

A
REACH OUT SANFORD
PROGRAM



CITY OF
SANFORD
FLORIDA

CITIZEN AWARENESS AND
PARTICIPATION PLAN GUIDELINE
AND RESOURCE HANDBOOK

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Introduction

Sanford residents and property owners are becoming more interested in development issues and more insistent on being involved in the decisions that affect them. In an effort to meet the needs of this more interested community, the City has developed a new and innovative **Reach Out Sanford Program entitled Citizen Awareness and Participation Plan** to ensure early and effective citizen participation in conjunction with proposed development applications. Sanford's Land Development Regulations now requires project applicants to create and implement a citizen participation plan prior to gaining approval of the Planning and Zoning Commission or Planning and Development Services Department of the application and before any public hearing is scheduled.

The purpose of the **Citizen Awareness and Participation Plan** is to ensure that both developers and citizens have adequate opportunities early in the planning process to discuss, understand and try to resolve neighborhood issues related to the perceived impacts of a proposed project. While it does not guarantee success, the plan is a tool to help you complete a successful development project

This handbook is designed to assist you in implementing your **Citizen Awareness Participation Plan** as required by the City's Land Development Regulations.

The Citizen Participation Process

Sanford is experiencing a significant reemergence of civic responsibility, citizen participation and neighborhood spirit. The Sanford City Commission is committed to ensuring that this community-based energy and interest is captured and used productively in municipal decision-making, particularly as it relates to land use and development issues. The City's Citizen Awareness and Participation Plan requirement is designed to focus attention on the importance of citizen participation early in the planning process and its relationship to completing a successful development project in Sanford.

The Citizen Awareness and Participation Plan is designed to:

- Encourage early participation in the public review process.
- Open a dialogue between the applicant and affected neighborhoods.
- Improve communication between the development community, citizens and Sanford City government.

Three Easy Steps to Success

The citizen participation process consists of three steps.

1. Prepare a Citizen Participation Plan.

This will be a written plan that will describe how you intend to notify interested parties of your proposed project and how those people will have an opportunity to comment on your project. The plan will be reviewed by the City's Department of Planning and Development Services. City staff can help with much of the information that needs to be provided in the plan, particularly in identifying issues that are likely to arise when you go out to residents and property owners.

2. Implement the Plan.

This is where you actually go out to the public and do what the plan outlines. This handbook has information on where and how to hold meetings, how to deal with conflicts, and successful ways to approach the task of citizen participation.

3. Report What Happened.

A written report will be reviewed and approved by City staff and will be given to the decision-making bodies for their use during the formal public hearing process. It is a summary of what was done, the issues and concerns raised during the process, and what you have done or will do to address those issues.

Step One: Developing A Citizen Participation Plan

The product will be a written plan that you will submit to the Planning Department. City staff will review your draft plan, make comments and review your revisions, just as for any other portion of your application. The staff can be used as a resource in preparing your plan.

Before you write your plan, you need to think about the following:

1. Who might be impacted by your project?

Who are the residents, property owners, businesses and others whom might be interested in your project? Who will be directly affected? Who will be indirectly affected? Who will not be affected but think they will? Who may want to get involved even though they realize they won't be affected?

Differentiate between groups based on impact. For example, most residents of a neighborhood have different concerns depending on what part of the neighborhood they're in. A resident living immediately next to your proposed project's site may have very different concerns –and more strongly held concerns – than the rest of their neighborhood. A resident living on a busy collector street in the neighborhood may have much more concern about the traffic impacts of your project than someone living on a cul-de-sac. Treating the entire neighborhood as if they have uniform concerns may cause you to miss or gloss over important issues.

2. What are the concerns, problems and issues related to your project, as seen through the eyes of these people?

Put yourself in the place of these people. How will they see your project? Will they view it as an enhancement to the neighborhood, or will they be concerned that your project will create traffic that may adversely affect them? Will they be concerned about the hours you plan to be open or the quality of housing you intend to build? Try to predict what you will hear during the participation process so you can be better prepared to respond. We've found that applicants that do a good job of thinking this through are better prepared to discuss thorny issues with citizens.

