

## Planning in Communities Without Planning Staff

*2006-National-Planning Conference*

C. GREGORY DALE, FAICP

(513) 561-6232

gdale@mcbriedale.com



## Overview

- ◆ Basics of planning
- ◆ Basics of fair decision making
- ◆ Resources and ideas

## Planning Basics: Maxi, Mini, & Money

- ◆ Comprehensive Plan
- ◆ Area Plans
- ◆ Land Use Regulation
  - Zoning
  - Subdivision Regulations
- ◆ Capital Improvement Plans
- ◆ Functional Plans
  - Transportation
  - Parks
  - Utilities / Infrastructure

## Plan Overview

- ◆ A statement of community policy or intent as to the future growth and development of the community
- ◆ Plan for the physical development of the community, and is concerned with land use, transportation, public facilities, infrastructure, natural and environmental features, housing, and socioeconomic aspects of the community

## Plan Overview

- ◆ Planning is about balancing
- ◆ It attempts to balance quality of life and livability, economic health and prosperity, private property needs, and public fiscal responsibility

## Plan Overview

- ◆ It is long range – 20 years
- ◆ It is community wide
- ◆ It is based on a factual understanding of the forces and trends shaping the community, but it also reflects community desires

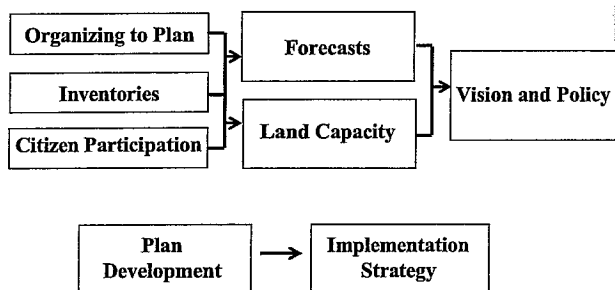
## Plan Overview

- ◆ Subject to state law requirements, it can and should be tailored to your needs – it can be as extensive or as simple as you need it to be

## Legal Framework

- ◆ Each State has different laws related to comprehensive plans
- ◆ Some do not require comprehensive plans
- ◆ Some require plans as a condition of zoning
- ◆ Some require that plans be updated
- ◆ Some require mandatory consistency
- ◆ Some require that they be implemented
- ◆ What does your state require?

## A Planning Process



## Citizen Participation

- ◆ Steering Committee
- ◆ Plan Forum
- ◆ Focus Group Interviews
- ◆ Workshops
- ◆ Open Houses
- ◆ Web Sites
- ◆ Newsletters
- ◆ Surveys
- ◆ Special Purpose Committees



## Creating a Factual Base: Forecasts and Capacity

- ◆ How much new growth do we expect to occur under certain circumstances?
- ◆ How much growth can we reasonably accommodate based on certain constraints?

## Policy Questions

- ◆ Are the growth forecasts viewed as being desirable?
- ◆ Is the growth too fast? Too slow?
- ◆ Do the commercial and residential growth rates bode well for fiscal health?
- ◆ Is the growth occurring in the right areas?

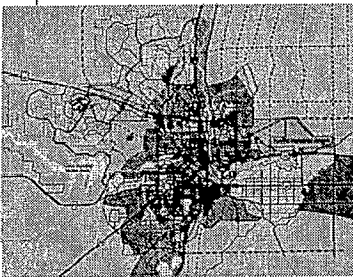
## Policy Direction

- ◆ Values of the community
- ◆ Create consensus before you put lines on the map
- ◆ Turning the "could be" into the "should be":
  - Goals/Visioning
  - Objectives/Bench marking
  - Policies/Strategies
- ◆ Citizen Participation
- ◆ Get the approval of the elected officials

## Dimensions of Growth

- ◆ Location of Growth
- ◆ Amount of Growth
- ◆ Rate of Growth
- ◆ Intensity and Density of Growth
- ◆ Quality and Character of Growth
- ◆ Relationship of Growth to Infrastructure
- ◆ Fiscal Dimensions of Growth

## What Type of Plan is Best for Your Community?



- ◆ Parcel Specific
- ◆ Character Based
- ◆ A Mixture of the Two

## Implementation

- ◆ Integrated Throughout the Process
- ◆ Many Tools Available
- ◆ Land Use Regulations
- ◆ Capital Facilities Planning
- ◆ Infrastructure Financing Techniques
- ◆ Economic Development Programs
- ◆ Redevelopment Programs

## Fair Decision Making

- ◆ Notice
- ◆ Opportunity to Be Heard
- ◆ Full Disclosure
- ◆ Unbiased Decisions
- ◆ Timely Decisions
- ◆ Complete Records
- ◆ Clear Rules
- ◆ Findings

## Findings of Fact

- ◆ Principles of Findings
  - You are not committees of compassion
  - Your decisions must be based on facts
  - The facts must address the standards
  - The burden of proof is on the applicant
  - Information is not the same thing as facts
  - Weighing of the evidence is your responsibility

## Findings of Fact

### ◆ Principles of Findings

- You do not have to believe everything you hear
- Opinions without a factual basis are without merit
- Public sentiment is not a basis for decisions
- You can rely on personal knowledge, but make it a part of the record

## Suggestions and Resources

- ◆ Advisory Committees
- ◆ Special purpose committees – Comprehensive Plan, special project
- ◆ "Circuit rider" planners
- ◆ Consultants
- ◆ Universities / colleges
- ◆ APA – National, State Chapters, Local Sections, conferences and publications

## Build Relationships

- ◆ Private Organizations
- ◆ Regional Agencies
- ◆ State Agencies
- ◆ Federal Agencies

## Private Agencies

- ◆ Land Trusts
- ◆ Housing Trusts
- ◆ Economic development groups
- ◆ Environmental groups
- ◆ Neighborhood groups or associations
- ◆ Homebuilders, developers, realtors

## Regional Agencies

- ◆ Regional planning agencies
- ◆ Regional service providers – such as sewer and water authorities
- ◆ Regional housing agencies
- ◆ Regional environmental agencies

## State Agencies

- ◆ Departments of Transportation
- ◆ Environmental Protection Agencies
- ◆ Health Departments
- ◆ Community Development Departments
- ◆ Departments of Natural Resources

## Federal Agencies

- ◆ FEMA
- ◆ Transportation Department/Federal Highways
- ◆ Housing and Urban Development
- ◆ Fish and Wildlife

## Conclusion

- ◆ Plan, don't just react
- ◆ Have good and fair decision making practices
- ◆ Make time to plan – planning work sessions, guest speakers
- ◆ Put the planning back in Planning Commissions

## **Internet Resources**

### **APA**

<http://www.planning.org>

<http://www.planning.org/smalltown/>

### **APA Commissioners Site**

<http://www.planning.org/commissioners/index.html>

### **State Planning Chapters**

<http://www.planning.org/chapters/links.html>

### **The Planning Commissioners Journal**

<http://www.plannersweb.com/>

### **On-line Code Libraries**

<http://www.municodes.com/>

<http://www.amlegal.com/library/>

### **Planner Community Sites (Message Boards and resource links)**

<http://www.cyburbia.org/>

<http://www.planetizen.com/>

<http://www.smartgrowth.org/>

[http://www.nationalgeographic.com/earthpulse/sprawl/index\\_flash.html](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/earthpulse/sprawl/index_flash.html)

<http://web.uflib.ufl.edu/afa/urp/web.htm>