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LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

Municipal governments are under constant pressure to deliver services more efficiently. As a municipal government professional you must continually evaluate your performance in terms of productivity and effectiveness to keep pace with today's demands as well as to prepare for tomorrow's challenges. You must keep up with new trends, sharpen old techniques and acquire new skill. Your participation in *The University of Tennessee Municipal Training Program* (UTMT) will help prepare you for the challenges of public service.

The UTMT program is a comprehensive certificate program focusing on six major functions necessary for the smooth operation of municipal government. The courses included in each functional area are carefully tailored to meet the needs of municipal professionals. Courses are developed and delivered through a cooperative effort with The University of Tennessee's Municipal Technical Advisory Service, the Tennessee Municipal League, its affiliate organizations and state and national resources. In addition to the knowledge and management insights you will acquire, UTMT courses provide an opportunity for you to discuss issues and share ideas with other municipal professionals. I encourage you to learn more about the UTMT program.

Your course materials were developed by Mr. Norman Whitaker, AICP, Executive Director, of the Knoxville Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission. Our sincere thanks is extended to Mr. Whitaker.

On behalf of the staff of the Center for Government Training. I welcome you to *The University of Tennessee Municipal Training Program*. By your participation in this course, you are joining an outstanding group of municipal professionals who realize that education is a life-long process. We applaud your commitment to public service and professional development.

Sincerely,

Patricia C. Davis
Executive Director

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
CENTER FOR GOVERNMENT TRAINING**

**and the
MUNICIPAL TECHNICAL ADVISORY SERVICE**

**in cooperation with the
TENNESSEE MUNICIPAL LEAGUE**

**PARTICIPANT MANUAL
MARCH 1993**

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

Table of Contents

THE COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROCESS	1
Introduction	1
Definition	1
Why Use the Comprehensive Planning Process?	1
Characteristics of the Comprehensive Plan	2
Comprehensive Scope	2
Long Range Orientation	3
Focus on Physical Development	3
What the Comprehensive Planning Process Entails	3
Issues and Opportunities	3
Principles, Concepts and Standards	4
Inventory and Analysis	4
Goals and Objectives	4
Policies and Proposals	4
Implementation	4
Monitoring and Maintenance	4
THE PLANNING DOCUMENT	6
What the Document Should Look Like	6
HOW TO CONDUCT THE PROCESS	7
The Importance of Citizen Participation	7
How to Write the Document	8
WHAT TO PUT IN THE PLAN AND	
HOW TO COLLECT THE INFORMATION	10
Demographics and Trends	10
Population Growth Trends	10
Population Characteristics	10
Projected (Future) Population	10
Population Distribution	10
Housing Characteristics	11
Economic Base Data	11
Existing Land Use and Development Trends	11
Economic Development	12
Community Facilities	12
Land Use	13
Transportation	15
Capital Improvements Program	16

IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPREHENSIVE PLANS	18
Zoning	18
Subdivision Regulations	19
Environmental Regulations	19
Infrastructure Financing Ordinances	20
CONCLUSION	21

THE COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROCESS

Introduction

This course is intended to give non-planners, including governmental administrators, planning commissioners, or interested laymen, an understanding of the role of the comprehensive plan and how it is prepared. The course should also help prepare non-planners work with planning professionals and to understand the process enough to participate effectively or exercise managerial oversight if necessary.

Definition

A comprehensive plan is an official statement of goals, objectives, policies and proposals for the long range physical development of a city, county or region. The plan should provide a written and graphic policy framework for decision making and should provide an inspiring, but realistic, vision of what the citizens and their elected officials want their city, county or region to become in the future. The comprehensive plan is not an ordinance, a regulation, or a rigid blueprint for future development; rather the plan is general, conceptual, and amendable.

Why Use the Comprehensive Planning Process?

