

DRAFT

**City of Lithonia, Georgia
2010 - 2026 Comprehensive Plan**

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

Prepared by the City of Lithonia Redevelopment Committee

March 2010

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I. Background on Public Participation

In 2003, the City of Lithonia was awarded a Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) grant from the Atlanta Regional Commission that included the entire city limits as the study area. The LCI study grant provided the opportunity to engage the community in the development of a community-wide vision for the revitalization of the city. Several public participation methods were utilized during the Lithonia LCI planning process to provide a forum for all community stakeholders to enunciate their vision of the future for the City of Lithonia and the downtown area. The public participation methods included the following activities:

- *Individual Stakeholder Interviews*
- *Project Management Team Meetings*
- *Core Team Meetings*
- *Community Workshops*
- *Small Group Meetings*

The stakeholder interviews were conducted in the initial phase of the planning process with City of Lithonia leadership, staff, residents, property owners, institutional representatives, investors and other community stakeholders. These interviews helped the planning team formulate an accurate picture of the existing conditions, issues and forces affecting the area.

The project management team met with the planning team regularly to review the planning process and to keep the process on schedule. The project management team was comprised of the City of Lithonia City Council, several advisory consultants and community stakeholders.

The core team was comprised of approximately 30 community stakeholders including representatives from City of Lithonia City Council, DeKalb County Planning Department, DeKalb County Office of Economic Development, Georgia State University, The Conservation Fund, the Lithonia Housing Authority, Lithonia residents and business owners, and investors.

There were four community workshops for the public to allow for additional input into the planning process and the development of the revitalization plan for the City of Lithonia. Each of the community workshops were advertised and open to the general public. The first community workshop was a public kick-off for the planning process using a vision exercise named the “Lithonia Compass.” Approximately 90 attendees participated in the Lithonia Compass. The Compass included a visual preference survey, allowing participants to rate commercial, mixed-use, residential, transportation and circulation, parks and open space and signage and imagery images according to their appropriateness for the future of the City of Lithonia.

Following the visual preference survey, participants were asked to respond to a series of 30 “short-answer” questions. These questions discussed important community issues including land use, transportation, sense of place and implementation.

The results of the Lithonia Compass, included in Appendix A, will be revisited during this comprehensive planning process to ascertain if major changes are required due to changed conditions or circumstances.

II. Public Participation Goals

The City of Lithonia has emphasized the importance of public input and participation in the comprehensive planning process to assist in the development of practical guidelines for future decision-making to create a vibrant and sustainable community. The effort is being led by the Lithonia Redevelopment Committee consisting of council members, citizens, and other stakeholders.

The development of the Comprehensive Plan for 2010-2026 is building upon the community participation from the 1995 Comprehensive Plan and the 2003 Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Study. The city and its citizens recognize that many challenges and circumstances have prevented the implementation of the goals and objectives of previous planning efforts.

In order to build upon the commitment to expand community participation in the local decision-making process and engage citizens in the local planning process, the City of Lithonia will actively pursue the following goals for the Community Participation Program for the development of the Community Agenda.

- **Goal 1:** To raise the level of awareness and understanding of the planning, development, and decision-making processes.
- **Goal 2:** To provide meaningful opportunities for involvement in the planning and decision-making processes of the City.
- **Goal 3:** To identify, involve, and maintain close working relationships with key stakeholders and decision-makers.
- **Goal 4:** To involve the traditionally underserved communities of youth, low-income, and the elderly in planning and other decision-making processes.
- **Goal 5:** To identify the specific issues and opportunities to be addressed by the comprehensive planning process.
- **Goal 6:** To educate the elected officials, citizens, and key stakeholders about methods that can be utilized to meet the goals and objectives of the community.
- **Goal 7:** To provide the necessary tools and support to implement the community's vision of a viable and sustainable community.

III. Stakeholders

A stakeholder is considered to be someone who has an interest in an organization or community, or in a process or in the outcome of a process. Stakeholders are an essential part of the community planning process. The Community Participation Program will include tools to identify and include representatives who have a stake in the development of the City of Lithonia. Key stakeholders generally include the residents, business and industry leaders, civic leaders, developers, media, professionals, city staff, elected officials, and the general public.

