

# **Neighborhood Notification Proposal for Cobb County**

**To recognize, inform and engage Cobb County Neighborhoods**

**Presented by Carol Brown  
To Cobb County Board of Commissioners**

**June 25, 2013**

## Stakeholder Meeting dates & Participants

### Presented by Carol Brown

September 25, 2012  
Chairman Tim Lee  
Clarice Barber-Page SWAN  
Keli Gambrell PLAN  
Robin Meyer MIC  
Shelia Edwards MIC  
Jim Smith CRN  
Beverly McMurray CRN  
Teresa Stendahl Protect Allatoona

October 30, 2012  
Robin Meyer MIC  
Keli Gambrell PLAN  
Beverly McMurray CRN  
Jim Smith CRN

March 27, 2013  
Commissioner Helen Goreham, District 1  
Commissioner Lisa Cupid, District 4  
Planning Commissioner Bob Hovey,  
District 1  
Planning Commissioner Christi Trombetti,  
District 3  
Rob Hosack, AICP, Director of Community  
Development  
Dana Johnson, AICP, Planning Division  
Manager  
Delon W. Barfuss, PhD, CRN  
Beverly McMurray CRN  
Ben Clopper MIC  
Robin Meyer MIC  
Keli Gambrell PLAN  
Eric Jacobson, Esq.

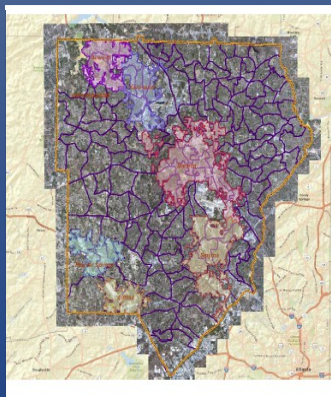
April 1, 2013  
Chairman Tim Lee  
Commissioner JoAnn Birrell District 3  
Dana Johnson, AICP, Planning Division  
Manager  
Larry Johnson Historic Riverline  
Teresa Stendahl Protect Allatoona  
Marline Elkins PLAN  
Delon W. Barfuss, PhD, CRN  
Beverly McMurray CRN  
Eric Jacobson, Esq.

June 7, 2013  
District 2 Commissioner Bob Ott  
Rob Hosack, AICP,  
Director of Community Development  
Dana Johnson, AICP,  
Planning Division Manager

# Neighborhood Notification Proposal for Cobb County

**Cobb is the 4th most populous county in Georgia, with over 688,000 residents (Census 2010). However, with the exception of a small number of geographically based civic groups, Cobb has relatively low participation in planning and zoning issues.**

**The geography of participation is uneven in Cobb. There are areas where boundaries overlap or are covered by two groups that may not agree on an issue. There are areas where there is little or no resident representation on neighborhood issues at all.**



# Neighborhood Notification Proposal for Cobb County

**To recognize, inform and engage Cobb County Neighborhoods**

**This is accomplished by allowing neighborhoods to voluntarily register and be recognized by the county, and by providing targeted planning and zoning information to the appropriate registered neighborhoods and civic groups. Over time this will increase participation by many more of Cobb County's neighborhoods.**

**It doesn't create another layer of government, as some have claimed. What it does is to create a more modern approach to governance, enabled by technology. It will enable better local representation of people's concerns and be less representative of special business interests. It will also help to ensure that that folks who claim to represent the neighborhood really do.**

**It will also increase transparency in the process and reduce uncertainty for residents. The politics that are sometimes associated with how a rezoning case is handled will be replaced by a codified process.**

# Neighborhood Notification Proposal for Cobb County

*Why are codified neighborhood programs a good thing?*

**Including citizens in decisions about their community gives policy and planning legitimacy.**

**Increased participation improves the quality of representative democracy.**

**When citizens feel they are heard it increases their confidence in officials, and that the system “works”. It also increases their own sense of effectiveness.**

**Inclusion of marginalized communities may be the best way they can get their issues on the agenda.**

**Communities have different character and different needs- a codified program recognizes that fact and supports pluralism in planning, not one size fits all.**