Comprehensive planning has several unique benefits for a city, county or region. The following beneficial functions of the plan were originally identified by T.J. Kent in *The Urban General Plan* (1964):

- The plan formulates and states the official policies of the governing body for the physical development of the jurisdiction, and establishes a mechanism for the continuous re-evaluation and improvement of these policies.
- The plan provides a broad policy context for the many short-range and mid-range planning and development activities, such as capital budgeting, zoning and plans for public facilities and services.
- The comprehensive planning process injects long-range considerations into decisions on short-range actions. Assessment of the cumulative, long-term effects of public and private sector development activities results in better communities, lower capital expenditures, and fewer crises.

- The plan facilitates coordination of governmental activities related to physical development. The availability of clearly identified policies, proposals and standards will improve the clarity of communications between agencies.
- The plan improves cooperation between the public and private sectors. Although the public sector builds infrastructure, provides services and engages redevelopment activities in some areas, most of the development of cities is done by private developers. The plan assists developers by providing a clear statement of public objectives and policies. The plan process is greatly enhanced if developers contribute their specialized knowledge to the process.
- The plan promotes the public interest rather than the special interests of individuals.
- Through its implementation, the plan improves the physical environment of the city, county or region.
- The plan provides an inspirational, but realistic picture of what the citizens and their elected officials want the community to become.

Characteristics of the Comprehensive Plan

Comprehensive plans are also often referred to as "general plans" or "master plans". Regardless of the term used, there are a few basic requirements that should be fulfilled by the plan:

Comprehensive Scope. The plan, although general in nature, should cover all of the major types of public and private development. At a minimum, the plan should address:

- Land Use (residential, commercial, industrial, etc.)
- Transportation (major roads, highways, mass transit, airports, and pedestrian and bicycle routes).
- Community Facilities (schools, other public buildings, utilities, storm water drainage).
- Parks and Open Spaces (parks, trails, nature preserves, zoos, botanical gardens, other recreation facilities).

Aside from being comprehensive in terms of subject matter, the plan should also be geographically comprehensive. The plan should cover all of the areas in the jurisdiction of the city or county, as well as any land or water that might reasonably become a part of the jurisdiction in the future.

Long Range Orientation. Most comprehensive plans address a 20 to 30 year timeframe. This is long range enough to accommodate the planning, design, land acquisition and construction cycles of major public works projects, such as a freeway system. A shorter timeframe results in a limited vision and is not conducive to seeing the "big picture" context of specific projects or proposals. If the timeframe extends too far into the future, another problem arises. It is difficult to anticipate with any reasonable certainty the technological factors and political influences that will exist.

Focus on Physical Development. Although the planning process includes analysis of social and economic trends and needs, and the plan has many objectives addressing social and economic needs, most comprehensive plans focus primarily on physical development.

What the Comprehensive Planning Process Entails

There are many variations of the comprehensive planning process, but the issue-oriented process used in Portsmouth, Virginia (EXHIBIT 1) is typical. Identification of issues and opportunities drives the process. As noted above, citizen involvement in identifying the issues is critical. Subsequent phases of the planning process are directed at developing policies and proposals, implementing them, monitoring the success of the implementation effort, and making adjustments to the plan to improve its performance.

The following is a summary of the steps in the issue oriented planning process. It should be noted that, in practice, the sequence of the steps may be varied, with some steps proceeding simultaneously.

Issues and Opportunities. Through staff research and the citizen participation techniques outlined above, issues (major unresolved questions or problems involving long-range development) and opportunities for improvement are identified. The policies and proposals developed later in the process should resolve the issues and capitalize upon the opportunities.

Principles, Concepts and Standards. Professionally recognized principles, concepts and standards in planning, civil engineering, real estate development and other disciplines are reviewed, analyzed for their relevance, and adapted to the local situation.

Inventory and Analysis. Staff surveys of existing land use patterns, neighborhood conditions, public facilities, economic and population trends and environmental resources are conducted. (A good source for methodology of these "base studies" is Urban Land Use Planning by Stuart F. Chapin, Jr.). Future needs for different types of land use and public facilities are projected. This phase of the process also includes identification of resources and constraints.