Participation by key stakeholders helps to foster community understanding and support for the comprehensive planning process and the subsequent implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. As a result, it is important to invite the key stakeholders to participate in the planning process from the earliest stages. Involvement from the beginning in the decision-making process helps to develop trust and support for the plans that are developed. This can lead to pride and ownership of the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

The City has established the Lithonia Redevelopment Committee (LRC) that includes current and former elected officials, citizens, and volunteers. The Redevelopment Committee will review the city's existing policies and plans as part of the Community Assessment. Additionally, the Redevelopment Committee will be expanded to include other key stakeholders. The LRC will organize the broader community's participation in the planning process to develop the Community Agenda.

IV. List of Stakeholders

The following list was prepared based on discussions by the Lithonia Redevelopment Committee and input from the public hearing. This list is considered to be representative rather than all-inclusive.

City of Lithonia Mayor and Council

Tonya Peterson, Mayor
Doreen Carter, Mayor Pro Tem
Kathleen de Cocq, Council Member
William Dodd, Council Member
Al T. Franklin, Council Member
Deborah A. Jackson, Council Member

Lithonia Redevelopment Committee (in formation)

Deborah A. Jackson, Chairperson
Marcus Lloyd
Johnny Daugherty

Yataye Keaton
Juvernia Smith
Hassan Abdullah
Cecilia Jackson
Flora Napper
Reba Smith
Allene S. Harper
Olitha Reid
Pat Miller
Larry Miller
John Robins
Eleanor Robins
Pat Jackson
Terry Anderson
Darold Honore
Tirar Harper

Other City of Lithonia Organizations and Staff

Lithonia City Clerk
Lithonia Police Department
Lithonia Maintenance Department

Local Schools

Stoneview Elementary School
Lithonia Middle School
Lithonia High School
Arabia Mountain High School
KIP Learning Center

Community Organizations

Hearts in Motion
Smooth Ashlar Lodge
Lodges 84 and 502
Herrings of Jericho
South DeKalb Center for Healthy Living
Lithonia Civic League

Local Churches

Christian Fellowship Community
Exousia Ministries
Family Fellowship International Christian Church
First St. Paul AME Church
First Lithonia Baptist Church
Good News Community CME Church
Grace Community Christian Church
Holy Ground Full Gospel Ministries
Lithonia Central Baptist Church
Lithonia First United Methodist Church
Living World Faith Center International
New Beginning International Ministries
Tabernacle of Refuge Ministries
Union Missionary Baptist Church
Wilkes Grove Baptist Church

Business Associations

Lithonia Business Association
Greater Lithonia Chamber of Commerce
DeKalb Chamber of Commerce

DeKalb County Elected Officials and Organizations

DeKalb County CEO
DeKalb County Board of Commissioners
DeKalb County School Board Members
DeKalb County School Superintendant

Lithonia-Davidson Library
Planning and Development
Office of Economic Development
Workforce Development
Parks and Recreation
Health
Public Safety
Visitors' and Convention Bureau

Office of Congressional Representative

Hon. Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr. – District 4
Congressional District Office Staff

State of Georgia Elected Officials and Organizations

State Representatives and Senators

Department of Community Affairs
Department of Natural Resources
Department of Transportation
Department of Economic Development
Environmental Protection Division

Regional Organizations

Atlanta Regional Commission
Georgia Regional Transportation Authority
Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA)
Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District

Public Utilities

Public Service Commission
Georgia Power
Comcast
AT&T
Direct TV

Other Entities and Stakeholders

Lithonia Housing Authority
PATH Foundation
The Conservation Fund
Georgia Conservancy
CSX Railroad
NeighborWorks® America

Local Developers

Mercy Housing
Synchronicity
Cadillac Fairview Properties

Local Businesses and Categories

Wayfield Foods Supermarket
Citizens Trust Bank
Family Dollar
Yellow Brick House
The Academy
The Mall at Stonecrest
Lithonia Industrial Park

Arts and craft
Daycare centers
Furniture
Consumer loans
Barber shops
Beauty salons
Restaurants
Auto repair shops
Home decorating
Insurance
Accountant
Lawyer
Florist
Seamstress
Printer
Chiropractor

Community Papers

Granite City News
CrossRoadsNews
On Common Ground

Other Stakeholders

Lithonia property owners
City residents
Greater Lithonia residents

V. Public Engagement Planning Techniques

The Mayor and City Council have entrusted the Lithonia Redevelopment Committee (LRC) to conduct the initial meetings on the Comprehensive Plan (Plan) and to prepare the Community Assessment and Community Participation Program. All LRC meetings are open to the public and notices of meetings are posted at City Hall and advertised in community newspapers. Members of the community have an opportunity to participate in the meeting and provide input. Drafts of the plan have been shared with citizens and the elected officials to obtain comments during a general information session in December 2009 and a public hearing in January 2010 prior to transmittal of the first two sections of the plan to the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA).

