Georgia’s Local Planning Requirements
Acknowledgements

• Photos in this presentation are courtesy of Department of Community Affairs Field Staff, Three Rivers Expeditions and www.walkable.org
The Georgia Planning Act - 1989

- Planning Standards Revision - 2005
  - Community Assessment
  - Community Participation Plan
  - Community Agenda
Yes, but what is the Comprehensive Plan FOR?

- To guide local decisions about land use and growth patterns
- To identify and care for the unique characteristics of your community
- To give citizens an active role in visioning the future of their community
- To help allocate revenues (taxes!) through responsible resource management
Community Assessment

- What Do We Have Here?
Community Assessment

- Identify Issues and Opportunities for the Community
- Analysis of Existing Development Patterns
  - Create an Existing Land Use Map
  - Identify Special Attention Areas
  - Make a First Draft of Recommended Character Areas
Community Assessment

- Supporting Data and Information (included as an Appendix to the Main Document)
  - Population projections
  - Income information
  - Job types and locations
  - Natural characteristics
  - MUCH MORE
Community Assessment

- Analysis of Local Consistency with DCA’s Quality Community Objectives
Georgia’s Quality Community Objectives

- Adopted by the Board of the Department of Community Affairs in 1999
- Promote Quality Growth through preservation of cultural, natural and historic resources
- Provide options to assist communities develop to fullest potential
Participation Program

• Identify Stakeholders
• Identify Techniques
• Schedule for Agenda Completion

“In many cases, involving the public is a contentious and even messy process…but plans developed without citizen involvement….lack the buy-in necessary for success and make it more difficult to build support.”

- ICMA and APA
Our first duty as citizens is to participate in government.

- *Theodore Roosevelt*
Participation Program

• Provides stakeholders (CITIZENS!) an opportunity to invest in local government and planning for the future

• Can be the trickiest and most time-consuming portion of the Comprehensive Planning process, but also most worthwhile
Participation Program

• Should provide a variety of options for involvement and fact-sharing
  - Website
  - Surveys
  - Newspaper articles
  - Public meetings
  - Focus groups
Community Agenda

• Future Development Map
  – Character Areas
  – Areas Requiring Special Attention

• Future Land Use Map
  – Legally tied to Zoning Plan
Community Agenda

• Defining Narrative
  – Written and visual description of character areas
  – Allowed land uses or zoning codes for each character area
  – QCOs to achieve in each character area
  – Implementation measures for each character area (WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO TO GET THERE?)
Community Agenda

• Issues and Opportunities
  – How will the community address these in the next twenty years?
  – What differences do you want to see?
Implementation Program

• Short Term Work Program
  - Activities for the next five years to help you achieve your plan
  - Should include implementation measures from Defining Narrative

• Long Term and On-going Activities
  - Community plans already underway, or that will take longer than five years to accomplish

• Policies

• Supplemental Plans (small area, greenspace, Scenic Byway)
Character Areas

- Existing or Desired
- Small Area Planning
- Elements of Character
Traditional Neighborhoods

- Human scale development
- Mixed uses
- Pedestrian activity
Policy Options to Increase Neighborhood Activity

- Consider alternatives to “traditional” zoning, which was meant to polarize activities
- Encourage closer location of schools, residences and businesses
- Examine current parking requirements
- Encourage redevelopment and infill options
Infill Development

- Maximize use of existing infrastructure
- Encourage development or redevelopment of a community core
- Encourage Brownfield and Greyfield development
Sense of Place

• Preserving and enhancing the unique elements of a community can:
  Increase property values
  Increase tourism
  Increase civic involvement
Where am I now?
Transportation Options

- Increase citizen mobility
- Increase economic opportunities for citizens and community
- Reduce automobile dependency
- Promote walking/cycling as an option in our communities
Non-traditional “options”

- Connectivity among parcels and neighborhoods
- Compact design to increase walkability
- Reduce surface parking lots
- Offer shared parking options among businesses
(Our general principle in all operations is) “that a man shall never have to take more than one step, if it can possibly be avoided.”

-Henry Ford -

Upon the 1913 opening of the first Ford Company assembly line
Yes, but what if he wanted to?
Heritage Preservation

- Preserve and revitalize historic areas
- Encourage compatibility of new development to old
- Protect other scenic or natural features with historic significance
Open Space Preservation

- Set aside open areas for public use
- Encourage minimizing land consumption
Between 1982 and 1997, the amount of urbanized land used for development in the United States increased by 45% (from 51 million acres to 76 million acres.) The population grew by 17%.

(William Fulton, et al.)
Environmental Protection

- Protect sensitive areas from negative impacts of development
- Maintain natural terrain, drainage and vegetation where possible
Growth Preparedness

- Adequate infrastructure to support projected growth
- Ordinances and other land use measures to promote desired development
Housing Options
Where we live determines:

- Transportation options
- Commuting patterns
- Access to goods and services
- Educational opportunities
- Career opportunities
Community Agenda
Georgia’s Online Resources

- www.dca.state.ga.us
- www.georgiaplanning.com
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Georgia On My Mind...