3. How will you notify interested parties, and how will they be able to comment on your project?

There are a number of citizen participation and notification techniques which can be used in implementing your plan. Neighborhood meetings and letters are the most common, but there may be other methods of communication and interaction you might want to use. Applicants have had success with open houses, tours of other projects, informational flyers, and news releases. What will connect you with the people who need to know about your project? How can you best inform them of what you want to do?

The written plan you submit to the Planning Department must include the following information:

- Identification of which residents, property owners, interested parties, political jurisdictions and public agencies may be affected by your project.
- How you will notify these people and agencies that you're making an application.
- How you will inform these people and agencies of the details of your project.
- How you will give the affected and interested people an opportunity to discuss your proposal with you and let you know of any concerns, issues or problems they may have.
- Your schedule for completing your citizen participation process.
- How you will keep the Planning Department informed as to what's going on.

Step Two: Implementing Your Plan

1. Getting the word out.

This may involve many different techniques, but they all fall into two basic categories; written communications and face-to-face discussion. Written information is always a part of the participation process. Whether it's a meeting notice or general information about your project, it's critical that you give people background about your project, including a description of the project, what process you're going through and what decisions related to the project have already been reached. Don't assume that people know your property had been designated for a shopping center for years. You need to tell them. No meeting should be held without some written background information having gone out beforehand.

To ensure that meeting notices are effective in getting people to your meetings, you need to consider not just what you want to tell people in your notice, but what form it should take. What techniques can make the communication more effective? How can you help ensure people will read your mail? Consider other ways of getting the word out, like door hangers, homeowner association meetings or newsletters, local newspapers, etc.

It's important that all meeting notices get to people early enough so they can make plans to attend your meetings. Notices of meetings should reach invitees 10 to 14 days before the meeting. Later than that doesn't give people adequate time. Sooner than that, people tend to forget. When you schedule your meetings, look for other events or activities that might conflict. Is it a holiday or the day before a holiday when a lot of people are out of town? is there a big local or neighborhood function that day?

2. Listening to issues, concerns, and problems.

The process of listening to the questions, concerns and problems you hear from the public is critical to successful citizen participation and a successful project. Your role in any contact with neighborhoods is not to try and convince people your project is wonderful, but to identify questions and concerns the public has about your project so you can address them.

Much of this listening is done through group meetings, so how they are conducted can be critical to your success. You must convey to the people attending that while you may not be able to do everything everyone wants, you are listening; and the process you are using is fair and open. If someone is going to go to the time, expense and trouble to attend meetings, find baby-sitters, rearrange their schedules, and all the other inconveniences associated with public participation, they need to believe there will be a return to them in having a quality development that doesn't harm their way of life. If people see your decision-making process as fair, they will be much more willing to accept your proposal than if they think a project is being forced on them. Make sure whoever you have on your team dealing with the public understands the importance of listening and being non-confrontational. This will help set the tone for the entire meeting.

3. Resolving issues, concerns and problems.

What are you going to do about what you hear from the public? The problem solving process may involve many meetings, contacts with individuals, and time to gather additional information. You may need to revise your plans and bring them back to the public for further review. Don't feel you have to solve everyone's concerns at one meeting. If they are confident you're working with them to find solutions, people will be glad to put in time and effort to work toward those solutions. Try to deal with people as directly as possible. Face-to-face communication and the telephone are much better than communicating through letters. Use letters as a follow-up and to formalize an agreement already reached. A large group is liable to have a wide variety of issues and concerns.

Sometimes working with smaller groups, organized by the issue they are particularly interested in, can be very effective in helping to reach solutions. While breaking a large group into smaller ones can be very effective, sometimes it can also give the impression that you're trying to "divide and conquer" the opposition. Remember the goal is to effectively work toward solutions.