Upon completion of the Community Agenda phase of the planning process, the transmittal of the recommended Community Agenda also will require a public hearing. Throughout the comprehensive planning process, information regarding the Plan will be available at City Hall. The City of Lithonia City Council holds a regular meeting on the first Monday of each month in addition to a work session later in the month. In general, issues may be presented to the elected officials and City staff at the Council meetings or at any time via mail, telephone or email. In addition to regular meetings of the LRC and the City Council, special meetings, workshops, interviews, focus groups, and open houses will be held during the planning process.

However, it is important to acknowledge that the lack of any significant follow through on other planning efforts will require more concerted efforts to engage the community and develop a sense of confidence that something different will happen this time. The following are types of public involvement opportunities that can be offered as part of the Lithonia Community Participation Program to have a variety of ways for the community to participate in the planning process; and to stay informed:

Lithonia Redevelopment Committee (LRC) – The LRC is composed of current and former elected officials, longtime residents, key stakeholders and volunteers. The LRC will meet during the preparation of the Community Assessment and the Community Participation Program to provide input and guidance to the planning process. The LRC will develop project goals and objectives, the project schedule, and opportunities for community participation during the project. The Committee will use a variety of techniques to engage the community to guide the development of the Plan. Presentations will be made to this group to identify the issues and opportunities that are available to redevelop and revitalize the community. Brainstorming sessions will be used to help finalize the list of issues and opportunities the City will address during the planning process. A public hearing will be held to assist the community to understand and define the City's future character areas and to facilitate discussions outlining the goals and objectives of the comprehensive plan. The LRC may divide into work groups to review specific elements of the plan and suggest changes regarding alternatives and other recommendations.

Surveys – An initial survey will be prepared by the LRC to ask a series of questions regarding community attitudes, opinions and perceptions about current conditions and anticipated trends in the City. Several community residents will receive training to conduct the survey to enhance the results and to give the community a stake in the process. The LRC will tally the results and present them at the Community Agenda visioning session. As needed, additional surveys may be included as part of the Community Agenda process during the public meetings to elicit comments from the general public or targeted community audiences, such as business owners, and other stakeholders, regarding the challenges facing the City of Lithonia and the desired future development activities to be considered during the planning process.

Kick-off Public Information Meeting – A well-publicized “Open House” will be held to announce the kickoff of the Community Agenda phase of the planning process. Notices will be sent to the media, citizens, property owners, and key stakeholders about the upcoming Public Workshops and to provide information on what the Comprehensive Plan requires. The “Open House” meeting will provide added depth to the issues and opportunities presented in the Community Assessment. The meeting will include a presentation covering the purpose and limitations of comprehensive planning, an overview of the process to complete the City of Lithonia’s Comprehensive Plan, and a summary of the information contained in the Community Assessment. A summary of the proposed Community Participation Program also will be presented.

Stakeholder Interviews – Representative stakeholders will be interviewed to identify issues and opportunities regarding the community’s need to create a vibrant and sustainable future. The interviews will include business and civic leaders, local officials, property owners, service providers, state and county representatives, seniors, youth, and others that represent key institutions and organizations. These representatives are expected to be drawn from the above list of stakeholders.

Public Workshops – The comprehensive planning process is a two-phase process which includes the initial Community Assessment and Community Participation Program followed by a process to create the Community Agenda. The Community Agenda represents the “vision” portion of the Comprehensive Plan. At least two town hall meetings/workshops will be conducted during the Community Agenda planning process. The first will be a “Visioning” workshop, where attendees will be divided into small work groups and led through facilitated discussions regarding their vision for the future of the community that is economically viable and inclusive of all segments of the population. Additional smaller meetings may be held to expand the opportunities for participating in the vision discussions.

