

**Ware**  
**County**, Georgia

**JOINT WARE COUNTY – CITY OF WAYCROSS  
2031 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**



**Community  
Participation Program**

Ware County and the City of Waycross

**August 2010**



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# **1. INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Purpose**

The preparation and implementation of the Community Participation Program (CPP) is an important first step to involve the citizens in the development of the Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of the CPP is to ensure that the citizens of Ware County and the City of Waycross are aware of the planning process and have sufficient opportunity to review and comment on the Comprehensive Plan. The CPP also creates a dialogue between citizens, businesses, owners, other stakeholders and elected officials and with this two-way communication opens the way for a unified vision for Ware County and Waycross that will be supported by the public.

## **1.2 Requirements for Success**

Pursuant to the Rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Chapter 110-12-01 (Local Planning Requirements), Greater Ware County has to update its Comprehensive Plan by June 30, 2011, in order to maintain its Qualified Local Government Status (QLG).

The Community Participation Program (CPP), as prescribed by the Department of Community Affairs (DCA), will follow the intent of the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning effective May 1, 2005.

The Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC) will guide the citizen participation efforts associated with the Comprehensive Plan. Several meetings will be held to inform and educate the citizens about the project and to solicit their input in the definition of the Plan's vision, values, priorities, goals, objectives and policies. The meetings will be held for the unincorporated area of Ware County and the City of Waycross.

The SGRC will also solicit input from other groups within the County, including, but not limited to appropriate City and County staff, Waycross/Ware Planning Commission, City Council, County Commissioners, Chamber of Commerce, and any Economic Development Group.

The following principles will guide the successful implementation of this Community Participation Program and the development of the Comprehensive Plan:

- 1) The public has a say in decisions about actions that affect their lives;
- 2) The public is involved as early as possible in the community participation and decision-making process in order to build trust;
- 3) The involvement of those potentially affected is sought and participants are encouraged to assist in defining how they participate;
- 4) Participants are provided with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way;
- 5) Education and participation are directly combined whenever possible; and
- 6) The needs and concerns of the public are listened to and their input is integrated into the outcome.

## **2. IDENTIFICATION OF COMMITTEES AND STAKEHOLDERS**

Stakeholders are those who affect and/or are affected by the development and implementation of the Joint Ware County – City of Waycross County Comprehensive Plan. The following is a list of stakeholders whose involvement will be beneficial to the development of the Plan. This list is not all-inclusive and all interested parties are encouraged to actively participate in the development the Comprehensive Plan.

### **2.1 Technical Advisors**

These are professional city and county staff who will work closely with the Southern Georgia RC to provide techniques, tools and strategies needed to inform the citizens regarding the Comprehensive Plan. The list below shows just a few of those who will be actively included in the drafting of the comprehensive plan, both in workshops and through individual meetings:

- Paul Smith – Ware County Manager
- Wayne Kilmark – Ware County Planning & Zoning
- Dr. Joseph C. Barrow, Jr. – Ware County Board of Education
- Jan Sanchez – Waycross Ware County Chamber of Commerce
- Linda Taylor – Downtown Waycross Development Authority
- Scott Murphy – Waycross Water Department
- Gene Thomas– Waycross Solid Waste
- Frank Baugh – Waycross Engineer
- Marc Hawkins – Building and Codes Manager, Waycross
- David Callaway – Ware County Recreation Department
- Wilton DeLoach – Waycross Public Works
- Randy F. Royal – Ware County Sheriff
- Chief Tony Tanner \_ Waycross Police
- Chief David Eddins – Fire Department
- Bill Strickland – Ware County Airport
- Richard Love – Traffic Engineer
- Angela Wall - SGRC Environmental Planner
- Michael Jacobs – SGRC Historic Preservation Planner

### **2.2 Stakeholder Committee**

The Stakeholder Committee for the Joint Ware County – City of Waycross Comprehensive Plan update consists of County and City representatives and members from business and community organizations to advise, review and help shape the overall plan process. A listing of the stakeholders follows on the next page.

