

Appendix A: Public Comments and Results of Citizens Steering Committee Workshop

Comments made during the various public sessions are as follows:

- Bright Water subdivision is a local conservation development.
- Dave Rosselle's group at Bright Water could protect their lake with a conservation easement.
- Coordinate with other efforts such as: Bike plan, need for sidewalks, County wide comprehensive transportation plan, school system and their plans (they are planning 18 new schools in the next 5 years), Clean Water Act, Boy Scouts and Adopt a Stream.
- Sidewalks, sidewalks, sidewalks!
- Ivy Creek at Mall of Georgia – integration of greenspace and bikeways or any other plans that have been done. Ivy/Mill Creek is in progress.
- Need more smaller parks within walking distance– passive and green
- Consider equestrian trails and activities.
- Downtown Atlanta to Stone Mountain Path – can we link to it with Yellow River Park?
- Connection between facilities for bikes, horses and walking should be provided to:

Schools	Parks	Public Facilities
Libraries	Shopping	
Neighborhoods	Sidewalks	
Churches	Bike Lanes	
- Preserve greenspace in new developments, Not all greenspace has to be public land.
- Conservation Easements on private property = greenspace. Promote conservation easements.
- Growth can be beneficial but we have to stay on top of it – find the open space opportunities.
- Greenway = Spoke, Greenspace = Hub
- How does greenspace affect the value of the property? This needs to be an identifiable amount.
- Incentive programs for open space are needed.
- Project team should meet with developers regarding open space.
- Bold Spring/Luke Edwards remain greenspace.
- Change zoning to coincide with greenspace preservation.
- People in Gwinnett are lacking contact with streams. There are a lot of headwaters in Gwinnett County.
- Positive perspectives of a water quality based open space and greenway plan are enhanced wildlife and water quality, and reduced flooding, runoff and erosion.
- Additional requirements on buffers, definitive stream buffers –enforcement!
- Alcovy aquifer should be explored for water supply for Lawrenceville.
- Storm water alternatives and education of developers on better development techniques are needed.
- Ronald Reagan Parkway has ample ROW for re-forestation.
- Ronald Reagan Parkway is a good example of well-buffered road.
- Jones Bridge/Pinckneyville Arts Center sites need improvements.
- Volunteers who fish along the river are willing to help build river access.

- The question was raised, who do I call when I see a good piece of property? Chuck Flink made the suggestion of a 'Greenspace Director' for the County.
- Should look into the 'Rock Houses' , Dave Rosselle suggested. Also see www.centerville.org
- Establish criteria for acquisition tools for land to be acquired as well as land to be excluded.
- Framework for an overall system needs to be in place in order for acquisitions to make sense.
- 124&264 Corner Property for sale. Could be a park in Centerville. Within ½ mile of new library/Community Center, Shiloh Elementary, Middle and High Schools.
- Initiate option agreements, owners hold property until County has enough money to purchase. Local property tax breaks.
- Hurdles of conservation subdivision include the current mindset of a 1-acre home site market. Bootstrap incentives are needed.
- Condos and Townhouses are a foreign concept in Gwinnett County. Incentives are needed in order to tie communities together. There is a market for creative plans. Incentives to homeowners might include walking trails, greenspace, tax incentives, low cost for public services, and homestead exemption.
- Buy land where people live, not on the other side of the County.
- Check with the Chamber of Commerce regarding new business activity in the County.
- Improving infrastructure promotes growth.
- Incentives for businesses to keep some green and scenic qualities are needed.
- There are very few existing impact fees. Impact fees can be used to pay the interest on bonds.
- SPLOST funds to existing areas – restoration initiative, Impact fees!
- Need multiple funding sources, fund preservation incentives, use SPLOST to buy TDR's.
- There is a need for concurrent amendments to ordinances.
- New TDR legislation is in the works.
- Regulations need to be enforced.
- Lake Lanier Homeowners Association needs to be contacted regarding open space.
- New residents should pay their fair share.
- Need to change Georgia law that allows local governments to take/condemn land that has been protected in perpetuity.
- This plan should affect development standards; clear cutting, etc...Put higher value on trees.
- Site preparation (clear/grub) should not be allowed to begin until construction is scheduled to begin.
- Gwinnett County needs a citizens review board
- There is a distrust among citizens of County government.
- Gwinnett County needs smart growth.
- Distributing flyers in malls, stores, and movie theaters would help publicity of this project.
- Investigate the Path Foundation.
- Property protection
- Good school education site for outdoor lab.
- Need a population density to park land balance as well as projected populations and growth. People served per acre?
- Increase the density in the areas already urban.
- Abandoned and operational railroad corridors.
- Complete mapping of floodplains.
- Look at Hwy. 78 corridor from DeKalb County line to Snellville.