A. A Visioning Workshop will provide a narrative description for each Character Area identified in the Community Assessment focusing on the following points:

1. Strengths and weaknesses regarding the issues and opportunities affecting economic development and the quality of life in the city as a whole and in each character area.

2. The role of each character area in the city as a whole.
3. The opportunities and threats that confront the quality of life in the city over the next 20 years.
4. The quality of life that the stakeholders and participants in the workshop envision for the planning area 20 years from now.
5. The challenges that will need to be addressed in order to guide the City and each character area from what they are today to what participants want them to be in 20 years.
6. Benchmarks, or measurable indicators, of quality of life will be used to indicate success in the future.

B. A Strategic Planning Workshop will be scheduled after the Visioning Workshop. The Strategic Planning Workshop will identify objectives, policies, and strategies to support the city's vision statement. This effort will establish the framework to address the specific issues and opportunities within each character area. Additionally, the framework will assist the development of implementation strategies, work programs and action plans.

Participants will assist in the creation of a Strategic Plan to address the following:

1. The preferred options for each character area and the desired future scenario.
2. The prioritization of goals, objectives, and policies to achieve the desired vision.
3. The timing of development based on the forecasted changes in population, household, employment, education, health, and land use changes.

An independent facilitator may be engaged to help manage the public engagement efforts during the town hall meetings/workshops. The workshops will address specific issues in the key character areas, and discuss strategies, priorities, financial and human resources, and other scenarios to achieve the implementation of the planning process outcomes. The LRC will work with the City Council to ensure that the desired policies are effectively communicated.

Review Meeting – When a draft Community Agenda document and a Short-Term Work Plan (STWP) for the Comprehensive Plan have been completed, there will be a Review Meeting to present the documents in a user-friendly format. The Short-Term Work Plan will include the city's Capital Improvements Program and the city's strategic development programs for a five-year period. An extended long-range work plan will be identified for programs that require more than a five-year time frame.

As resources permit, they may be a series of presentation panels on display for the public to review at their leisure. The panels will highlight major parts of the Community Agenda and Short-Term Work Plan. Members of the Lithonia Redevelopment Committee will be on hand to answer questions and discuss the plan with participants. Written surveys and easel pads are tools that can be used to capture input.

The public will be able to ask specific questions about the Community Agenda and Short-Term Work Program. Audio and/or video tape and written resources may be used by facilitators to capture input.

Public Hearings – The Georgia Planning Act requires two public hearings be held during the planning process. The first hearing will be conducted prior to the transmittal of the Community Assessment and Participation Program to the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) for review. The purpose of this hearing will be to brief the community on the potential issues and opportunities identified through the Community Assessment and to obtain input on the proposed Community Participation Program. The second of two public hearings required by Georgia DCA procedures will be held after the Review Meeting for the Community Agenda. This hearing will inform the community about the contents of the Community Agenda and provide the opportunity for residents and other participants to make final suggestions for additions or revisions to the document. Additional public hearings may be held at the discretion of the City.

Public meetings, including workshops and review meetings, will be held in locations in Lithonia conducive to encourage meaningful community input, such as local cultural facilities and public schools. The public meetings for the Community Agenda should be advertised by signs at strategic locations along appropriate road corridors including Main Street, Max Cleland Boulevard, Stone Mountain Street and Bruce Street. Meetings will be advertised in the Granite City News and press releases will be sent to other newspapers serving the Lithonia area.

Public Information Resources - The Granite City News is widely read by the community for information about the city. Other newspapers, such as CrossRoadsNews and On Common Ground, provide editorial and feature coverage of city activities. School newsletters, PTA circulars, and flyers may provide another potential source of communication about the planning process. Information will be maintained at City Hall and published in community papers to educate the public about the scope, goals, and schedule of the planning process so that they can see how they can get involved.

Outreach - The Lithonia Redevelopment Committee will develop a network of outlets for distribution of meeting notices, flyers and posters. During the Community Agenda planning phase, articles will be prepared and released to the local media on a bi-weekly basis to encourage and assist in outreach efforts for public participation.