**The American Planning Association has recognized the importance of citizen participation, stating: “Planning is a collective activity and it involves issues in which citizens have a large emotional stake”(Levy 2000).**

# Neighborhood Notification Proposal for Cobb County

**Q: Some Commissioners may already be getting information out to neighborhoods, and some neighborhood or civic group representatives know how to find zoning information online. Why do we need this?**

**A: Because the practices of district commissioners can vary widely, and a relatively small number of residents know how to get the information they need, or understand the process.**

**So regardless of what a current commissioner or civic group is doing at this time, codifying neighborhood participation creates a permanent and official structure that transcends today's activists, elected officials and staff. It will be there for Cobb's future residents and their communities.**

# Neighborhood Notification Proposal for Cobb County

**Q: Some Commissioners may already be getting information out to neighborhoods, and some neighborhood or civic group representatives know how to find zoning information online. Why do we need this?**

**A: Because the practices of district commissioners can vary widely, and a relatively small number of residents know how to get the information they need, or understand the process.**

**So regardless of what a current commissioner or civic group is doing at this time, codifying neighborhood participation creates a permanent and official structure that transcends today's activists, elected officials and staff. It will be there for Cobb's future residents and their communities.**

# **Neighborhood Notification Proposal for Cobb County**

**Most US states have some cities or counties with formally recognized neighborhood participation.**

**They are meant to be self-organizing, from the grassroots up, not created by the local government or district commissioners from the top down.**

**They are geographically based and not meant to be organized around partisan issues.**



- >Alabama Birmingham [www.birminghamal.gov/neighborhood-associations.aspx](http://www.birminghamal.gov/neighborhood-associations.aspx)
- >Alaska Anchorage [www.communitycouncils.org/download/1520.pdf](http://www.communitycouncils.org/download/1520.pdf)
- >Arizona Phoenix NN <http://phoenix.gov/nsd/programs/assistance/notification/>
- >Arkansas Fayetteville  
[http://www.accessfayetteville.org/government/neighborhood\\_resources/neighborhood\\_associations/Ful1\\_Neighborhood\\_Association\\_List.cfm](http://www.accessfayetteville.org/government/neighborhood_resources/neighborhood_associations/Ful1_Neighborhood_Association_List.cfm)
- >California Los Angeles [www.ci.la.ca.us/DONE/map.htm](http://www.ci.la.ca.us/DONE/map.htm) <http://done.lacity.org/dnn/>
- >California San Francisco <http://www.sf-planning.org/index.aspx?page=1654>
- >Colorado Denver  
<http://www.denvergov.org/YourNeighborhood/RegisteredNeighborhoodOrganizations/tabid/432158/Default.aspx>
- >Connecticut Hartford <http://www.hartford.gov/neighborhood-planning>  
[http://planning.hartford.gov/LSNI/Maps/Neighborhood\\_Map.pdf](http://planning.hartford.gov/LSNI/Maps/Neighborhood_Map.pdf)
- >Delaware Wilmington <http://www.wilmingtonde.gov/residents/civicasociations>
- >Florida Jacksonville/Duval County <http://www.coj.net/departments/neighborhoods/housing-and-community-development/neighborhood-initiatives-%281%29/citizen-planning-advisory-committees-%28cpacs%29.aspx>
- >Florida St Augustine [http://www.staugustinegovernment.com/residents/neighborhd\\_contactinfo.cfm](http://www.staugustinegovernment.com/residents/neighborhd_contactinfo.cfm)
- >Tampa [https://www.tampagov.net/appl\\_customer\\_service\\_center/form.asp?strServiceID=684](https://www.tampagov.net/appl_customer_service_center/form.asp?strServiceID=684)
- >\*Naples <http://www.naplesgov.com/index.aspx?NID=476>
  