- Consider utility easements as corridors
- Consider tunnels/overpasses for safe road crossings
- Park Place area has huge parking lots and lake businesses that cannot go east.
- Purchase land along Yellow River.
- Land is less expensive in Snellville (zip code 39003)
- Need to redevelop areas along Hwy 78 rather than continuing to consume undeveloped property.
- Need redevelopment incentive.
- Anniston Road needs a buffer to prevent destroying homes and creating another Hwy. 78.
- 53 to 56 acres near Norcross
- How can we access land?
- Need improved access point for fisherman to access Chattahoochee River at Old Pinckneyville Arts Center.
- North Georgia Trout Online (NGTO) is a group willing to volunteer to work along river and building access facilities.
- Need access for boats (non-motorized)
- East Jones Bridge is overused by river users causing erosion and other problems.
- Need to purchase greenspace in highly developed areas now target largest tracts.
- Historic and cultural resources need to be mapped and included in the plan.
- Watson Farm is the second home in Centerville. It is a historic site that is for sale and should be protected by the County.
- Preservation and restoration with and without access.
- Ecological concerns/ corridors, restoration to native plant material, get rid of invasive, non-native plant material.
- Preservation incentives.
- Permanent Protection. Protect what has already been acquired.
- Little Mulberry Creek needs to be included in the study.
- Visible component to landscape ordinances should be implemented.
- Scales Road between churches – "old house" 10-20 acres? Consider purchasing.
- Poole Mountain would be good property, has cultural resource site or historic farm sites.
- Retain timber and wooded areas and farms to protect views.
- Mass tree removal is a problem. Tied to storm water drainage requirements.

Citizens' Steering Committee Workshop Results

To supplement the public input, an encumbered Citizen's Steering Committee was appointed by the County Commission. The Steering Committee has met on a regular basis throughout the planning process to provide feedback to the design team. A full day workshop was held with the Steering Committee to provide specific input on questions generated by the public meetings. The Steering Committee prioritized their responses on each group of issues.

Prior to the Citizen's Steering Committee Workshop held in May, 2001 the planning team summarized the results of public and departmental input. The team then used these suggestions and comments to create a questionnaire designed to clarify issues

related to the open space program. Questionnaires were filled out by each member of the Citizen's Steering Committee before the May 16th workshop. The questions, followed by the results, are presented below.

Explanation of charted results: Nine respondents were asked to assign a numerical value to each question in a set, with "1" signifying the most important. Each question's numeric position was then added to obtain the tally. Therefore, a lower tally signifies greater importance. Example: If nine respondents ranked a question as number 1 in importance, it would have a tally of 9. If the nine respondents ranked a question as number 11 in importance, it would have a tally of 99 and would be lower on the list of results. An asterisk (*) and bold text are used to identify the top three choices in each set.

1. The following significant suggestions and issues have been identified in public meetings, workshops, and interviews. Please rank, in order of their importance to the success of the Gwinnett County Open Space program:

1. Educate the public on the benefits of open space.
2. **Develop incentives for preservation of open space.**
3. Hire a Gwinnett County Open Space Coordinator.
4. **Change zoning regulations to facilitate open space preservation.**
5. Protection of river and stream corridors.
6. Protection of historic and cultural resources.
7. Restoration of stream corridors already impacted by development.
8. Limit clearing of property prior to final plan approval and issuance of a building permit.
9. **Link open space to neighborhoods, schools, and public facilities.**
10. Improve interagency planning within the County to maximize open space benefits.
11. Improve enforcement of current development requirements.
12. Provide incentives for current land owners to retain land until the County can acquire the property.
13. Establish criteria for open space acquisitions.
14. Ronald Reagan Parkway is a roadway design model that should be copied.
15. Educate the development community that open space enhances property values.
16. Organize a Citizens' Advisory Group to advise on property selections.
17. Mixed Use developments (including retail, office and residential) should be promoted as a development alternative to increase open space.
18. Providing adequate security.