VI. Community Assessment and Participation Program Public Hearings and Plan Transmittal

Prior to the public hearing, an informational meeting was held on December 10, 2009 for local residents and interested parties to obtain information about the planning process for the Community Assessment, the Community Participation Program, and the Community Agenda. A representative from the Atlanta Regional Commission also presented information about the planning process requirements. The LRC sponsored a Public Hearing on January 28, 2010 to provide a specific opportunity for the public to discuss the Community Assessment and the Community Participation Program prior to submittal of the draft to the Mayor and City Council for review and transmittal to the Atlanta Regional Commission for formal review.

The draft Community Assessment and Community Participation Program documents are expected to be approved by the City Council at the March 1, 2010 meeting and forwarded to the Atlanta Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs shortly thereafter. If needed, the documents can be modified following the review to better reflect additional information or details that should be incorporated.

VII. Community Agenda Public Hearing and Plan Transmittal

The Lithonia Redevelopment Committee will present the Community Agenda component of the Comprehensive Plan at a public hearing. The public will have an opportunity to comment on the plan before the plan is transmitted to the Atlanta Regional Commission for review. The tentative date for the presentation of the Community Agenda at a public hearing will be June 7, 2010.

VIII. Schedule and Milestones

The following is an overview of the schedule to complete the City of Lithonia's Comprehensive Plan. Key milestones and meeting discussion topics are noted. The schedule on the following page illustrates the flow of the Comprehensive Plan process. All dates are tentative and may be subject to changes caused by elements outside the control of the planning team. Major milestones in this schedule include the following:

Preparation of the Community Assessment and Community Participation Program

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| - Comprehensive Plan Informational Meeting | December 10, 2009 |
| - Community Assessment and Participation Program Public Hearing | January 28, 2010 |
| - Mayor and Council Approval to Transmit Draft to ARC and DCA | March 1, 2010 |

Review of the Community Assessment and Community Participation Program by Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) and Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA)

- Regional and State Planning Review March 2010

Publicizing the Community Assessment and Community Participation Program

- Availability of Community Assessment and Participation Program publicized April 2010

Preparation of the Community Agenda*

- Preparation of Community Survey March 1-31, 2010
 - Training of Survey Takers
 - Compilation of Survey Results
- Kickoff Meeting to Review Survey Results April 12, 2010
- Visioning Workshop (additional small meetings as needed) April 26, 2010
- Public Strategic Planning Workshop May 10, 2010
- Community Agenda Review Meeting May 27, 2010
- Public Hearing on Community Agenda June 7, 2010
- Adoption of the Community Agenda for Transmittal June 7, 2010

Review of the Community Agenda by ARC and Georgia DCA*

- Regional and State Planning Review June – July 2010

Formal Adoption of the Community Agenda by Mayor and City Council*

- Adoption of the Community Agenda and publicizing its availability July – August 2010

** Note: Dates for the preparation of the Community Agenda are tentative and depend on the review and response of the Atlanta Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.*

Work Plan Schedule

The schedule on the following page illustrates the flow of the project from initial data collection through adoption of the Comprehensive Plan by the Mayor and City Council.

CITY OF LITHONIA WORK PLAN 2009 - 2010

| Comprehensive Plan Schedule | Time (in months) | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Oct./Nov. 2009 | Dec. 2009 | Jan. 2010 | Feb. 2010 | Mar. 2010 | April 2010 | May 2010 | June 2010 | July 2010 | Aug. 2010 |
| Formation of Lithonia Redevelopment Committee (LRC)/ LRC Meetings | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | |
| Review of prior comprehensive plan, LCI study, ordinances, and other documents | X | X | X | | | | | | | |
| Informational Meeting on planning process | | X | | | | | | | | |
| Public Hearing on Community Assessment and Community Participation Program | | | X | | | | | | | |
| Completion of Community Assessment and Community Participation Program | | | X | X | | | | | | |
| Adoption of Transmittal Resolution and Submittal of Community Assessment and Participation Program | | | | | X | | | | | |
| 30-Day Review period for Community Assessment and Participation Program by ARC and DCA | | | | | X | | | | | |
| Preparation of Community Survey, Training, Tally of Survey Results | | | | | X | | | | | |
| Kickoff Open House on Community Agenda/Presentation of Survey Results | | | | | | X | | | | |
| Visioning Workshop | | | | | | X | | | | |
| Strategic Planning Workshop | | | | | | | X | | | |
| Processing of community input by LRC | | | | | | X | X | | | |
| Review Meeting on Community Agenda | | | | | | | X | | | |
| Completion of Community Agenda | | | | | | | X | | | |
| Public Hearing on Community Agenda | | | | | | | | X | | |
| Adoption of Transmittal Resolution and submittal of Community Agenda for Review by ARC and DCA | | | | | | | | X | | |