- >Georgia Atlanta <http://www.atlantaga.gov/index.aspx?page=739>
- >Georgia Athens-Clarke County NN <http://athensclarkecounty.com/?nid=816>
- >Georgia DeKalb County <http://www.onedekalb.com/initiative.html>
- >\*Georgia Savannah <http://savannahga.gov/index.aspx?NID=481>
- >Georgia Columbus <http://www.columbusga.org/crime-prevention/neighborhood-associations.htm>  
(Accessed under Crime-prevention rather than planning)
  
- >Hawaii Honolulu <http://www1.honolulu.gov/nco/>

>New Mexico Albuquerque <http://www.cabq.gov/planning/developers/forms/axis-downloads/interactive-map-gallery>

>New York New York City <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/lucds/cdstart.shtml>

>North Carolina Raleigh [www.raleighnc.gov/neighbors/content/CommServices/Articles/CitizensAdvisoryCouncil.html](http://www.raleighnc.gov/neighbors/content/CommServices/Articles/CitizensAdvisoryCouncil.html)

>\*Charlotte/Mecklenburg County

<http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/nbs/communityengagement/Pages/default.aspx>

>\*1/2 North Dakota Bismarck <http://www.bismarck.org/index.aspx?nid=1225>

>Ohio Cincinnati <http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/community-development/references-resources/community-council-directory/>

>Oklahoma Tulsa <https://www.cityoftulsa.org/community-programs/neighborhoods/list-of-neighborhood-associations.aspx>

>Oregon Portland [www.portlandonline.com/oni/index.cfm?c=25967](http://www.portlandonline.com/oni/index.cfm?c=25967)

>Pennsylvania Philadelphia

<http://www.phila.gov/CITYPLANNING/PROJECTREVIEWS/Pages/RegisteredCommunityOrganizations.aspx>

<http://citizensplanninginstitute.org/>

<http://www.phila.gov/ohcd/Philadelphia%20neighborhood%20advisory%20committees.htm>

>Pittsburgh <http://www.city.pittsburgh.pa.us/portal/neighborhoods.html>

>Rhode Island Providence <http://www.providenceri.com/ONS/neighborhoods>

>South Carolina Charleston <http://sc-charleston.civicplus.com/index.aspx?NID=280>

>South Dakota Sioux Falls <http://www.siouxfalls.org/planning-building/planning/neighborhoods.aspx>

>Tennessee Knoxville <http://www.ci.knoxville.tn.us/development/neighborhoods/advisory.asp>

>\*Memphis/Shelby County <http://shelbycountyttn.gov/index.aspx?NID=391>

>Texas Houston <http://www.houstontx.gov/superneighborhoods/index.html>

>Texas Austin <http://austintexas.gov/cr>

>Texas Fort Worth <http://fortworthtexas.gov/neighborhoods/?id=972&terms=&searchtype=1&fragment=False>

>Utah Salt Lake City <http://www.slcgov.com/commcouncils>

## Atlanta Neighborhoods defined in NPU Map

City of Atlanta, GA : Neighborhood Planning Unit (NPU) - Mozilla Firefox

City of Atlanta, GA : Neighborhood Planning ...

www.atlantaga.gov/index.espx?page=739

### Neighborhood Planning Units of Atlanta

The map displays the 32 Neighborhood Planning Units (NPUs) of Atlanta, labeled A through Z. The units are defined by black outlines. Major expressways (I-75, I-85, I-285, I-475) and MARTA rail lines are shown in yellow. A legend in the top-left corner identifies the symbols for Expressways, MARTA Rail Lines, and NPU Boundaries.