No.	Tally										Priority
1.	15	1	12	3	1	9	7	11	14	73	9
2.*	4	1	10	1	1	3	6	6	2	34	1
3.	16	6	17	5	2	7	3	5	13	74	10
4.*	5	3	3	6	1	4	4	4	5	35	2
5.	11	3	8	8	1	1	8	1	11	52	4
6.	12	3	15	9	3	2	12	2	12	70	8
7.	10	4	7	10	1	6	10	12	4	64	7
8.	6	2	5	17	3	12	9	16	6	76	11
9.*	1	3	14	4	3	5	2	3	1	36	3
10.	9	2	4	14	2	10	1	13	3	58	6
11	8	3	6	18	2	12	5	18	15	87	14
12.	3	3	9	16	1	12	16	10	9	79	12
13.	2	5	1	7	2	8	11	8	10	54	5
14.	7	1	16	13		12	15	15	7	86	13
15.	14	7	11	2	2	12	14	9	16	87	14
16.	17	4	2	15	1	12	13	17	17	98	16
17.	13		18	11	2	12	17	7	8	88	15
18	18	8	13	12		11	18	14	18	112	17

Question 1 = "Clusters" (Several "Clusters" = No. 1)

Additional Committee comments:

- Create the incentives
Create awareness (a.k.a. education)
Incentives & Awareness
Cause & Effect
- 1-Acre lot mindset = open space?
- Consumer benefits & taxes = ?
(Easement = market via reduced homeowner association fees?)
- Implementation strategy = "Holistic" view of open space
Coordinator
+Funding
- #4 & #17 = cluster
- Mandate open space between land uses (E.G. mixed-use)
- Sewer – Significant issue – drives
Large lots in east Gwinnett
Infrastructure = solution

2. Rank the following land acquisition methods based on their potential for acceptance and success in Gwinnett County:

1. **Fee-Simple purchase by the County.**
2. Fee-Simple purchase by cities within the County.
3. **Incentive policies tied to zoning and development regulations.**
4. **Acquisition by, or donation to a land trust or other non-profit groups.**
5. Land donations to the County by for-profit businesses.
6. Land donations to the County by private land owners.
7. Purchase of Development Rights (PDR).
8. Voluntary Conservation Easements.

No.	Tally									Priority	
1.*	2	1	2	1	1	4	3	1	1	16	1
2.	4	4	2	3	1	8	3	1	5	31	4
3.*	1	2	1	2	1	3	1	5	1	17	2
4.*	3	6	4	4	1	2	2	2	1	25	3
5.	5	8	7	6	1	7	7	3	7	51	8
6.	6	7	6	5	1	6	4	3	8	46	7
7.	7	5	3	4	2	5	5	2	6	39	6
8.	8	3	5	4	1	1	6	3	4	35	5

Additional Committee comments:

- Fee simple (1, 2 & 4) Easiest to understand

3. Rank the following funding sources for acquisition of significant open spaces based on their potential for acceptance and success in Gwinnett County:

1. **Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST)—Gwinnett County.**
2. Special property taxes levied by cities within the County.
3. **County General Fund.**
4. City General Funds.
5. Dedication of a County millage for acquisition of open space.
6. Private funds and donations.
7. Public/Private partnerships.
8. TEA-21 and other grants.
9. **Georgia Greenspace Program funds.**
10. Stormwater Utility.
11. Impact Fees.

No.	Tally											Priority	
1.*	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	11	1
2.	6	2	6	10	11	5	9	9	7	6	7	78	9
3.*	2	5	3	3	5	2	2	2	3	3	2	32	2
4.	7	6	6	9	11	2	7	11	6	4	2	71	8
5.	8	2	1	7	1	5	11	10	2	2	4	53	4
6.	9	6	3	4	2	1	8	7	8	5	3	56	6
7.	3	7	2	5	2	2	4	8	10	7	5	55	5
8.	10	4	4	6	4	5	5	4	5	5	6	58	7
9.*	4	3	4	2	1	1	6	3	4	5	1	34	3
10.	11	8	6	8	5	5	3	6	9	8	9	78	9
11	5	9	5	11	1	5	10	5	11	9	8	79	10

Additional Committee comments:

+ Bonds

CID (community improvement districts)

? Impact Fees = Insignificant \$

+ Difficulty of implementation

- Private \$ + donations are happening now

4. The recreational activities listed below are permitted on Greenspace Program properties by Georgia statute. Please rank this list in order of importance:

1. Boating
2. Hiking
3. Camping
4. Fishing
5. Hunting
- 6. Running**
7. Biking
8. Birding
9. Environmental study
- 10. Picnicking**
- 11. Open play**