APPENDIX A

THE LITHONIA COMPASS A Survey for the Lithonia Master Plan

DEMOGRAPHICS

Number of Respondents

| | |
|--|----|
| 1. Briefly tell us about yourself. | |
| | |
| I live in the Greater Lithonia Area | 55 |
| I live in the City of Lithonia | 32 |
| I own property and/or a business in the City of Lithonia | 31 |
| I shop in the City of Lithonia | 30 |
| I work in the City of Lithonia | 24 |

| | |
|---|----|
| 2. Number of years you have lived and/or worked in Lithonia. | |
| | |
| Over 20 years | 23 |
| 5-10 years | 17 |
| 10-20 years | 16 |
| 0-2 years | 15 |
| 3-5 years | 13 |
| | |

| | |
|-----------------------|----|
| 3. Your Age: | |
| | |
| 36-50 years of age | 38 |
| 51-65 years of age | 31 |
| 21-25 years of age | 10 |
| Over 65 years of age | 8 |
| Under 21 years of age | 1 |

| | |
|------------------|----|
| 4. Gender | |
| | |
| Female | 59 |
| Male | 29 |

LAND USE

Scale of 1 to 5

| | |
|--|-----|
| 5. What types of new commercial buildings would be most appropriate within the City limits? | |
| | |
| Main Street Retail (storefronts) | 4.5 |
| Food and Beverage | 4.2 |
| Office | 3.9 |
| Mixed-Use Development (housing about retail) | 3.7 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Drive-Up Commercial (banks, pharmacy) | 3.7 |
| Highway Commercial (convenience) | 2.8 |
| Big Box Retail (Target, Best Buy, etc.) | 2.5 |

| 6. What types of specific commercial/retail establishments are most needed within the City? | |
|--|-----|
| Sit-down Restaurants | 4.7 |
| Coffee shop | 4.4 |
| Bookstore | 4.2 |
| Antique/Craft Stores | 4.1 |
| Deli/Sandwich Shop | 4.0 |
| Drug Store/Pharmacy | 4.0 |
| Grocery Store | 3.8 |
| Pub/Bar/Tavern | 3.5 |
| Hardware Store | 3.4 |
| Dry Cleaners/Laundry | 2.9 |
| Fast Food | 2.8 |

| 7. What types of new housing are appropriate in the City? | |
|--|-----|
| Single-Family Houses | 4.2 |
| Housing over Main Street Shops | 3.7 |
| Lofts | 3.6 |
| Condominiums | 3.0 |
| Townhomes | 3.0 |
| Cluster Homes | 2.6 |
| Duplexes | 2.3 |
| Apartments | 1.9 |
| Public Housing | 1.7 |

| 8. What types of institutions or services are most needed or need a higher profile within the City? | |
|--|-----|
| Recreation Center | 4.4 |
| Cultural Arts/Performance Center | 4.4 |
| Senior Center | 4.3 |
| Bank | 4.1 |
| Library | 3.9 |
| Schools | 3.6 |
| Post Office | 3.6 |
| Daycare | 3.2 |

| 9. Is a New Town Center/Square/Park needed in Downtown Lithonia? | |
|---|----|
| Yes | 77 |
| No | 6 |

| 10. If yes, where would a New Town Square most ideally be located? | |
|---|-----|
| At/near Lithonia Plaza | 4.6 |
| Near/adjacent to Lithonia Park and Middle School | 2.7 |
| On/near Covington Highway | 2.2 |

| 11. What other types of open spaces are needed in the City? | |
|--|-----|
| Walking/Biking Trails | 4.6 |
| Passive Green Space/Nature Area | 4.4 |
| Recreation Areas (ball fields, playgrounds) | 4.1 |
| Small Pocket Park/Plaza | 3.9 |
| Large Central Park/Plaza | 3.2 |

| 12. The Lithonia Plaza is in the center of Downtown, what should its future be? | |
|--|-----|
| Demolish structure, rebuild as retail and housing | 3.8 |
| Demolish a portion and rebuild | 3.3 |
| Demolish structure, rebuild as retail | 3.2 |
| Keep existing structure but fix it up | 2.6 |
| Demolish structure, rebuild as housing | 2.5 |
| Do nothing...I like it as it is | 1.2 |