- Office of Housing
- Office of Planning
  - Forms & Applications
  - Plans and Studies
  - Zoning
  - The Atlanta BeltLine
  - Maps
  - Urban Design Commission
- Neighborhood Planning Unit (NPU)
  - NPU by Neighborhood
  - Neighborhoods by NPU
  - NPU Schedule
  - NPU Geographic Breakdown
  - NPU e-mail list sign-up
- Development Incentives
  - Sustainable Brownfield Redevelopment Project
- Population
- Transportation Division
- View Online Permit Information
- Missions and Visions
- FY2008 Operational &

# Athens-Clarke County interactive map of registered neighborhoods:

[www.athensclarkecounty.com/index.aspx?NID=816](http://www.athensclarkecounty.com/index.aspx?NID=816)

The screenshot displays a web interface for the Athens-Clarke County interactive map. At the top, a navigation bar includes the text "myConnections: Engage your community - connect to news, events and information you care about." and a "Sign" button. On the left side, there is a vertical menu with icons and labels for "VIDEOS", "PAYMENTS", "REPORT A PROBLEM", "E-NEWSLETTERS", and "NEWS". The main area is a map of Athens, Georgia, with various neighborhoods highlighted in different colors. A pop-up window titled "Chicopee-Dudley Neighborhood Association" is overlaid on the map, indicating it was last updated by a user named "aoc" on August 8, 2012. The map includes standard navigation controls like a compass and zoom buttons, and a legend for map styles (Map, Sat, Ter, Earth). The number "6" is visible in the bottom right corner of the page.

# Athens-Clarke County Neighborhood Directory

Neighborhood Advisory  
Committee



ALERT CENTER



VIDEOS



PAYMENTS



REPORT A PROBLEM



E-NEWSLETTERS



NEWS

## Directory of Neighborhoods

View contact information and maps for neighborhoods registered with Athens-Clarke County's Neighborhood Notification Initiative. To help prevent spam, if you would like to e-mail neighborhood contacts, please replace "(DOT)" with ". ." a "(AT)" with "@" in the e-mail addresses listed below.

[A](#) | [B](#) | [C](#) | [D](#) | [E](#) | [F](#) | [G](#) | [H](#) | [I](#) | [J](#) | [K](#) | [L](#) | [M](#) | [N](#) | [O](#) | [P](#) | [Q](#) | [R](#) | [S](#) | [T](#) | [U](#) | [V](#) | [W](#) | [X](#) | [Y](#) | [Z](#)

### A

#### Ashton Place Community Association

[Map](#) [Website](#)

Commission Districts: 8 and 10

Contact: Ben Walker

[ashtonplacehomeowners\(AT\)gmail\(DOT\)com](mailto:ashtonplacehomeowners(AT)gmail(DOT)com)

### B

#### Bar H Neighborhood Association

[Map](#)

Commission Districts: 1 and 9

Contact: Gail Hoge

[gwhoge\(AT\)bellsouth\(DOT\)net](mailto:gwhoge(AT)bellsouth(DOT)net)

#### Boulevard Neighborhood Association

[Map](#) [Website](#)

Commission Districts: 3, 5, 9, and 10

Annual Meeting: December

Contact: Dan Lorentz

[lorentz\\_d\(AT\)gmail\(DOT\)com](mailto:lorentz_d(AT)gmail(DOT)com)

#### Beechwood Hills Community Neighborhood Association

[Map](#)

Commission Districts: 7 and 10

Contact: Mark Dodson

[marksdodson335\(AT\)gmail\(DOT\)com](mailto:marksdodson335(AT)gmail(DOT)com)

#### Briarcliff Woods

[Map](#)

Commission Districts: 7 and 10

Contact: Greg Trandel

[gregtrandel\(AT\)charter\(DOT\)net](mailto:gregtrandel(AT)charter(DOT)net)

### C



## Neighborhood Notification Initiative NEIGHBORHOOD REGISTRATION FORM

### REQUIRED INFORMATION

Organization Name:

---

Type of Organization:  Covenant-based Homeowner's Association  Other Incorporated  
 Non-profit  LLC  Other:

---

Commission Districts:

---

Contact Person:

---

Contact Person

Mailing Address:

---

Neighborhood Mailing

Address (if different):

---

Telephone Number:

---

E-mail Address\*:

---

*\*A valid e-mail address is required for all Contact Persons where they may receive neighborhood notifications.*

**Please include the following information with this completed registration form:**

1. Map of neighborhood boundaries
2. One of the following:
  - For established neighborhoods - Documentation indicating your neighborhood group's organizational structure and/or legal status (i.e. by-laws, articles of incorporation, etc.)
  - For newly forming groups - A petition acknowledging the endorsement of the neighborhood organization and Contact Person signed by at least 20% of the property owners and/or residents within the proposed neighborhood boundaries.