| <b>ELECTED OFFICIALS</b>                          |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Organization/Group/Individual</b>              | <b>Organization/Group/Individual</b>                            |
| City of Waycross Mayor & Council                  | Ware County Chairman & Commission                               |
| <b>COMMISSIONS/BOARDS/ DEPARTMENTS</b>            |   |
| <b>Organization/Group/Individual</b>              | <b>Organization/Group/Individual</b>                            |
| City of Waycross Manager & Clerk                  | Ware County Manager & Clerk                                     |
| City of Waycross Fire Dept. & Police Department   | Ware County Sheriff Dept.                                       |
| Ware County Bldg Inspector / Zoning Administrator | Ware County - City of Waycross Economic Development Authorities |
| Waycross/Ware Planning Commission                 | Ware County Health Department                                   |
| Ware County Board of Education                    | Southern Georgia Regional Commission                            |
| <b>COMMUNITY / BUSINESS GROUPS</b>                |   |
| <b>Organization/Group/Individual</b>              | <b>Organization/Group/Individual</b>                            |
| Chamber of Commerce                               | Okefenokee Technical College                                    |
| Waycross College                                  | Local Businesses  |
| Main Street                                       |   |
|   |   |

### **2.3 Other Stakeholders**

Other stakeholders include representatives of various agencies and organizations such as the colleges, various schools, media, Faith-based organizations, civic associations, advocacy groups, homeowners associations, and realtors.

Stakeholders will be called upon to assist with the development of the Community Assessment and Community Vision, leading to the Goals and Objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. Presently there are over 58 names of people that have expressed interest and are receiving regular updates and invitations to the stakeholder meetings.

### **3. IDENTIFICATION OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES**

The goal of the Community Participation Plan is to educate the public and media on the Comprehensive Plan process and content. In order to achieve broad participation, all segments of the population will be included. The following provides an overview on the public participation process and how it will be implemented.

#### **3.1 Visioning Workshop/Kick-off Meeting**

A Community Visioning/Kick-off meeting was held to announce the planning process to the citizens, and stakeholder committee and provide an overview of the Comprehensive Plan's purpose and general approach for completion. The meeting was held on May 26, 2010, from 9am – 12 pm at the Downtown Waycross Development Authority Building in Waycross, Georgia.

The goals of this workshop were:

- a) to identify the vision of the participants for Ware County and the City of Waycross 20 years from now and translate this vision into goals and policies; and
- b) to identify issues and opportunities facing the area, including strengths and weaknesses; and
- c) to identify development characteristics and boundaries for proposed character areas;
- d) to establish participation and support for each planning area in the development of the joint Comprehensive Plan.

#### **3.2 Initial Public Hearing**

Following several stakeholder meetings, as required by the State Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, public hearings before the Ware County Board of County Commissioners and the Waycross City Commission were and will be held to announce that the planning for the update of the Joint Ware County – City of Waycross Comprehensive Plan is underway. Southern Georgia RC staff made a brief presentation to outline the schedule and any further public involvement opportunities. At the meeting scheduled for xxxxxxxx, the public has final opportunity to comment on the draft Community Participation Program and the draft Community Assessment. Previous input and public involvement opportunities through the stakeholder meetings will have been provided prior to this public hearing. Following the public hearing and including the input from the public and County and City officials, the Community Participation document and Community Assessment will be transmitted to the DCA for their review and comment. Ware County and the City of Waycross will advertise all public hearings in compliance with adopted guidelines for public notification.

#### **3.3 Stakeholder/Steering Committee Meetings**

The Stakeholder Committee will provide continued guidance and feedback throughout the Comprehensive Plan's update process. Meetings will be scheduled at regular intervals to ensure review and buy-in of deliverables and in advance of and as a follow-up to public meetings and hearings.