TRANSPORTATION

| 13. Where are the most congested area(s) in the City of Lithonia? | |
|--|----|
| Max Cleland at Main Street | 19 |
| Main Street | 9 |
| I-20 at Evans Mill | 8 |
| Max Cleland at Stone Mountain | 6 |
| Post Office | 4 |
| Covington Hwy at Evans Mills | 4 |
| Max Cleland Blvd. | 4 |
| Not in City of Lithonia | 4 |
| Railroad when trains are stopped | 3 |
| Traffic light at Lithonia Methodist Church | 2 |
| Stone Mountain Street | 2 |
| Lithonia Plaza | 1 |
| Bank | 1 |

| 14. What would be the most appropriate means to reducing congestion within the City? | |
|---|-----|
| Enhance signal design and timing | 3.5 |
| Add lanes to existing roads | 3.1 |
| Congestion is not a problem or a priority | 2.8 |
| Build additional roads in the area | 2.7 |

| 15. Where is the most difficult place to cross the street as a pedestrian within the City? | |
|---|----|
| Main Street | 12 |
| Max Cleland Blvd. | 10 |
| Max Cleland at Wayfield Foods | 4 |
| Max Cleland at Stone Mountain Street | 3 |
| Downtown | 1 |
| Anywhere sidewalks don't exist | 1 |
| Library | 1 |
| Plaza Area | 1 |
| Railroad tracks at Main Street | 1 |

| 16. What measures are needed to improve the walking environment for pedestrians within the City? | |
|---|-----|
| More sidewalks in more places | 4.8 |
| Better lighting | 4.7 |
| Additional landscaping/streetscapes | 4.6 |
| Maintenance of existing sidewalks/landscaping | 4.5 |
| More crosswalks | 4.4 |
| Handicap ramps | 4.4 |
| Pedestrian Signals | 4.3 |
| Better access across the railroad | 4.3 |

| 17. What, if any, improvements to transit are needed in Lithonia? | |
|--|-----|
| Better access to MARTA rail (flex trolley, etc.) | 3.9 |
| More bus stops/routes are required | 3.0 |
| Bus routes need to be altered | 2.9 |

SENSE OF PLACE

| 18. What object or place evokes the strongest sense of place and identity in the city of Lithonia? | |
|---|----|
| Historic structures (older homes) | 13 |
| Main Street/ Downtown storefronts | 11 |
| Parks and natural areas | 8 |

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Churches | 5 |
| Lithonia Methodist Church | 4 |
| Murals | 2 |
| Amphitheater | 2 |
| Granite areas/ sites | 2 |
| Cemeteries | 2 |
| Women's Club building | 1 |
| Granite Structures | 1 |
| Wayfield Foods | 1 |
| Post Office | 1 |
| Library | 1 |
| Triangle Park on Max Cleland | 1 |
| Rail Station | 1 |
| Masonic Hall | 1 |

19. What activities could be added to the area to create a more vibrant, "live, work and play" atmosphere?

| | |
|---|-----|
| Family-Oriented Entertainment | 4.6 |
| More Programmed events/Festivals | 4.5 |
| More Restaurants | 4.5 |
| More Shops | 4.4 |
| Outdoor Gathering Space | 4.4 |
| Historic tours | 4.4 |
| Museum/Cultural center | 4.4 |
| Art Galleries/Dealers | 3.9 |
| Nightclub/Bars | 2.6 |
| Other: Upscale quality restaurants; Outdoor market; music hall; performing arts; historic center | |

20. What measures would be most effective in enhancing the character of Downtown Lithonia?

| | |
|---|-----|
| More Landscaping | 4.7 |
| Consistent architecture character | 4.6 |
| Decorative Lighting | 4.6 |
| More Sidewalks | 4.6 |
| Public Art | 3.8 |
| More buildings Downtown | 3.8 |
| Banners | 2.9 |
| Other: Consistent architectural character; rehab downtown buildings | |