### OPTIONAL INFORMATION

Website:

---

Newsletter or other  
publication:

---

Regularly scheduled meetings: Provide date, time, and location:

---

Comments, questions, or  
suggested topics for  
neighborhood planning  
workshops:

---

Date received by Planning Department:

Date approved by Mayor and Commission:

# **Neighborhood Notification Proposal for Cobb County**

**Most of the program is administered online, it is an information based model, similar in many ways to PENS (Police Email Notification System). PENS does not create another layer of government, it is a two way exchange of information between Cobb Police and residents about law enforcement issues.**

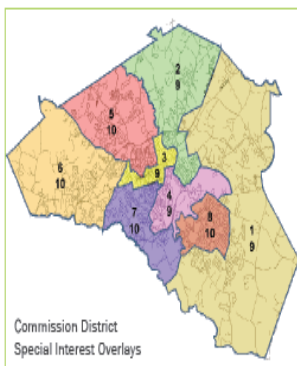
**Think of NNI as a Planning & Zoning version of PENS.**



Registered Neighborhoods

**WHAT IS THE NEIGHBORHOOD NOTIFICATION INITIATIVE?**

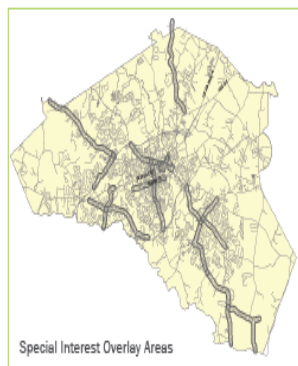
In May of 2005 the ACC Mayor and Commission adopted the Neighborhood Notification Initiative (NNI) to facilitate communication between neighborhoods and



Commission District Special Interest Overlays

**WHAT TYPE OF E-MAILS WILL I RECEIVE?**

Proposed zoning actions that generate e-mail notifications include the Plans Review of commercial, institutional, and multi-family



Special Interest Overlay Areas

**WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A REGISTERED NEIGHBORHOOD & A SPECIAL INTEREST OVERLAY AREA?**

NNI Neighborhoods are formed when



**+myConnections:** Engage your community - connect to news, events and information you care about. [View more information...](#)

Directory of Neighborhood Advisory Committee

[Home](#) > [Departments](#) > [Departments M - Z](#) > [Planning Department](#) > [Neighborhoods](#) > Neighborhood Notification Initiative

## Neighborhood Notification Initiative

### WHAT IS THE NNI?

The Neighborhood Notification Initiative (NNI) was adopted by the Mayor and Commission in May of 2005 with the goal of improving communication between neighborhoods and developers about construction projects proposed in or adjacent to the neighborhood's boundaries.

Once an application is submitted to the Planning Department and placed on the appropriate agenda for review, a notice is emailed to people registered to receive NNI notices for the Neighborhoods, Overlay Areas and Commission Districts the project falls within. Please see the topics below for more information about:

- [How to Sign Up for Notifications](#)
- [Maps of Notification Areas](#)  
(Registered Neighborhoods, Commission Districts, Other Overlay Areas)
- [Planning Department Agenda Types](#)  
(Hearings Board, Historic Preservation Commission, Planning Commission, Plans Review)
- [How to Register Your Neighborhood](#)

ALERT CENTER

VIDEOS

PAYMENTS

REPORT A PROBLEM

E-NEWSLETTERS

NEWS



# Neighborhood Notification Proposal for Cobb County

**Q: Which neighborhoods can register with the county?**

**A: Neighborhoods with existing HOA can register, older neighborhoods without HOA can register with some minimal requirements, or they can join with other smaller nearby neighborhoods to form a civic group, much like Canton Road Neighbors did in 2005. Geographically based Civic organizations can also register: All registration is voluntary and the applications must be approved by the BOC. Once approved, the neighborhood and civic group would appear online on an interactive web map, and be listed in a directory of neighborhoods.**

