



Hillsborough County

STAFF REPORT TO

Dan Kleman
County Administrator

February 19, 2001

Office of Neighborhood Relations
And
Planning & Growth Management

Model Plan for
Citizen Participation in
Community-Based Planning
Goal #8.3

Consent (Informational Item)

Regular (Requires staff/Board discussion and/or public input)

<u>APPROVAL</u>	<u>DATE</u>
DEPARTMENT: _____	_____
__ATTORNEY: _____	_____
__PURCHASING : _____	_____
_____	_____

INTRODUCTION

Community-based planning is the process of having citizens in a community come together with government planners to determine how their community will be developed in the future.

To be successful, it relies on very extensive involvement of residents, property owners and other interested groups to develop a vision of the area being planned and to incorporate that vision into the plan. This requires that citizens work collaboratively with planners and the Board of County Commissioners to realize a shared vision. To assure the interest and ongoing commitment of these stakeholders, it is necessary to design a process for citizen participation that reflects how they want to be involved and their expectations for community planning. What follows is the Model Citizen Participation Plan that is based on the experience of previous community-based planning efforts and the feedback received at a series of five community meetings that were held to get citizen input into the public participation component of the community-based planning process.

The key components of the public participation plan for community based planning are:

- ◆ Development of a mailing list of stakeholders
- ◆ Translations as needed
- ◆ Letters of explanation and invitation to stakeholders
- ◆ Central meeting place
- ◆ Outdoor signs, press releases, flyers through Communications Dept
- ◆ E-mail groups
- ◆ Introductory meeting to introduce process
- ◆ Establishment of Steering Committee of stakeholders
- ◆ Published and distributed summary reports/updates
- ◆ Establishment of a Steering Comm meeting schedule
- ◆ Notices and calls before meetings
- ◆ Steering Committee members joining staff for presentation to BOCC
- ◆ Publication of Plan
- ◆ Certificates for Steering Committee members
- ◆ Evaluation

Community Selection

A three to five-year program to coordinate community-based plans will be developed by the Community-Based Planning Management Team and presented to the Board of County Commissioners after approval by the County Administrator. The team will take into

account such factors as development pressure, disinvestment, environmental sensitivity and expressions of citizen support . Initial boundaries for communities will be based on areas defined by the Office of Neighborhood Relations, but are subject to adjustments in response to the input from community stakeholders.

Community Notification

The Office of Neighborhood Relations (ONR) will use its database of neighborhood associations to identify associations within the area chosen for the community-based planning process. Letters are sent to the contacts for those associations explaining the community-based planning approach, inviting their association members to participate, seeking volunteers to help greet residents at the first meeting, and asking for referrals to other stakeholders in the designated community. Efforts are made to assure that the attendees reflect the diversity within the community. Notices are sent to faith-based organizations, Community Resource Officers and school principals as well. County Commissioners, other elected officials, Planning Commission staff and County Department Directors and/or their representatives are invited to participate.

In communities where a large proportion of the residents speak Spanish as their primary language, notices are published in Spanish as well as English. Interpreters will be provided for meetings if there is a demonstrated need.

The Communications Department is involved for the first two meetings, at the beginning of the process in each community, arranging for a meeting place, posting signs at strategic locations, issuing press releases, and distributing flyers to recreation centers and libraries. Once the steering or working committee has been formed, PGMD takes responsibility for notification of the committee members, with review of mail-outs for readability by Communications.

Planning and Growth Management (PGMD) also uses e-mail groups to notify people who have expressed an interest in a particular plan, and will include information updates in the community-based planning section of the PGMD website. If the interactive land use software becomes available to PGMD, that mechanism will be used for information and updates.

Introductory Meeting

The first meeting is held on a weeknight at a centrally located facility within the community. PGMD and ONR staff and residents solicited through the neighborhood associations greet the attendees and ask them to sign in, including their address on the log for further mailings.

The PGMD Director opens the meeting with a general overview of the purpose of the meeting, outlining the community-based planning process, and the importance of citizen participation. Key community leaders are introduced and thanked for helping identify all

stakeholders in the area. PGMD staff then describes how the process works, the steps to be followed, the timeline, the commitment required, and the intended outcomes. A question-and-answer period follows. Staff then asks for volunteers or nominations for the Steering Committee, which will be a core group of twenty to thirty people who will represent their community.

Communications

Written updates on the status and progress of the planning initiative will be prepared by PGMD and ONR staff. They will be distributed to neighborhood associations, the newspapers serving the area, libraries, recreation centers, businesses, civic groups, neighborhood service centers, and other organizations representing residents of the community or where residents visit frequently. An invitation to provide feedback is extended to those who are unable to attend. ONR will receive, record and report all feedback.

Staff & Consultant Roles

Professional staffs of PGMD and ONR work with staff of The Planning Commission and other County departments to provide communities with the resources needed to plan effectively for their neighborhoods. In some areas PGMD or Planning Commission staff lead the program, while in other areas consultants are contracted to facilitate the planning in conjunction with staff. These professionals provide expertise in preparing plans, so residents can determine the nature of their community in the future.

Community-Based Planning Process

The community-based planning program relies on very extensive involvement of residents and property owners and other interest groups to develop a vision of the area being planned and to participate in developing the plan. The process produces both Community Plans and Special Area Studies that take into account the fiscal resources available for plan implementation and the political and legal ramifications of implementation. This community-based planning process is just the first phase in area development, with implementation of plans occurring in subsequent phases over a period of time.