Goals and Objectives. A set of long range goals and objectives are developed to address the issues and opportunities identified earlier. The goals and objectives are refined through continued rounds of citizen participation.

Policies and Proposals. Policy guidelines for future physical development and proposals for projects and programs are produced in written and graphic form. These may be revised several times in response to citizen comments and directives from the Planning Commission or elected officials.

Implementation. The primary means for implementing the Comprehensive Plan include construction of public capital improvements, such as parks, roads, and utilities; land use controls, such as zoning and subdivision ordinances; voluntary compliance by developers who build projects consistent with the plan; and the operation of local programs such as Community Development Block Grant, Housing authorities, economic development corporations, and redevelopment authorities.

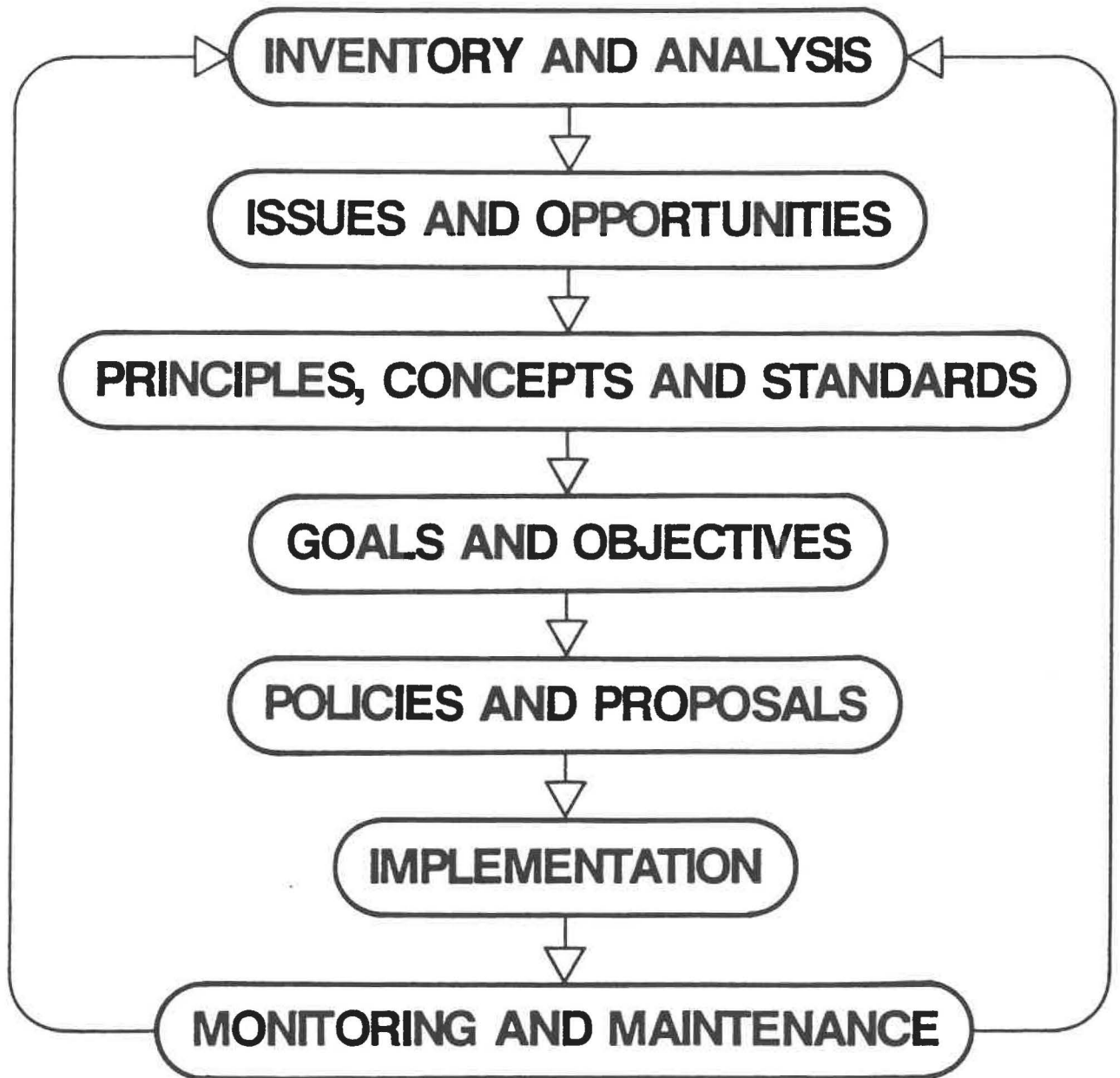
Monitoring and Maintenance. This phase is essential to the continued relevance and effectiveness of the plan. Issues change over time, as do social, economic and technological factors. The plan should be reviewed and updated at least every other year to keep policies and proposals up to date. A continuing review process also provides an opportunity to identify and improve proposals which are not working.

