

Group 1
Draft Action Steps

Establish quality of life objectives for Cumming-Forsyth County

Action Steps:

1. _____ sets quality of life objectives on a regular basis.
 - To set the objectives, _____ appoints a Quality of Life Committee, comprised of community leaders including, but not limited to, representatives from Cumming and Forsyth County government, the school system, non-profit organizations and neighborhood groups.
 - The Quality of Life Committee is advised by a technical committee, made up of citizens who are familiar with measurements that might be used in the process.
 - The technical committee should suggest objective third-party statistics that will accurately measure the quality of life objectives set by the Quality of Life Committee.
 - The technical committee should review the Quality of Life Committee's report in draft form, to assure the measurements are accurate.
 - The Quality of Life Committee actively seeks citizen ideas about how quality of life should be defined – and which indicators of quality of life should be used – as a first step in its decision-making process.
 - On a regular basis, the Quality of Life Committee publishes a report that:
 - Sets broad quality of life goals for Cumming-Forsyth County
 - Reports on how Cumming-Forsyth County's current situation compares to the goals, using objective third-party numbers
 - Reports Cumming-Forsyth County's performance in these statistics in recent years
 - Other information important to understanding the goals or the community's performance in reaching these goals
2. In connection with its reports, _____ convenes Quality of Life Forums to discuss the objectives and community performance.
 - The main topic of the Quality of Life Forums will be how to make greater progress toward the objectives or address poor performance.
 - Elected officials, top government appointed officials and executives of major community non-profit organizations should be invited guests of the Forum.
 - The Forum should be open to the public and the news media.

Balance economic and residential growth so that growth improves the quality of life of existing residents

Action Steps:

1. Create tools and incentives to attract desired forms of growth.
 - For the foreseeable future, desired growth includes employment and retail to balance the tax digest, provide jobs and services closer to home and reduce overall traffic congestion.
 - Develop the most comprehensive set of incentives in Georgia for employment and retail developments.
 - Commission a study of city and county incentives in Georgia for employment and retail with the objective of identifying “best practices” and “benchmark communities.”
 - Develop incentives matching the best practices.
 - Every year, the Cumming-Forsyth Chamber of Commerce issues a public report on how Cumming-Forsyth County’s employment and retail incentives compare with those of the benchmark communities – and how much progress was made in the previous year toward closing the gaps.
 - Every five years, commission a new study of “best practices” and “benchmark communities” in Georgia.
 - Develop strategies that ensure all new commercial and retail developments are architecturally compatible with their surroundings and financially sustainable.
 - Create new planning and zoning initiatives that encourage live, work and play environments (eg., Vickery, Windward, John’s Creek).
 - _____
 - Streamline the process for entitling commercial developments so that Cumming-Forsyth County is the community in North Georgia with the least bureaucratic and least time-consuming approval processes for developers with desirable projects.
 - To make sure that land best suited for employment and retail is held for those purposes, establish a Cumming-Forsyth County Business Land Trust to purchase desirable undeveloped land.
 - The Land Trust will be operated by a city-county authority, with initial funding from the city and county governments.
 - In time, the Land Trust will sell its land holdings to private developers who will build the desired developments. The sales will provide the Land Trust with revenues for future purchases of undeveloped land.
2. Create new sources of revenues for community quality of life projects.
 - Use SPLOST and dedicated property taxes for achieving quality of life improvements, tied to the quality of life objectives set by the Quality of Life Committee.
 - Consider general obligation bonds, special tax districts, tax allocation districts (TADs), community incentive districts (CIDs).

Employ state-of-the-art strategies for managing congestion and improving mobility

Action Steps:

1. Create an innovative county transit system connecting Cumming-Forsyth County's major employment centers.
2. Where possible, integrate Cumming-Forsyth County transportation projects with regional transportation systems
3. Develop a heliport that allows passengers to check their bags at the heliport and fly directly to Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport, where they can connect to their flights
4. Require interconnectivity among all future residential, retail and commercial developments, so that driving, bicycling or walking from one development to another is as seamless and efficient as possible. One way of assuring interconnectivity is through use of a road grid.
5. Develop parallel road systems so that _____. (*Needs further explanation.*)
6. Create incentives for students to bike, walk or bus to school, which will help relieve traffic in mornings and afternoons.
7. Establish an innovative public education program about how to combine trips, join carools and use public transportation.
8. Create new ways for Cumming-Forsyth County to pay for road and transportation improvements with money generated in and controlled by the community.
9. Require that Cumming-Forsyth County transportation planning always include alternative transportation, including transit, and ways of paying for it.

Possible Appendix Material:

The Planning Group with major responsibility for the quality of life action steps suggests that the Quality of Life Committee consider the following areas for setting quality of life objectives (in order of importance):

- Transportation/mobility
- Education
- Healthcare availability and quality
- Low crime/community safety
- Family Life Quality
- Master Plan
- Population/density
- Arts and leisure
- “Planned Image”
- Environment/air quality/water quality/weather/climate
- Parks/green space
- Taxes/governmental efficiency
- Employment/Job Sustainability
- Cost of Living/Income
- Volunteerism
- Town Center/community center

Homework: Roger Crow will frame an alternative to the suggestion that the Cumming-Forsyth Chamber facilitate the Quality of Life Committee's work and that the Quality of Life Committee be comprised of representatives from a list of governments/civic organizations.

Homework: To help frame the "Chamber-facilitation" idea, please bring a list of groups that you believe should be represented on QoL committee. We'll dot vote at next meeting.

Homework: We've asked James McCoy for additional information about the Business Land Trust idea. Specifically, would this tool be needed if the community zoned land appropriately and provided infrastructure needed for commercial development?

Homework: Think of additional transportation "to-dos" that could improve mobility for Cumming-Forsyth County.