Ground rules, an explanation of technical terms and acronyms, the current status of ongoing projects, and any changes already planned for the community will be reviewed at the beginning of the first Steering Committee meeting. Committee members will be asked at one of the early meetings to provide any significant history and community assets that should be considered in planning.

Steering Committee Role

Each community-based plan is led by a Steering Committee whose purpose is to effectively represent all perspectives as citizen participants in the planning process and to

advise about planning methods and policies. This Steering Committee will dedicate a period of six months to two years to develop the community-based plan for their area.

The Steering Committee assists staff in establishing broad-based public participation in the process, identifying interest groups and advising on methods to increase participation. It identifies issues for resolution through the planning process. Members come to consensus on plan recommendations and support and advocate for those recommendations through the adoption process. The Steering Committee presents the final draft plan to The Planning Commission for review and comment.

The Steering Committee should reflect the community's diversity, should include citizens who are active in the neighborhood and know a large number of people, and those who have in depth knowledge of the community and its history, assets, and problems. Steering Committee members are asked to identify other individuals who need to be at the table, and advise staff on how to encourage public participation. The Board of County Commissioners endorses the composition of the Steering Committee.

A meeting cycle is established so members can mark their calendars. ONR/PGMD staff will send meeting notices to Steering Committee members, and will call the day before each scheduled meeting to remind them of the time and place.

Product

The product resulting from the community-based planning process will be a plan that reflects the community's vision of how they wish their area to look and function in the future, including, but not limited to, land uses, new development, transportation, parks and recreation facilities, road improvements, economic development and community services. A report is produced that summarizes background data, describes a vision from and for the community, includes maps and illustrations, recommends any needed Comprehensive Plan changes, and lists implementation actions.

The Community-Based Planning Management Team submits the plan developed through the community-based planning process to the Board of County Commissioners for endorsement and approval of various implementation strategies. One or more representatives of the Steering Committee take part in the presentation in support of the plan and to answer any questions from Board members.

Certificates of recognition or commendation are given to the Steering Committee members on completion of the plan.

Implementation

The primary governmental implementation strategy for community-based plans is through Hillsborough County's Comprehensive Plan, through land development regulations, which make certain changes possible, through zoning decisions and through the Capital

Improvement Program, which funds certain projects. Individual decisions of property owners, developers, families, institutions and other individuals, which are in conformance with the plan, are the most common implementation mechanisms.

Evaluation

Each community process will be evaluated by asking everyone who participated (staff, residents, business owners and consultants) to fill out an evaluation form. A time frame will be set for a second evaluation once implementation has begun. Feedback from these evaluations will be used by PGMD and ONR to refine the process for future communities.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION CHECKLIST

Function	Date Completed	Remarks
ONR mailing list prepared	_____	_____
Spanish translations needed?	Yes_____	No_____
Letter of explanation and invitation sent to:		
Associations	_____	_____
Faith-based orgs	_____	_____
Comm Resource Officers	_____	_____
School Principals	_____	_____
Commissioners	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____
Communications Dept		
Meeting place set	_____	_____
	Mtg date	Mtg location
Outdoor signs	_____	_____
Press release	_____	_____
Flyers	_____	_____
PGM e-mail groups	_____	_____
Introductory Mtg	_____	_____
Steering Committee established	_____	_____
Summary reports/updates Written, mailed, posted on web	_____	_____
Consultants announced	_____	_____
Steering Comm mtg schedule	_____	_____
Notices and calls before mtgs	_____	_____

Staff and Steering Comm members'
presentation to BOCC

Publication of Plan

Press release on Plan

Certificates for Strg Comm members

Evaluation

Name
Organization
Address
Town

Dear

Your community, XX, has been selected by the Board of County Commissioners for development of a community based plan. Community-based planning is the process of having citizens in a community come together with government planners to determine how their community will be developed in the future. To be successful, it relies on very extensive involvement of residents, property owners and other interested groups to develop a vision of the area being planned and to incorporate that vision into the plan. This requires that citizens work with planners and the Board of County Commissioners to realize a shared vision.

As a community leader, you are being invited to attend an introductory meeting and consider participating in a steering committee. This first meeting will be held XX. At the meeting the group will be asked to review the initial boundaries, discuss the strengths and issues in the community, ask questions, and make nominations for the steering committee.

The community based planning process involves a series of meetings. It begins with one or two large general community meetings in which the process is explained, attendees are asked to confirm or redefine the boundaries of the planning area, a discussion of issues and assets in the area, and a request for volunteers and nominations for a steering committee. The steering committee, which can range from 30 to 50 people, will be stakeholders who are representative of the community and who will commit the required fifty to sixty hours over a period of six to eighteen months. They will, with the help of professional planners, participate in visioning exercises, preference surveys, and neighborhood design in small groups. The steering committee will make final recommendations that everyone can agree on. Those recommendations will be submitted to the Board of County Commissioners for approval, and once approved, will result in regulatory changes that will support implementation of the community based plan.

We hope you will join us on XX, and bring other people from the neighborhood. If you have

any questions, please call me at 276-2541.

Sincerely,

Shelley Blood
Neighborhood Relations Officer

Filename:Modelplan.doc