



Meeting Report

An Envision 2030 vision meeting was held Tuesday, November 7, 2006 at the Lanier Jaycees in Cumming. Approximately 27 people attended. In the course of one hour, participants worked in small groups of five or more on a series of questions that helped them think about the kind of community they would like Cumming-Forsyth County to be in 25 years.

Meeting Process

Participants were welcomed by Brett Berto, co-chair of Envision 2030, who also served as the meeting facilitator. Brett explained that participants would work in small groups or “circles” of five or more people and they would be asked to think about, discuss and come to consensus on several questions. Brett also covered a few suggested ground rules. Each group had a “moderator” who acted as recorder and group facilitator, and wrote the group’s comments.

The first question Brett asked was part of a scenario. Its purpose was to help the groups imagine what an ideal Cumming-Forsyth County would look like. Here’s the scenario:

It is 2030. Time magazine is sending a reporter to Cumming-Forsyth County to do a cover story on how this community came to be regarded as the “model” or “ideal” mid-sized community in the country – the community other mid-sized communities around the country want to be like.

Here’s the question Brett posed to the groups:

What will Time magazine say in its 2030 article makes Cumming-Forsyth County such an ideal community?

Brett gave the groups 30 minutes to work on this question.

In the remainder of the meeting, Brett asked the groups to consider two other questions:

- *What do we need to preserve among things that already exist in Cumming-Forsyth County today for the Time magazine article (and our vision of the future) to come true?*

These things could include physical assets, organizations or institutions, public policies or decisions, or positive traits or skills of the people who live here now that will be needed if Cumming-Forsyth County were to become an ideal community.

- *What do we lack in Cumming-Forsyth County today that we would need for the Time magazine article (and our vision of the future) to come true?*

These things could include physical assets, organizations or institutions, public policies or decisions, or positive traits or skills of the people that are missing today but will be needed in the future, if Cumming-Forsyth County were to become an ideal community.

The results of these three group discussions (a general vision for Cumming-Forsyth County, the assets that should be preserved and those that should be developed) are in the following three sections of this report. (Note: The small groups were assigned numbers before the meeting, but the numbers may not be sequential. As a result, you may find some gaps in the numbering, but be assured that the results of all the small groups are produced below.)

Small-Group Results: A Vision of Cumming-Forsyth County in 2030

Here are the vision ideas – the things that participants felt Time magazine would focus on, if it were writing about Cumming-Forsyth County as the ideal or model mid-size community in 2030.

Small group 1:

- Public Transportation
- Community within communities - mixed-use facilities - live-work-play (residential on retail)
- More high rises - Downtown Cumming
- More designated areas set up for parks - subdivision parks
- Airports
- Events facility on the lake

Small Group 2:

- Shops, people enjoy area
- Park - Central Park, NY-like
- Need hotels - nice throughout county, Marriott
- Downtown - like Charleston
- More Vickery-type development
- Ice rink
- Convention / cultural arts center - to bring in conventions
- Something at Lake Lanier

Small Group 3:

- Events facility - a nice one - banquet, convention
- Reinvent the square - main street feel, like Vinings, Buford
- Nice parks that aren't softball/baseball oriented - like Central Park, open space
- Quality developments that are focused on green space - keep the trees
- Amphitheater on the lake - something like Chastain
- Transportation - but not buses - maybe electronic trolleys through downtown and places of interest - no marta

Small Group 4:

- Community of excellence
- Thriving businesses
- Highly maintained road and transportation infrastructure
- Conscious water management
- Land set aside for greenspace
- Amenities that attract
- Concert hall - events
- Sports attraction - minor league team
- Strong central community area

Small Group 5:

- Historic Square
- Preserved green space for parks and recreation activities
- Mixed-use communities (similar to Vickery) - residential, business, educational and social
- Strong school system - with college or university
- New / thriving businesses - mom and pops small businesses with large (more service-based) businesses that employ people, health care
- Small town feel but people live and work here
- Creating and bringing in businesses within this county to keep people and money here
- Large, environmentally friendly county

Consensus Ideas

Here are the ideas, from those listed above, that the groups felt reflected a consensus of their thinking:

- Community within communities - mixed-use facilities - live-work-play (residential on retail)
- Convention / cultural arts center - to bring in conventions
- Highly maintained road and transportation infrastructure
- Sports attraction - minor league team

Small-Group Results: Existing assets that should be preserved

Here are existing community assets that participants felt should be preserved, if Cumming-Forsyth County is to become the ideal or model mid-size community in 2030. These things could include physical assets, organizations or institutions, public policies or decisions, or positive traits or skills of the people who live here now.

Small Group 1:

- Conservation on water
- Sawnee Mountain
- Lake community
- Low tax base

Small Group 2:

- Parks and recreation - with improvements
- Low crime rate
- Small town feel - welcoming feeling
- Green space

Small Group 3:

- Green space
- Land downtown
- Lake and surrounding lands
- History - different community
- School system - not to get lost with all everything else going on
- Continue splost

Small Group 4:

- Lake Lanier
- Safety in community
- Low taxes
- Schools
- Regional access

Small Group 5:

- The lake
- Keeping young people here - especially the talented
- Give young people something to come back to

Small-Group Results: Assets that will be needed

Here are community assets that participants felt are missing now and will be needed, if Cumming-Forsyth County is to become the ideal or model mid-size community in 2030. These things could include physical assets, organizations or institutions, public policies or decisions, or positive traits or skills of the people. (Note: Not all groups listed assets that participants felt are missing now.)

Small Group 1:

- Water and sewer infrastructure to support livable communities
- Continuity in county government
- Analyze property for school sites

Small Group 2:

- Right people in office
- Infrastructure - clear plan - people stick to plan
- Consistency in the plan - follow-through
- Land
- One clear plan - stick to it - checks and balance - core city united
- Focus on keeping crime rate

Small Group 3:

- Pods - alternative modes to get to down from all over the county
- set land aside now
- Preserving historical sites / locations
- Slow development / set controls, more strict
- Redeveloped downtown
- Airport

Small Group 4:

- Leadership - young, native
- Plan - coordinated between government, people
- Vote
- Short term goals - milestones

Small Group 5:

- Better / more economic development by city and county together
- Diversity in housing market

What Is Envision 2030?

Envision 2030 is a year-long, citizen-led community planning initiative to envision – and plan for – Cumming-Forsyth County’s development over the next 25 years.

It begins with eight vision meetings in fall 2006 and will continue as a strategic planning process in early 2007. At every stage, citizens will be invited to join Envision 2030 meetings and planning groups – and to critique its reports and work products. Every document will be available on the Envision 2030 web site, www.envision2030.com.

Envision 2030’s final report will be available in June 2007.