



CITY OF MILNER

2009-2029 Comprehensive Plan

COMMUNITY PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

Prepared by

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1. INTRODUCTION

In preparing a Comprehensive Plan, it is important to work with citizens to identify the issues and challenges unique to their community. The comprehensive planning process begins with an evaluation of the current strengths and needs of the community followed by a vision for the future. This Community Public Participation Plan is designed to give citizens the opportunity to take part in the planning process in an effort to gain support for proposed programs from the public and to produce a document that best reflects the overall vision for the community. An innovative and comprehensive public involvement program will ensure that the public feels vested in the results of the planning process.

The Department of Community Affairs (DCA) requires that a Community Public Participation Program be implemented as part of the comprehensive planning process as outlined in the Rules for Comprehensive Planning, Section 110-12-1-.04. The goal for the Program as outlined in the Rules is as follows:

“The purpose of the Community Participation Program is to ensure that the local comprehensive plan reflects the full range of community values and desires, by involving a diverse spectrum of stakeholders in development of the Community Agenda. This broad-based participation in developing the Community Agenda will also help ensure that it will be implemented, because many in the community are involved in its development and thereby become committed to seeing it through.”

The DCA also requires that a Plan for the Community Public Participation Program be developed and submitted to DCA for approval prior to the start of the public involvement process. This document outlines Milner’s strategy to develop and implement a public involvement program for the City of Milner Comprehensive Plan and is hereby submitted to DCA for approval.

2. SCOPE

The mission of the Community Public Participation Program is to provide citizens the opportunity to participate in the development of the Comprehensive Plan. An effective community participation program should be designed to educate the public, as well as provide an opportunity for citizens to provide input and feedback as the Plan is developed. The participation strategies outlined in this report have been selected to ensure that citizens understand and participate in the planning process.

The primary public involvement strategy used to facilitate the development and submittal of the Comprehensive Plan is the formation of the Milner Comprehensive Plan Stakeholder Committee. This Committee was established to provide feedback to the planners and shape the overall planning process. This committee includes a number of appointed officials, elected officials, citizens, and other persons who have a vested interest in the City of Milner. The major role of the Stakeholder Committee will be to

review draft development strategies, issues and opportunities presented in the Community Assessment.

A public meeting was held in accordance with the DCA Rules for Comprehensive Planning, to introduce the Plan and increase public awareness before submittal of the Community Assessment and Community Participation Plan to the DCA. The following public involvement strategies have been selected by the City as part of the public involvement strategy and are discussed in this report:

- Stakeholders Committee
- Community Survey
- Flyers and Handouts
- Website

In most cases, informing and educating the public is not enough. The most successful strategy is one that also gets citizens involved in the decision-making process and help shape the future of their community. The City intends to accomplish this goal by providing various levels of public involvement, which have the potential to reach all citizens. Citizens that want to take a greater role in the planning process will have the option to participate in community events such as public meetings and workshops. Lastly, the Stakeholders Committee will allow citizen representatives the opportunity to work directly with the project team.

Implementing the tasks outlined in this report will improve the overall quality of the Plan by defining the values of the community and working together to accomplish those goals. Additionally, involving the public during the planning stage will help to garner support for the Comprehensive Plan and its eventual implementation.

3. TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

A technical advisory committee has been established to coordinate project staff, provide feedback to the project managers, and to ensure that the Comprehensive Plan accurately represents the City's vision for the future. The team includes representatives of the various departments and groups:

Project Team (5 members)

- Mayor
- City Manager
- Milner City Council
- Milner Downtown Development Authority
- Public Services

The Project Team has meet to oversee the development of the Community Assessment and Community Participation Plan. The following list describes the early efforts of the Project Team:

- *Community Character Map:* The Project Team analyzed current land use and development patterns and established a vision for the future that is illustrated in the Character Area map.
- *Areas Requiring Special Attention (ARSA):* The Project Team used the Existing Land Use and Community Character maps to develop the ARSA map. Areas were identified based on the consistency between current trends in a given area and the future vision for the community.
- *Issues and Opportunities:* The Project Team reviewed the State Planning Recommendations and created a comprehensive list of issues, specific to Milner that needed to be addressed in order to meet the goals outlined in the Plan. A list of opportunities was developed based on the identified issues.

The Milner Technical Committee will continue to meet throughout the planning process. The initial findings of the Technical Committee will be updated and revised based on feedback generated during the public involvement process.

4. PUBLIC HEARINGS

The state minimum standards require that a Public Hearing be held before City Council to inform the public that the planning process for updating the Comprehensive Plan is in progress. The Comprehensive Plan was presented to the City Council Meeting on August 20, 2008 to inform the Council and the public about the scope of the Plan. The meeting was open to the public and advertised in accordance with City procedures. Schedules were posted on the City's website and agendas were made publicly available at City Hall before the meetings. The following items were presented at the Public Hearings.

- Existing Land Use Map
- Community Character Map
- Areas that Require Special Attention Map
- Issues and Opportunities
- Data Assessment
- Quality Community Objectives Assessment
- Public Involvement Strategy
- Project Schedule

The initial public meeting provided citizens with an opportunity to ask questions and voice any concerns about the proposed strategy for public involvement and plan development. A second Public Hearing will be held prior to final adoption of the Community Agenda.