No.	Tally										Priority	
1.	10	7	2	6	10	9	10	8	10	6	78	10
2.	7	4	1	7	5	2	7	9	1	4	47	5
3.	6	6	2	9	6	10	9	10	9	7	74	9
4.	5	5	2	5	3	7	8	4	8	3	50	6
5.	11	11	13	11	11	11	11	11	11	9	110	11
6.*	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	15	1
7.	2	4	3	2	9	6	6	2	7	2	43	4
8.	8	2	4	8	1	8	5	6	2	8	52	7
9.	9	3	5	10	2	5	2	7	5	10	58	8
10.*	4	1	2	4	4	3	4	5	4	5	36	3
11.*	3	1	2	3	1	4	3	3	6	4	30	2

Additional Committee comments:

- Non-motorized boating. If that is understood; boating scores higher!

5. Please create a list of acceptable amenities (parking, trails, etc.) that are appropriate for development on Greenspace Program properties:

1. Grassed open area with sloped mounds (meadow)
2. Picnic tables
3. Trails (pervious/nature)
4. Pavilion
5. Restrooms
6. Improved, paved paths
7. Wooden boardwalk
8. Outdoor classroom
9. Learning stations
10. Trash cans
11. Nature-based attractions: zoo, museums, etc.
12. Signage (all kinds: interpretive, etc.)
13. Historic structures, interpretation, etc.
14. Porous parking (limited)
15. Benches/rest areas
16. Bike racks
17. Stream access points
18. Water fountains
19. Grills, etc. for picnicking
20. Vehicle access barriers
21. Camp sites
22. Playgrounds
23. Stargazing – compass/pad
24. Dog walk
25. Pier, dock, canoe launch

26. Bandstand, amphitheater
27. Vistas, overlooks
28. Pedestrian bridges over water features
29. Concession facilities?
30. Emergency call boxes

6. Is it appropriate to spend public funds on open space that will not have public access?

Yes 6.5 votes No 3.5* votes

*No in Gwinnett, but public access can be extremely limited; e.g., McDaniel Farm!

Yes:

- Preserve pristine, natural land
- Protect water quality
- Protect wildlife habitat
- Public access not appropriate if too close to some residential areas.
- May not be feasible to provide access to new properties (may want to limit access need public education to sell the concept).
- Need to pursue a public purpose

No:

- If we buy it, we should at least provide access
- People who can't afford private parks need public lands
- We can always limit or manage access.

7. Please identify the kinds of properties that should not have public access:

1. Habitat for threatened or very sensitive species
2. Fragile ecosystems
3. Water resource protection areas
4. Dangerous areas
5. Archaeological and historic sites
6. Areas where restoration or habitat repair is needed
7. Stream corridors adjacent to existing subdivisions
8. Farmland
9. Vistas
10. Wetland banks

8. Please develop a list of the pros and cons for a public entity or a private organization to manage or protect open space within the County:

Manage - Public

Pro:

- Funding options
- Public representation
- Citizen pressure and media attention for accountability

Con:

- Cumbersome process
- Political environment

Manage - Private

Pro:

- Flexibility

Con:

- Limited funding
- No public influence
- No guarantees regarding use or protection

Protect - Public

Pro:

- Greater resources
- Potential for com. involvement
- Community preference for public protection in some circumstances (esp. if public access)
- Govt. viewed as permanent
- Accountability

Con:

- Potential exposure to liability
- Concern about public access
- Lack of trust
re: public officials
- GA law doesn't bind govt. to commitments

Protect - Private

Pro:

- Ability to involve community
- Liability protection by statute
- Community preference to work in private entity
- Flexibility for homeowner's association in use of open space
- Providing a complement to County in program for holding easements on CSOS
- Appropriate entity for holding dev. rights when there are public access concerns
- Permanent protection
- Voluntary member base
- Held to national standards
- Conservation mission

Con:

- Limited resources
- Community apprehension over limited influence
- Concerns about survivability
- Limited representation
- Lack of public understanding

Additional Committee comments:

- Level of management required: impact on choice
- Types of activity and amenities anticipated = impact
- Open space ordinances will regulate activities – “Post it” and it is against the law
- Within Homeowner's Association – Letter to resident to cease and desist or a lien on their home is allowed by GA law
- Conservation Subdivision Ordinance = “General” and easement language = “specific”