You want to work toward a solution with which all the affected public can agree. Sometimes, however, this may not be possible. If you reach an impasse, recognize it, be clear about it, and move on to other issues. Resolving other concerns can make the initial disagreements go away or make people more amenable to compromise. If you have an interest group making completely unreasonable demands on you, be clear about why you think they are unreasonable. In the end, the public and the decision makers are able to tell which concerns are legitimate and which aren't.

Once again, if you can't solve every problem to everyone's satisfaction, you must at least show you have considered and addressed all issues and dealt with them fairly and honestly.

Step Three: Reporting on What Happened

When you have completed your participation process, you will need to compile a written report that will summarize what has taken place and tell what you've done to address concerns that arose. City staff will review your draft report to insure that it is comprehensive and accurately reflects the process.

1. What techniques did you use to notify and involve the public regarding your application?

Make a chronological list of all the meetings, mailings, telephone conferences, open houses, newsletters, etc. that you employed in your participation process. Include the number of people contacted and the number that attended meetings. Include copies of written materials and publications, letters, mailing lists, and sign-in sheets. Indicate on a map where people receiving notices were located, generally.

2. What concerns, issues and problems did you hear during the process?

Write a summary of what you heard at each meeting or during other contact with the public as you carried out your plan. Be as comprehensive as you can. Just because an issue was dealt with early on doesn't mean it won't be important during the public hearing process.

3. How have you (or will you) address the concerns, issues and problems raised?

This is a critical part of the report for you, because this is where you can best describe the reasonableness of your project issue-by-issue. Address each of the concerns you listed in number 2 above, however minor or easily resolved. Write a description of what you've done about each concern. If it's an issue you feel was not legitimate, don't ignore it; this is your opportunity to explain why it's unreasonable. Be as factual and straightforward as you can. Include details, references to plans you've submitted, etc.

4. If there are concerns, issues and problems you aren't able to address, tell us why.

We realize there may be items raised in meetings that you won't be able to resolve to everyone's satisfaction. You may not be able to do them and keep your project viable. They may be issues that are the responsibility of the City or another property owner to resolve. You may just not feel that the concern is legitimate and doesn't require your attention. List these issues and the reason(s) you won't be able to resolve them.

Citizen Participation Plan Checklist

Step One – Plan Development

1. Project Impacts.

- I have identified the residents, property owners, businesses and others who might be interested in my project.
- I have identified those who will be directly affected.
- I have identified those who will be indirectly affected.
- I have identified those who will not be affected, but who think they will.
- I have identified everyone who may want to get involved, even though they realize they won't be affected.

2. Project Concerns, Problems, Issues.

- I have thought about my project from the perspective of the people listed above.
- I have identified some of the concerns or problems they may have.

3. Notification.

- I have decided which public notification techniques are most appropriate for this project.

Citizen Participation Plan Checklist

Step Two – Implementation

1. Getting the Word Out.

- I have considered different techniques for getting the word out to interested parties about my project.
- I have developed a timeline for notification that provides people ample opportunity to plan to attend meetings.
- I have looked at a calendar of events in the area to ensure that there are no conflicts with my meeting date.

2. Listening to Issues, Concerns and Problems.

- I have identified potential questions and concerns that the public might have regarding my project.
- The process I am using will be open and fair.

3. Resolving Issues, Concerns and Problems.

- I have a plan to show that I have considered all of the issues and have dealt with them fairly.

Citizen Participation Plan Checklist

Step Three – Final Report

1. Details of Techniques Used.

- I have included dates and locations of all meetings where citizens were invited to discuss my proposal.
- I have included content, dates mailed, and number of mailings, including letters, meeting notices, newsletters and other publications.
- I have included where residents, property owners, and interested parties receiving notices, newsletters or other written materials are located.
- I have included the number of people that participated in the process.