As shown on the Planning Process Diagram, the monitoring and maintenance step creates a "feedback loop" which makes the process a continuous one.

APPENDIX 2

Exhibit 1

The Planning Process



THE PLANNING DOCUMENT

What the Document Should Look Like

A comprehensive plan can take many forms. Jurisdictions have produced plans which consist of a single volume of text and maps; several volumes or "elements"; a plan supported by one or more technical reports or base studies; or a one-sheet, fold out map with policies printed on the back. It is helpful to prepare a condensed, executive summary version of the plan for widespread distribution. Comprehensive plans are usually illustrated with maps, flow charts, policy diagrams or other visual techniques for showing the timing, extent, and implications of the plan's proposals.

The trend in comprehensive plans is toward briefer, more concise plans with more reliance on graphics to convey the message. A higher standard of quality in the visual appearance of plan's has been made possible by the widespread availability of micro-computers and desk-top publishing software. Plans consisting of hundreds of pages of dense, jargon-laden text are held in disfavor by today's state-of the art planners. These lengthy documents grew out of the requirements for HUD's "701" Comprehensive Planning Grants in the 1960's. The Fort Worth, Texas planning department established a policy that no plan would be longer than eight pages.

When plans are summarized or presented in very brief form for mass public consumption, there should be a technical report or reports summarizing findings of the inventory/analysis phase and providing a reasonable amount of base study information to show how the plan's policies evolved. This is especially necessary if the plan or subsequent zoning decisions are challenged in court. In many states, the enabling legislation specifies areas of concern to be addressed by the plan and its base studies.

The Comprehensive Plan can be prepared as a single, freestanding plan, or it can consist of a series of elements. Examples of Plan elements are Parks and Open Space, Land Use, Downtown, Transportation, and Community Facilities. The advantages of preparing and adopting the plan as a series of elements include the ability to focus very closely on one major topic and the ability to work with a smaller staff. Disadvantages are the possible lack of consistency between elements prepared months or years apart, the inefficiency of having to write introductory and inventory material more than once, and the possibility that some elements will never be finished.

HOW TO CONDUCT THE PROCESS

The Importance of Citizen Participation

It is often said that, in comprehensive planning, the process is more important than the product. This is partly because the ongoing process of developing, adopting, maintaining and updating the comprehensive plan presents the opportunity to involve a wide range of participants with differing viewpoints and interests. This broad based participation has several important benefits:

Those involved in the process often become valuable allies in the adoption and implementation of the plan. ("People will support what they helped create".)

A properly designed planning process will bring critical public issues and opportunities to the forefront at an early point in the effort, so that they can later be addressed in the research, analysis and policy formulation stages of the process.

The participants from outside the planning agency often bring with them specialized knowledge of particular neighborhood characteristics, business concerns, or other professional disciplines. A diversity of knowledge and talents can result in a more effective plan.

Planning processes in the post World War II period were often criticized as excluding meaningful citizen involvement and relying excessively on the opinions of "experts" (professional staff and consultants). Public involvement often took the form of hand-picked "blue-ribbon committees". Plans were often presented at public hearings in final form, with little real opportunity for citizen involvement prior to adoption.