21. Should the City of Lithonia try and attract new residents and grow in population?

| | |
|--|-----|
| Yes but...should grow slowly and steadily | 3.9 |
| Yes...heavy growth is vital to the city's health | 3.2 |
| No...it should stay about the same size | 2.4 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| 22. If you think there should be some population growth, in what income levels should new residents be? | |
| | |
| Medium Income | 4.2 |
| Medium High income | 4.1 |
| High income | 3.4 |
| Low income | 2.4 |
| Very low income | 1.6 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| 23. How do you feel about the character of new development and how it impacts the character of Lithonia? | |
| | |
| New development is desirable but only if it doesn't ruin the character | 4.3 |
| New development is absolutely critical | 3.2 |
| Don't want to see any new development | 2.1 |

IMPLEMENTATION

| | |
|--|----|
| 24. What is the biggest obstacle or barrier to implementing improvements in the City of Lithonia in the past? | |
| | |
| No money/ funds | 16 |
| Politics/ City Government/ Leadership | 10 |
| Disagreements | 4 |
| Residents | 4 |
| Refusing to change | 3 |
| Lack of leadership | 3 |
| No master plan | 3 |
| Plans were not carried out | 2 |
| Lack of vision/ lack of support | 2 |
| Population migration | 1 |
| No staff | 1 |
| Very low income area in DeKalb Co. | 1 |
| Not enough available employment | 1 |
| Power struggles | 1 |
| No market to anchor trade | 1 |
| Lack of input from residents | 1 |
| Public apathy | 1 |
| Lower tax base | 1 |
| City Council | 1 |
| History | 1 |
| Lack of knowledge | 1 |

| 25. What do you perceive to be the biggest obstacle or barrier to implementing improvements in the City of Lithonia in the future? | |
|---|----|
| | |
| Money (funds) | 21 |
| Politics/ The Mayor & City Council | 5 |
| Lack of a Master Plan | 3 |
| Lack of vision | 3 |
| Tax increase | 3 |
| Support from residents | 3 |
| Willingness to change | 2 |
| Attracting people | 2 |
| Public apathy | 2 |
| Nothing - people want change now | 2 |
| Small tax base | 2 |
| Economic development/ attracting new businesses | 2 |
| Lithonia Housing Authority | 1 |
| No staff | 1 |
| Racial barriers | 1 |
| Lack of leadership | 1 |

| 26. What are the most important implementation tools necessary to achieve a comprehensive vision for the area? | |
|---|-----|
| | |
| Public Improvements | 4.6 |
| Revising the zoning code | 4.2 |
| More city services | 3.9 |
| Incentive for developers | 3.9 |
| Strategies/policies to avoid gentrification | 3.6 |
| Increasing city's tax base through annexation | 3.4 |

| 27. What should be the highest priority in terms of improving the quality of life and drawing patrons to Downtown Lithonia? | |
|--|-----|
| | |
| Enhance the Area's Identity | 4.7 |
| Encourage Mixed-Use development | 4.3 |
| Create open spaces | 4.0 |
| Create More Housing/Residents Downtown | 3.9 |
| Transportation Improvements | 3.4 |

28. Based on the list provided below, which items should be the highest priorities for the city to pursue funding?

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| Building Façade Improvements | 4.8 |
| Sidewalks | 4.5 |
| Parks, Plaza and/or Open Space | 4.5 |
| Bicycle lanes and paths | 4.4 |
| Streetscapes | 4.4 |
| Greenway trails | 4.3 |
| New/better roads | 4.2 |
| Crosswalks | 4.1 |
| Way finding Signage | 3.8 |
| Traffic Signals | 3.6 |

29. What types of communication efforts are most effective in terms of keeping the public informed of key issues and opportunities affecting future growth and development in the area?

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| Public Meetings | 4.6 |
| Print Media (Newspaper, Newsletter) | 4.6 |
| Announcements in Local churches | 4.5 |
| Direct Mailing | 4.2 |
| Posters, Banners, Flyers | 4.2 |
| Web Page | 3.4 |
| Email | 3.3 |

30. New development in lower-income areas such as Lithonia can sometimes result in heavy increases in property value as well as property taxes (typically called "gentrification"). What is your opinion of "gentrification"?

| | |
|--|-----|
| It is important to strike a balance | 4.0 |
| It is very important to increase property values | 3.1 |
| It is important to limit gentrification | 2.4 |