2. Summary of Concerns, Issues and Problems Expressed During the Process.

- I have included the substance of concerns, issues and problems.
- I have included information on how I have addressed or intend to address concerns, issues and problems expressed during the process.
- I have included concerns, issues and problems I am unwilling or unable to address and why.

Neighborhood Meeting Rooms

If you plan to hold a neighborhood meeting as part of your Citizen Awareness Participation Plan, the meeting should be as close as possible to your project and the homes of the interested parties. Schools often serve as a good location for a neighborhood meeting. You may call the individual school site of your choice, directly, for information about meeting room availability. Also, certain homeowner associations may have a meeting room that could be used to hold a neighborhood meeting.

Using the Local Media for Citizen Notification

The City of Sanford encourages using the local media to announce meetings and other news related to development projects. Many Sanford residents obtain news about the City and related activities by reading one of several publications which now serve the City. Below is a listing of local media, addresses, phone numbers and fax numbers should you decide to use the media to assist you in implementing your Citizen Awareness Participation Plan.

Channel 2 - WESH TV

1021 North Wymore Road
Winter Park, Florida 32789
Phone: 407.645.2222
Fax: 407.539.7948

Channel 18 - WKCF

31 Skyline Drive
Lake Mary, Florida 32746
Phone: 407.645.1818
Fax: 407.645.4795

Channel 6 - WKMG

4466 N. John Young Parkway
Orlando, Florida 32804
Phone: 407.291.6000
Newsroom: 407.521.1323
Fax: 407.521.1204

Channel 35 - WOFL

35 Skyline Drive
Lake Mary, Florida 32746
Phone: 407.644.3535
Fax: 407.741.5189

Channel 9 - WFTV

490 East South Street
Orlando, Florida 32801
Phone: 407.822.5616
Newsroom: 407.822.8353
Fax: 407.481.2891

Orlando Sentinel

633 N. Orange Avenue
Orlando, Florida 32801
Phone: 407.420.5000

Channel 13

20 N. Orange Avenue
Orlando, Florida 32801
Phone: 407.513.1313
Fax: 407.513.1310

Sanford Herald

217 E. 1st Street
Sanford, Florida 32771
Phone: 407.322.2611
Fax: 407.323.9408

What to Consider When Drafting A Neighborhood Letter: Seeking Input and Involvement

1. Purpose.

Is the purpose of your letter to invite residents to a meeting? To provide an explanation of your project? To state what you would like to see from the neighborhood?

2. Background.

Why you are writing to this neighborhood? Provide a description of the proposed use of your property. What's happened up to this point regarding your project?

3. Your intentions.

What you hope to do with your project? Describe some of the details that you think will mitigate neighborhood concerns (i.e., landscaping, sound barriers, improved street circulation, etc.).

4. Encouragement to letter recipient to participate

Conclude letter with a positive statement about hearing from the neighborhood, meeting with them, value of their input, etc.

5. Include your name and telephone number.

(On the next page is a sample letter you may want to use)

SAMPLE NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING NOTIFICATION LETTER

Company Letterhead

Date

Dear Property Owner:

YOUR COMPANY NAME would like to invite you to attend a neighborhood meeting to discuss **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF YOUR PROJECT**. The meeting will be held at the following place and time:

NAME OF FACILITY

ADDRESS

DATE AND TIME

IN THE FOLLOWING PARAGRAPH, PLEASE USE THESE MAIN POINTS:

- STATE WHAT YOUR COMPANY HAS SUBMITTED TO THE CITY OF SANFORD**
- BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DESIGN OF THE PROJECT**
- INDICATE HOW THE PROJECT COULD POSSIBLY IMPACT THE SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS**

I (or your company) would like to address any comments and concerns you may have regarding this proposal. Representatives from the City of Sanford have also been invited to attend this meeting. Please call me (or your company) at _____ before the meeting if you have any questions regarding the proposed development. I look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely,

YOUR NAME

TITLE

cc:

Tips for an Effective Presentation

Eight Steps to Preparing a Presentation.