5. IDENTIFICATION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES

5.1. Stakeholder Committee

A great part of the success of the Comprehensive Plan will be dependent on Stakeholder involvement. Effective involvement from key individuals/groups from the community will ensure that the Plan gains community wide support, addresses the issues and concerns of the general population, and is ultimately implemented. The benefits of Stakeholder involvement include:

- Citizens increasingly want to be involved in decisions that affect their community
- People with different areas of expertise contribute ideas, resulting in a well thought out Plan with better solutions
- Fellow citizens tend to support programs that have Stakeholder involvement
- By allowing residents, special interest groups, and business leaders to be involved, planners and decision makers have the chance to think “outside the box”
- Involving “citizen experts” helps facilitate communication
- Working together provides the opportunity to understand other people’s concerns and issues
- Stakeholder involvement allows for a more interconnected community in the end
- Stakeholder support builds program momentum and keeps the project moving forward
- Stakeholder comments are heard and responded to early in the process, which leads to more effective program implementation and future acceptance

The Stakeholder process allows individuals to make significant contributions to the planning process; therefore it is important that a free flow of information be maintained between the City and the Stakeholders, as well as within the Stakeholder Committee. Coordination is essential because the people that comprise the Stakeholder Committee live and work within the community, and they will be the best resource to generate support for the Plan. The City should consider that in order to effectively implement the future Comprehensive Plan, the Public Education and Involvement Program must create an awareness of land use, development, and community related issues and opportunities.

5.1.1. Selecting the Stakeholders Committee

The key Stakeholders are typically comprised of representatives from the general public, residents, professionals, business and industry leaders, civic leaders, media representatives, special interest groups, City staff and elected officials. It is important that the Stakeholder group consist of a diverse assortment of local representatives with different perspectives on the issue. The initial focus of the public involvement strategy will include the identification of the key Stakeholders in the community that possess a high degree of trust and credibility with their fellow citizens. These Stakeholders will

represent a broad range of backgrounds from business leaders to neighborhood groups to developers.

As the Stakeholders are selected, the City will make an effort to recognize and be cognizant of what the general public’s perception typically entails. The selected group of Stakeholders should be chosen such that their diversity ensures that the final Comprehensive Plan reflects the goals and objectives of the various communities within the City. The key to success will be achieving a consensus among the group on the future vision for the City of Milner. Once this is accomplished, this diverse group of Stakeholders should be able to “get the word out” to their fellow citizens and business associates that the Comprehensive Plan will be beneficial to the citizens of Milner and the future of their community.

Table 1

Milner Stakeholder Committee List
1. George Weldon
2. R. Harold Wilson
3. Carole Wilson
4. Joe Bostwick
5. Lynn Hadaway
6. Cheryl Idol
7. Glen Walters
8. Judy Ross
9. Ricky Fallings
10. A.P.Smith
11. Frances Manry
12. Will Thomas
13. Dennis Armstrong
14. Sabrina Vinings
15. Rhonda Bailey
16. Jeannie Britt
17. Dr. Vickie Smith
18. Kay Pedrotti
19. Alan Barbee
20. Ryan Vermeulen

5.1.2. Stakeholder Meeting Strategy

The Stakeholder Committee is scheduled to meet eight (8) times throughout the planning process to review progress and provide feedback to the Project Team. The following is a proposed list of meeting dates and topics to be discussed at each Stakeholder meeting.

Milner Stakeholder Committee Meeting Dates

MEETING DATE/TIME	LOCATION	TOPICS OF DISCUSSION
Thursday, June 5, 2008 7:00 PM	Milner City Hall	Character Areas Areas of Special Attention Finalize Issues and Opportunities
Thursday, June 19, 2008 7:00 PM	Milner City Hall	Review of the Community Assessment and Public Participation Plan
July	Milner City Hall	No meetings will be held in the month of July
August	Milner City Hall	No meetings will be held in the month of August
Thursday, September 4, 2008 7:00 PM	Milner City Hall	Future Development Map Develop Visioning Statement
Thursday, September 18, 2008 7:00 PM	Milner City Hall	Future Development Map Final Community Issues and Opportunities
Thursday, October 2, 2008 7:00 PM	Milner City Hall	Implementation Program Short Term Work Program (STWP)
Thursday, October 16, 2008 7:00 PM	Milner City Hall	Implementation Program Short Term Work Program (STWP)
Thursday, November 13, 2008 7:00 PM	Milner City Hall	Finalize Community Agenda Components
Thursday, November 20, 2008 7:00 PM	Milner City Hall	Review Community Agenda

Meetings will be held after work hours and will be limited to a maximum of two hours per meeting. If more meetings are required to meet the goals set above, the Stakeholder Committee will be asked for an additional commitment.

5.2. Community Survey

In an effort to increase public involvement, a community survey was developed to gain feedback from citizens. The community survey is an effective tool as it is available to a large population at a minimal cost. The survey will be posted on the City website and will contain questions on a wide range of community related topics.

The results of the surveys will be tabulated and presented to the Stakeholder Committee. Based on the results, the Stakeholder Committee will incorporate the main issues and concerns of the citizens into the development of the Community Agenda.

5.3. Public Information

In addition to the strategies identified above, the City will produce handouts to update citizens about the content and progress of the comprehensive planning process. The City will utilize the following Public Information techniques:

- *Media Kit (Press Package)*. A packet of information will be provided to the press containing all of the information/facts to write an article (or a series of several articles) on the Comprehensive Plan. A City contact name and phone number will also be included.
- *Informational Brochure(s)*. These brochures and/or fact sheets will be simple and straightforward in order to explain the comprehensive planning process and what it is designed to accomplish. The brochures will provide common questions and answers and will be written using language that is not overly technical. There may be more than one brochure to explain various aspects of the Comprehensive Plan. The brochures will be made available at City Hall and will be distributed at public meetings.
- *Websites*. Websites are a great method of getting information out to a large group of people. A section or link added to the City's website for the Comprehensive Program will allow for quick immediate information for the general public. The web page may include information on the program, a question and answer portion, contact information, and a link to e-mail any questions or concerns. This website address will be listed in all materials designed for the program. The website also provides an opportunity to catalog appropriate public documents and make them available to the public through use of downloadable PDF files.