

NEWS RELEASE

The Garrett County Planning Commission will conduct a public information meeting and workshop on Tuesday, March 27, 2007 for the purpose of soliciting public participation and input on rural planning and policy issues related to the Garrett County Comprehensive Planning process.

The Comprehensive Plan is the primary policy document used by the County to ensure healthy future growth and development. The Plan is widely used and referred to by multiple state and county agencies, economic development offices, bond rating firms, the Planning Commission, and the Board of Appeals.

Garrett County has experienced many changes since its last Comprehensive Plan was prepared in 1995, especially the rapid residential and commercial growth in and around Deep Creek Lake. These changes have brought the County many opportunities but also many challenges. The new Plan will look forward and establish new policies to guide the County through the year 2030 in areas including growth, development, rural preservation, transportation, and protection of environmentally sensitive areas. A master plan for the Deep Creek Watershed Area is to be a major component of the new Comprehensive Plan.

The March 27, 2007 meeting is intended to be a workshop meeting and will provide citizens with the opportunity to express their opinions and views on future growth and development in the rural areas of Garrett County. A presentation on the existing conditions of land use and development in Rural Areas will be presented by the County's Consultant, Environmental Resources Management. Following the presentation, citizens will have the opportunity to comment on rural land use policy issues such as land preservation; sensitive areas protection measures for steep slopes, floodplains and stream buffers; appropriate density of residential development in resource areas and the design of rural subdivisions including clustering options. In addition to the comment period, breakout groups will be selected to review and make suggestions for modifications to the boundaries of rural, agricultural resource and rural resource land classifications on the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map. The Planning Commission encourages citizens to express their opinions on what goals, objectives and policies should be established in Rural areas.

The Rural Issues meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 27, 2007 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. in the cafetorium of Southern High School on Oakland Drive in Oakland.

Public participation and input is a vital part of the Plan development process. The Planning Commission needs to hear from the broadest possible spectrum of the public interested in growth and development, including the Towns, so that the Plan reflects the breadth of the community's concerns and interests. The Planning Commission hopes the public will be able to join us on March 27, 2007 to ask questions and provide comments.