1. Develop Objectives.

Why are you doing this presentation? What results do you want?

2. Consider the Audience.

Who will be in attendance? Why do you think they are coming? What are their interests, concerns?

3. Introduction.

Capture the audience's attention and give them time to tune in on you and other speakers. Set the tone for what is to come. This part of the presentation can establish credibility.

4. State Your Main Ideas and Supporting Ideas.

Go from the general ideas to the more specific ideas.

5. State the Benefits.

Tell your audience the benefits of your objectives, particularly if your presentation is intended to be persuasive

6. Gather Facts.

Make sure you put together evidence to support your main ideas. Anecdotes, statistics and quotes can be useful.

7. Develop Visuals, Handouts, Notes.

These materials should complement your presentation and not serve as a distraction. Handouts should be made available following a presentation unless you want the audience to look at them while you are explaining the information.

8. Practice.

This is critically important for a successful presentation. If you are planning to use equipment, test it before the presentation. Make sure the room is arranged the way you want it.

Audio-Visual Aids

The use of audio-visual aids in a presentation can be very effective - if the presenter is comfortable with the equipment and/or the types of visual aids he or she is using. Research has shown that only seven percent of an audience's interpretation of our messages comes from words; 38 percent comes from voice and vocal inflections, and 55 percent comes from what we see. Audio-visual aids should be used to support and to enhance the spoken message and should not be the entire presentation.

1. Examples of aids which can be used to make a point or illustrate an idea:

- Models (concrete objects).
- Graphics (maps, photographs, drawings).
- Charts, tables, graphs.
- Display boards/flip charts.
- Optical devices such as overheads, computer projection, slide projectors, video recorders.

2. Keep it simple:

- Only put your main points on audiovisuals.
- One topic or no more than five lines per visual.
- Be consistent with the type of format you are using (i.e., vertical/horizontal, chart design, etc.).

Consider your audience and the room in which the presentation will be made. This will help determine the type of aids which will be most effective, their size, etc.

Tips for Handling Difficult Questions/Situations/Confrontation

Be aware that in your audience there will probably be people who support your ideas, project, philosophy - and those who don't. There will also be people who have not formed an opinion yet. Your goal in making the presentation should be to get people who haven't made up their minds yet to "like" you, thereby resulting in support for your ideas. This means working hard to establish credibility and handling your adversaries without being defensive or argumentative.

Arch Lustberg, author of the book "Winning When it Really Counts," is an expert on effective communications. In dealing with confrontation he suggests pausing, making eye contact and winning over your adversaries with reason, courtesy and valuable new facts. His book details the following suggestions regarding confrontation:

1. Pause. Think before you speak.
2. Stay calm and reasonable.
3. Don't get angry and keep control of your temper.
4. Refuse to take any attack personally.
5. Be positive.
6. Give information rather than denials
7. Be explanatory. Don't succumb to the temptation to argue.
8. Take lots of time and don't run off at the mouth, argue, yell or scream.
9. Be the voice of reason
10. Be the good guy, Mr. or Ms. Nice.
11. Always assume your audience is smarter than you when it comes to neighborhood issues.

Conclusion

The **Reach Out Sanford Program** is a positive step forward in encouraging early and effective citizen participation. We hope that this handbook, along with our assistance, will prove to be useful in creating your **Citizen Awareness and Participation Plan**.

The City of Sanford staff is always available to help you through the process. Please feel free to contact the Planning Department at 407.688.5140 should you have any questions or need additional assistance. In addition, please let us know if you have any comments or suggestions regarding our process. We look forward to working with you!