### **3.4 Stakeholder Interviews**

Stakeholder interviews will be held as appropriate and are intended to identify major issues and to develop a complete understanding of public opinions, comments and concerns. These issues include potential sources of conflict and controversy as well as perceived or real barriers to implementation. Participants in the interviews may include community leaders from various geographic, socio-economic and business sectors of the community who are committed to the success of the Comprehensive Plan. Results of any stakeholder interviews will be incorporated into the development of the Comprehensive Plan.

### **3.5 Public Hearing for Plan Transmittal**

The Southern Georgia RC staff will make a brief presentation of the highlights of the Joint Ware County – City of Waycross Comprehensive Plan at public hearings before the Ware County Board of County Commission and Waycross City Commission. The purpose of the public hearings will be to authorize the draft of the 2031 Comprehensive Plan to be sent to DCA for review. All public hearings will be advertised in compliance with adopted guidelines for public notification.

### **3.6 Project Website**

The Southern Georgia RC will have a special link on its home page to a webpage that will provide information on the progress of the planning process. Additional links to the webpage will be available through Ware County. This site will provide information on the Comprehensive Plan's three components including status and drafts for review. The site will also announce meeting opportunities for citizen involvement, provide contact information for staff, and will provide a dedicated e-mail address for questions and comments. The following are websites through which to access the comprehensive plan website: [www.sgrc.us](http://www.sgrc.us), [www.warecounty.com](http://www.warecounty.com), and [www.waycrossga.com](http://www.waycrossga.com)

### **3.7 Public Information Outreach Plan**

The Southern Georgia RC will coordinate the development of an effective media plan to publicize the Plan and its progress to the citizens and other stakeholders. The following activities may also be used to inform the media and the citizens:

- a) Waycross Journal-Herald newspaper
- b) Media Coverage

Media outlets such as print, radio and television will be educated about the plan through the use of briefings and media sessions. The development of press releases, stories, columns and interviews will be used to inform the Public.

- c) Public Information Materials

Outreach materials will be created and used to help the public understand the comprehensive planning process, distribute information and encourage feedback. The materials will be distributed at public meetings and other geographic locations and may include items such as fact sheets, comment forms, surveys, displays, flyers, notices and a mailing distribution data base.

#### **4 . SCHEDULE FOR THE COMPLETION OF THE COMMUNITY AGENDA**

The following is a schedule for the completion of the Community Agenda of the 2031 Joint Ware County – City of Waycross Comprehensive Plan. For future updates to the completion schedule visit the Joint Ware County – City of Waycross 2031 webpage on the Southern Georgia RC website ([www.sgrc.us](http://www.sgrc.us)) or on the Ware County ([www.warecounty.com](http://www.warecounty.com)) or City of Waycross ([www.waycrossga.com](http://www.waycrossga.com)) websites or call the Southern Georgia RC at 229.333.5277.

| <b>DATE</b>                    | <b>OBJECTIVE</b>  |
|--------------------------------|---|
| May 26, 2010                   | Public Workshops with Stakeholder Group to explain planning process to the community. and receive preliminary input as well as discuss and preliminary Issues and Opportunities and outline preliminary Areas of Special Attention, Character areas |
| July 13, 2010                  | Community-wide workshop to delineate preliminary Character Areas.   |
| July – August 2010             | Processing of public, Steering Committee and Stakeholder input and feedback to Southern Georgia RC to draft CPP and Community Assessment  |
| August 31, 2010                | Review & final comment on DRAFT Community Participation Program and Community Assessment  |
| October 5, 2010                | Public Hearing on the draft Community Assessment and Public Participation Program and subsequent transmittal to DCA for review  |
| October, 2010 – February, 2011 | Develop Draft Community Agenda through meetings with Stakeholder Committee and Technical Advisors for feedback and input  |
| March 2011                     | Community wide Public Meeting to present Draft Community Agenda and receive final comments and revisions.   |
| April 2011                     | 2nd Special Joint Public Hearing to transmit Draft Community Agenda to DCA for review   |
| April – June, 2011             | DCA Review period   |
| June 2011                      | Adoption of 2031 Joint Comprehensive Plan by Ware County, and the City of Waycross  |

