

# Introduction

## Purpose

Public participation is essential for all community based planning efforts. Those who are directly impacted by local government decisions must have opportunities to voice opinions and concerns regarding county policies, strategies and implementation measures as they move forward in the public realm. A vision for the county's future involves dialogue between citizens and landowners, local government staff and officials, the business community and a host of special interest groups. It is through a diversity of perspectives that a concise and inclusive plan may be developed that reflects the values and interests of the community as a whole. Ultimately, it is through a joint commitment to an agreed upon vision and strategic implementation process that community success can be achieved. The purpose of the Community Participation Program is to outline the steps that Oglethorpe County will take to ensure community members have defined methods for public participation throughout the Comprehensive Plan update process necessary to fulfill state planning requirements.

## Objectives

The objectives for the participation program include the following:

- The program must offer and encourage opportunities for the public to become actively involved during the update process
- The program must provide information throughout the update process to any interested party regardless of their level of participation
- The program should promote consensus through active dialogue and incorporation of community concerns as components of the Comprehensive Plan are developed and move through public processes

# Community Involvement

## Identification of Stakeholders

Stakeholders are individuals, groups or institutions that are vested in the future of the county. Stakeholders are indispensable to the public planning process since they will be affected by the Comprehensive Plan's recommendations and represent a fundamental aspect of the coordination and management required to complete the update. The following list is representative as additional stakeholders may be identified and incorporated into the participation process as the update progresses.

### Oglethorpe County Board of Commissioners

Chairman, Jay Paul  
District 1, Phil Sanders  
District 2, Andy Saxon  
District 3, David Clark  
District 4, Will Brown  
District 5, Tracy Norman

### Oglethorpe County Zoning Board

1 Jeff Sharp  
2 Janet Hill  
3 Jimmy Shealy  
4 Morgan Robinson  
5 Robert Drew

## **Oglethorpe County Economic Development Authority**

- 1 Joyce Sniff
- 2 Bill Cabaniss
- 3 Jeff Welch
- 4 Fred Gretsches
- 5 Dink NeSmith
- 6 John Robertson
- 7 Randy Bramlett
- 8 Will Brown

## **County Staff**

Director of Planning and Development  
County Clerk  
Director of Finance  
Director of Public Works  
Director of Emergency Medical Services  
Director of E-911 Communications  
Director of Emergency Management Agency  
Director of Parks and Recreation  
Director of Senior Services  
Sheriff

## **Oglethorpe County Elected & Appointed Boards**

Board of Education  
Board of Health  
Board of Elections  
Board of Tax Assessors  
Library Board of Trustees

## **Municipalities**

City of Arnoldsville  
City of Lexington - DDA, Historic Preservation  
City of Crawford  
City of Maxeys  
City of Winterville

## **Neighbor jurisdictions**

Madison County  
Elbert County  
Wilkes County  
Taliaferro County  
Greene County  
Oconee County  
Clarke County

## **Regional Organizations & Institutions**

Regional Commission  
SWCC

RC&D  
EPD

**Major Employers within the county, otherwise not listed**

Poultry  
Granite  
Forestry  
Horticulture (Select Trees, Goodness Grows, Wolfskin Growers, James Greenhouses)  
Centurion  
GGP  
J&J  
Bells  
OCA  
Farm Bureau  
ECHO  
Banks (Commercial/Pinnacle)

**Utilities**

Tri-County  
Rayle EMC  
Jackson EMC  
Georgia Power  
AT&T  
Windstream  
Charter  
MSW Landfill  
C&D Landfill  
Municipal water/sewer

**Community Groups & Organizations**

Cattleman's Association  
Churches  
Rotary  
Legion  
Historic Oglethorpe  
Homeowners Associations  
Firefly  
Chamber of Commerce  
Extension Service Coordinator  
NRCS District Conservationist  
Watson Mill (DNR)  
Student Groups  
National Forest Service  
Leadership Oglethorpe  
Family Connection/DEFACS

**Community Health**

Medlink

Physicians' Groups  
Pharmacy

## Identification of Participation Techniques

Oglethorpe County will include the following components as part of the participation program:

- Steering Committee
- First state-required public hearing and public information meeting
- Public outreach
- Re-use existing surveys to assess change over time
- Stakeholder surveys
- Public Surveys
- Intergovernmental Meetings
- Zoning Board review
- Second state-required public hearing
- Transmittal and review

### Steering Committee/Project Management Team

The committee shall be composed of five representatives. The committee shall meet three times as the Plan is being developed to provide procedural feedback and advisement. The steering committee will also function as the project management team with routine electronic and voice communication throughout the update process. This function provides continuous feedback about progress toward final adoption, adequacy of public input, quality of product, set corrections to the process, and make suggestions for improvement. The steering committee members are expected to be active ambassadors in the community, encouraging input. Members include:

- One representative from the Oglethorpe County Board of Commissioners, Tracy Norman
- One representative from the Oglethorpe County Zoning Board, Janet Hill
- One representative from the Oglethorpe County Economic Development Authority, Joyce Sniff
- Director of Planning and Development, Ashley Peterson
- other County staff, Josh Hawkins

### Kick-off Public Information Meeting/First Public Hearing

This will be an initial public hearing to announce the update of the Comprehensive Plan update. The focus of this meeting will include an overview of the purpose and process of comprehensive planning, a general presentation of the currently adopted plan, and an outline of public participation opportunities during the update process.

### Public Outreach

- Website - Informative, Input
  - Showcase currently adopted Plan
  - Publish participation program for public review
  - House the link to the public survey in order to collect input
  - Publish draft of new Plan for public review
- Speaker - Informative
  - Convey information, solicit input
  - Specific to civic organizations
- Press Release - Informative
  - Advertising public hearings
  - Advertising surveys
- Student Groups - Informative, Input, Interactive
  - Involving youth organizations (FFA, Youth Leadership Oglethorpe, etc.)

- Social Media - Informative
  - Using posts to garner interest and solicit input

### **Re-use Existing Surveys**

This will be to identify changes in opinions, attitudes, and beliefs over time.

### **Stakeholder Surveys**

These surveys will be a more in-depth look into the stakeholders' specific areas of interest.

### **Public Surveys**

These surveys will be more generalized in nature. They will include scaled questions, ranking questions, and short answer explanations.

### **Intergovernmental Visions & Goals Meeting(s)**

This will be a public meeting involving the Board of Commissioners, the Economic Development Authority, and the Zoning Board. The goal of this meeting will be to establish a common set of visions and goals, identify community needs and opportunities, and foster intergovernmental cooperation.

### **Second Public Hearing**

This will be an opportunity for the public to comment on a draft of the Plan before transmittal. This will be held on the same night as a Zoning Board Meeting in order to get feedback from the Zoning Board, as well.