Appendix: City of Sanford Citizen Awareness and Participation Plan

- A. The following requirements apply in addition to any other notice provisions required elsewhere in this Code. The Administrative Official may require that, based upon the needs of the abutting communities or the City as a result a generally accepted land use planning practices and principles or to ensure full public participation in the planning and land use processes of the City an application for a change or modification of land use will require a Citizens Awareness and Participation Plan (CAPP). This potential requirement shall be applicable to development applications for developments such as the following which list is provided for illustrative purposes only and not as a limitation of the requirement:
1. Site development plan review.
 2. Variances involving a non-residential use.
 3. Subdivision Plans
 4. Amendments to the Future land use map.
 5. Other land use or development applications proposing a change of use
- B. The purpose of the CAPP is at a minimum to:
1. Ensure that applicants pursue early and effective citizen participation in conjunction with their applications, giving them the opportunity to understand and mitigate any real or perceived impacts their application may have on the community.
 2. Ensure that the citizens and property owners of Sanford have an adequate opportunity to learn about applications that may affect them and to work with applicants to resolve concerns at an early state of the process.
 3. Facilitate ongoing communication between the applicant, interested citizens and property owners, City staff, and elected officials throughout the application review process.
 4. The CAPP is not intended to produce complete consensus on all applications, but to encourage applicants to be good neighbors and to allow for informed decision-making.
 5. At a minimum the CAPP shall include the following information:
 - a. Identification of the residents, property owners, interested parties, political jurisdictions, and public agencies may be affected by the proposed development and should be given notice of the CAPP meeting
 - b. Description of how notification will be provided to those interested in and potentially affected by the proposed development.
 - c. Description of how information will be provided to those interested and potentially affected of the substance of the change, amendment, or proposed development for which approval is sought.

- d. Description of the means by which an opportunity will be provided to those interested or potentially affected to discuss the proposal and express any concerns, issues, or problems well in advance of the first public hearing.
 - e. The applicants schedule for completion of the CAPP.
 - f. The means by which the applicant will keep City officials informed on the status of citizen participation efforts
6. The level of citizen interest and area of involvement will vary depending on the nature of the application and the location of the proposed development. The target area for early notification will be determined by the Administrative Official and at a minimum, the target area shall include the following:
 - a. Property owners within five hundred (500) feet of the property proposed for development.
 - b. The officers of any homeowner's association or registered neighborhood group within the public notice area as set forth in this Section or that may be impacted by the proposed development.
 - c. Other interested parties who have requested to be placed on an interested party's notification list maintained by the Planning Department.
 - d. Any person or entity that may be impacted by the proposed development as determined by the Administrative Official based upon sound and generally accepted land use planning practices and principles.
 - e. A determination to provide notice in the context of the CAPP process shall not grant standing to any person for the purposes of subsequent legal challenges or appeals
 7. These requirements apply in addition to any other notice provisions required elsewhere in this Code.
 8. The applicant may submit a CAPP and begin implementation prior to formal application at the applicant's discretion. This shall not occur until after the required pre-application conference and consultation with the Planning Department and any applicable fees have been paid by the applicant.
 9. Where a CAPP is required by this Code, the applicant shall provide a written report on the results of the citizen participation efforts prior to the notice of public hearing. This report will be attached to the public hearing report. The report shall, at a minimum, contain the following information.
 - a. Details of techniques used to involve interested and potentially affected parties, including by way of example only:
 - 1) Dates and locations of all meetings where citizens were invited to discuss the applicant's proposal.

- 2) Content, dates mailed, and numbers of mailings, including letters, meeting notices, newsletters, and other publications.
 - 3) Location of residents, property owners, and interested parties who received notices, newsletters, or other written materials.
 - 4) The number and names of people that participated in the process.
- b. A summary of concerns, issues and problems expressed during the process, including:
- 1) The substance of the concerns, issues and problems.
 - 2) The manner in which the applicant has addressed or intends to address these concerns, issues and problems.
 - 3) The concerns, issues and problems the applicant is unwilling or unable to address and why the basis and rationale of the applicant with the regard to each issue that have not been addressed.

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