

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCEDURES

Public participation procedures are designed to ensure that the public participates in the comprehensive planning process to the fullest extent possible, beyond the minimum provisions for public hearing required by law. Public participation means that the public is fully informed concerning the Comprehensive Plan and that the public input is considered and responded to in the preparation of the plan. The procedures described in this section are designed to provide for ongoing public participation in the preparation, amendment, and evaluation of the City of Bonifay 2020 Comprehensive Plan.

RULE REQUIREMENTS

The minimum requirements for public participation procedures are set out in Ch. 9J-5.004, F.A.C., Public Participation. The procedures adopted by the City the following:

- (a) Provisions to assure that real property owners are put on notice, through advertisement in a newspaper of general circulation in the area of other method adopted by the local government, of official actions that will affect the use of their property;
- (b) Provisions for notice to keep the general public informed;
- (c) Provisions to assure that there are opportunities for the public to provide written comments;
- (d) Provisions to ensure that the required public hearings are held;
- (e) Provisions to ensure the consideration of and response to public comments.

THE LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY

The City is Responsible for formulation of the Comprehensive Plan and for conduct of public participation. The local planning agency is created under the authority of Ch. 163.3174, F.S., which requires that the local government establish by ordinance a "local planning agency" (LPA). The LPA is responsible for preparing the Comprehensive Plan, conducting hearings, and making recommendations to the governing body concerning adoption of the plan. The LPA may be designated as (1) the local governing body itself, (2) the planning commission, (3) the planning department, or (4) other instrumentality, such as a city wide planning entity established by special act. The LPA has the responsibility for the review of proposed development regulations for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan when the LPA serves as the land development regulation commission.

The Local Planning Agency in the City of Bonifay is the West Florida Regional Planning Council. The land development regulation commission function is assigned to the City of Bonifay City Council.

THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

The Public Participation Plan is designed for use in the preparation, amendment, and evaluation of the Comprehensive Plan.

Formulation of the Comprehensive Plan occurs in three stages: preparation of a draft plan, plan revisions, and plan adoption. The draft plan provides the data and analysis which serve as the Support Document for the Plan. The draft also recommends goals, objectives, and policies. The maximum amount of public participation should occur during the preparation of the plan revisions, especially the formulation of goals, objectives and policies. At this stage, the necessary background information and draft goals, objectives, and policies are available for consideration as alternatives.

RECEIVING PUBLIC INPUT

It is recognized that the "public" consists of various groups. The community consists of the public at large, the public as defined by neighborhood or geographical location, or the public defined by socio-economic group (such as the elderly). The public may be defined by affiliation with a special interest, public or business groups. Other involved entities include state and regional agencies, adjacent local governments, utilities, the School Board and other agencies. The public participation procedures are designed to reach all of these "publics" at the appropriate stage of plan preparation.

The City of Bonifay City Council has the primary authority for conducting public workshops on the plan and receiving input from the public at large, interest groups, and technical advisors. The planning commission meets on a regular basis to provide a forum for public input and to consider and make recommendations concerning the comprehensive plan. The planning commission is made up of citizens at-large, not representing a specific interest in the community. The City encourages various interest groups to organize advisory groups and submit their comments to the planning commission so that they may be represented in the planning process. It is the responsibility of these organizations to obtain the necessary information, convene, and formulate formal comments to be provided to the planning commission.

REVIEW OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Copies of the draft comprehensive plan shall be made available to all affected agencies for their technical review prior to plan revisions. Such agencies shall be requested to submit their comments in writing and to participate in a public workshop to present their comments. The City of Bonifay Planning Commission shall develop a list of technical advisors for notification concerning opportunities for participation and plan review. This list should include, at a minimum, the regional offices of the designated review agencies for the comprehensive plan, pursuant to Ch. 9J-11.008, F.A.C., as identified in Exhibit 5.1, below.

EXHIBIT 5.1 AGENCIES FOR REVIEW OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

West Florida Regional Planning Council
Department of Environmental Protection
Department of Transportation
Northwest Florida Water Management District
Florida Department of State
Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission
Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Forestry

Source: Adapted from Ch. 9J-11.008, Procedural Rule for Review of Local Government Comprehensive Plans and Amendments

Copies of the comprehensive plan shall be readily available to the public at the City of Bonifay Clerk's office. Advisory groups and technical advisors shall receive copies of the plan for their review. Executive summaries of the comprehensive plan support document will be prepared for wider distribution to the public. Copies of the goals, objectives, and policies shall be made available in their entirety.

Public comment comes in many forms, ranging from spoken comments to a staff member to formal written reports presented during a meeting. Written comments are preferable as they can be retained as a permanent record and are less subject to interpretation. It is important that the public participation be documented. For this reason, all written comments shall be kept as part of the public record. All public workshops, meetings, and hearings shall be recorded and minutes kept.

NOTIFYING THE PUBLIC

Public notification ensures that information concerning the comprehensive plan reaches the public during the various stages of plan preparation. Notification includes keeping the public aware of meetings and providing public information.

ADVERTISEMENT

Advertisement requirements for public hearings are found in s. 166.041(3)(a) and s. 163.3184 (15). Public workshops shall be advertised in a similar manner. The advertisements shall include a statement of the date, time, place of the meeting, the subject of the meeting, direct the public where additional information is available, and state that opportunities for comment are available. The advertisement shall be prominently displayed in the local newspaper.

NOTIFICATION TO PROPERTY OWNERS

It is presumed that the statutory requirements for public advertisement are sufficient to notify owners of real property concerning adoption of the comprehensive plan affecting land use city-wide. Adoption of comprehensive plan amendments affecting specific properties or planning areas which will "regulate the use of property" shall be addressed using the "affected persons" standard found in Ch. 163.3215 (2), F.S. This standard states that the interest of the affected person should exceed in degree the general interest of the community shared by all persons. Where a presumption of such affect exists, it is recommended that additional means of notification be employed, such as direct mailings, posting of affected properties, community or neighborhood meetings, or other legal means.

PUBLIC INFORMATION PROGRAM

The West Florida Regional Planning Council shall have the responsibility for conducting a public information process. This process shall include effective use of the media, including press releases, feature articles, and interviews. Alternatives for keeping the public informed include:

- Direct mailings/notification of meetings and progress reports;
- Speakers' Bureau;
- Public Service Announcements;

CITY VISIONING PROCESS

The WFRPC shall have the responsibility for conducting a City-wide visioning process that will articulate a vision of the future physical appearance and qualities of its community as a component of the local Comprehensive Plan. The vision should be developed through a collaborative planning process with meaningful public participation and shall be adopted by the City of Bonifay Commissioners. Neighboring communities, especially those sharing natural resources or physical or economic infrastructure, are encouraged to create collective visions for greater-than-local areas. When the City's vision of the future has been created, the City should review its Comprehensive Plan, Land Development Code, and Capital Improvement Program to ensure that these instruments will help to move the city toward its vision in a manner consistent with the City of Bonifay 2020 Comprehensive Plan.

ADOPTION, AMENDMENT AND EVALUATION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The law requires two public hearings prior to plan adoption, amendment or evaluation submittal to the Department of Community Affairs. The first is to be held by the Local Planning Agency to recommend the Plan to the City Council. The second is held by the City Council for the purposes of approving the plan for transmittal to the State. Legal notice is required for both meetings.