**They would then be sent planning or zoning information as it affected their neighborhood.**

**All registration is voluntary and participation is voluntary**

## **Additional suggestions for Cobb's geographically-based civic groups:**

**Consider the civic groups as an overlay, and neighborhoods within the area can also register. They can interact with the civic group or not, it is their decision. All registered neighborhoods are to be recognized in their own right.**

**Boundaries should not overlap and claims of representation of an area should be backed up by membership with dues-paying neighborhoods or by having an advisory person from that neighborhood in the organization.**

**The civic group traditionally defers to or supports the concerns of the neighborhood on zoning and variance cases.**

**The county should post PDF files of the rules and procedure for residents who plan to engage in Zoning and Variance cases.**

**Existing and new civic groups should be held to a higher standard than neighborhoods. Civic groups should be incorporated and have regular elections. The chairperson or Zoning committee chair should be encouraged to attend the Atlanta Regional Commission Planning Academy or the equivalent, as a refresher course in zoning law and current planning topics.**

# Neighborhood Notification Proposal for Cobb County: FAQs

**Q: Will this system be unfair to those neighborhoods that don't register?**

**A: No. All neighborhoods have the opportunity. Think of it as registered voters: not every eligible citizen registers to vote and not all registered voters vote in every election.**

**Q: How will neighborhoods that don't register know about zoning cases near them?**

**A: They will still receive a letter from the zoning applicant if they are within 1,000' of the property being rezoned, and a yellow sign will still be posted.**

**Q: Will a county employee represent me on zoning cases?**

**A: No. You will continue to represent your neighborhood or civic group.**

**Q: What are the benefits of registration?**

**A: Registered neighborhoods and civic groups will receive information earlier. They won't have to take the time to search for it online, or miss it if they are busy. There will also be additional information of interest to the community posted on the Neighborhood page.**

# **Neighborhood Notification Proposal for Cobb County: FAQs**

**Q: I can already go online and find what I need. Why do I need this?**

**A: Because relatively few citizens know how to do this or have the time to sort through all the county information on a regular basis.**

**Q: My Commissioner sends me the information I need. Why do I need to register?**

**A: The approach taken by the Commissioners can vary widely. You may have a Commissioner who supports participation now, and in the future have a new Commissioner who doesn't think it is very important, or that residents don't need to get in the way of business.**

**A codified process gives certainty to all residents- and to zoning applicants as well.**

**An interactive map and neighborhood directory will let applicants know how to get in touch with the neighborhood leadership. It will also let other residents know how to contact you and hopefully become volunteers.**

**Q: Why should taxpayers have to pay for this?**

**A: Because this creates a reliable, non-political and permanent process for neighborhoods county-wide. This is important because we are a procedural republic**

# Neighborhood Notification Proposal for Cobb County: Cost

**Athens-Clarke County Planners:** This program is fairly inexpensive and not very labor intensive.

**The City of Denver Budget office :** The NNI takes only 10-20% of the Communication staffer's time and it takes less than that for the GIS tech.

**Denver's population of 620,000 is smaller than Cobb's 688,000 but a closer match than Athens-Clarke County.**

**Cobb Communications department:** Content delivery would not be a challenge. It would also not increase their expenses by a significant amount.

**The problem is that the Planning Division is currently understaffed and could not accommodate an additional 10%-20% work load.**

**If additional staff were hired, the NNI would take at most, 20% of their time. The balance of their time could be devoted to meeting the current demands of Cobb residents and business owners.**

# **Neighborhood Notification Proposal for Cobb County**

**To recognize, inform and engage Cobb County Neighborhoods**

**Request for Policy Guidance from the BOC**

**[www.cantonroadneighbors.org](http://www.cantonroadneighbors.org)**