

- The general public
- b) Participation techniques were identified. Techniques used included public hearings and meetings open to the public with open discussion; printed public information in local newspapers; e-mail correspondence with stakeholders; individual meetings with local government officials; and information on the Southern Georgia Regional Commission's website, local government websites, and social media.
- c) A participation program was conducted. This included an initial public hearing to give an overview of the plan update and receive initial public comments; four workshops, open to the public, for the development of the plan update; and a final public hearing to receive any final public comments before transmitting the plan draft to DCA for review. Identified stakeholders were invited to all the meetings and attended, yielding specific input in plan content.
- d) Public participation activities were documented. The documentation of public participation activities is included in the Appendix to this plan, which contains sign-in sheets and published advertisements.

### **1st Public Hearing – “Kick-Off”**

The public hearing kicking off the comprehensive planning process was held on February 23, 2021 at the Lowndes County Administration Building in Valdosta. It was held for the purpose of making any potential stakeholders and residents aware that the comprehensive plan update and review was now underway; to explain the purpose of the update; and to encourage residents and other stakeholders to actively participate in the plan update.

### **First workshop**

The first workshop was held on March 22, 2021. The purpose of the workshop was to update the goals in the comprehensive plan. This was done through open discussion, using the goals from the previous comprehensive plan as a starting point. SGRC staff took notes from the discussion, revised the goals based on those notes, and shared the results with stakeholders via e-mail. Additional comments and edits were received via e-mail and were included by SGRC staff as part of the preparation of the draft plan document.

In addition, a SWOT analysis was performed in which each attendee noted the community's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The results of this SWOT analysis were used to further inform the Needs and Opportunities. The results of the SWOT analysis are included in the Appendix.