In the 1970's, partly in response to the damage done to the planning's reputation by urban renewal and top-down policy making, new approaches began to emerge. Today, early involvement of citizens in the planning process is considered standard professional practice. In many cases, a substantial part of the policy content of the plan is contributed by citizens. Planners in Fort Worth, Texas have worked with neighborhood groups on "co-production" of plans. The citizens not only influenced the content of the plans, but helped write them and even paid some of the production and printing costs.

Citizen participation techniques now in common usage include:

- Opinion surveys conducted through the mail, newspapers or telephone.
- Intensive brain-storming sessions or design charettes, in which citizens, planners and other design professionals collaborate to prepare conceptual plans in a few days or a few hours.
- Work sessions where plans are presented in preliminary form, or as a series of alternatives. The preliminary plan is seen as a starting point for citizen comment and involvement, rather than as a finished product to be "sold" or defended by the planners.
- The Nominal Group Technique, which involves each member of a group in identifying issues, proposing solutions, and prioritizing implementation actions. (The participants are often urged to take formal responsibility for some of the implementation actions they have identified.)
- Video-taped presentations, which can be shown on public access television. It is also now possible for TV viewers to use their telephones to participate in computerized, interactive surveys, which give immediate reactions to televised planning proposals.
- Focus groups, in which small but demographically representative groups are able to respond in detail to questions or policy alternatives.

How to Write the Document

There are as many approaches to writing plans as there are planners. The following suggestions are based on the experiences of the writer of this course manual, which have included preparing plans for cities and counties in Tennessee, Virginia and Texas over a 15-year period.

1. The plan should be as free as possible from jargon and technical terms that would not be understood by an average citizen. Think about the plan as if it were being quoted verbatim in the local newspaper. Would the average reader understand it without resorting to a dictionary or planning textbook? Could a junior high school student understand it? Use simple sentence construction and make the language as conversational as possible. It's a good idea to include a glossary for technical terms that must be used.

2. Keep in mind that, although the plan should be understandable to people of diverse educational levels, the plan will probably be scrutinized by some very sophisticated readers who will recognize technical and

stylistic deficiencies. Planning commissions, governing bodies, and citizens groups almost invariably include some members with professional degrees and high standards for evaluating written material. Don't embarrass yourself by releasing the plan document to the public without carefully editing for accuracy, spelling, grammar, style, and logic.

3. Know where you're going with the planning project when you begin. Prepare an outline for the content of the plan, and then prepare a work program, indicating what will be done, how it will be done, who will do it, and definite checkpoints and deadlines for each major phase of the process. Unless you've got lots of time and have excellent writers on staff, try to avoid any unnecessary briefing papers, interim reports, or other products that won't be included in the final product.

4. Writing, editing and word processing narrative text is very labor intensive and time consuming unless your staff happens to include some exceptionally talented and disciplined writers. For these reasons, it is often advisable to try to limit the extent of text to the minimum needed to explain the plan. Try to keep the narrative "lean and mean" and be ruthless with the editing knife. Cut out anything that is superfluous. Most plan documents tend to have too much verbiage rather than not enough.

5. Utilize graphics---maps, charts, tables, photographs, and drawings---extensively. Properly prepared and selected, these visuals" make the plan more interesting to the reader, communicate the many aspects of the plan more effectively than text, and reduce the quantity of narrative that must be written, edited and word processed.

6. Here's an approach that has worked well for some planners: save the report writing for late in the process. Rely primarily on graphic techniques to summarize the findings of inventories, analyses, and early citizen input. Rely heavily on visual aides for any presentations. Then write the plan after the information has been converted to graphics. By this time, the planner is likely to be very familiar with the information and its implications and the narrative will be much easier to write.

WHAT TO PUT IN THE PLAN AND HOW TO COLLECT THE INFORMATION

Demographics and Trends

Some of the basic demographic planning studies include:

Population Growth Trends. Historical data is pulled from the census and estimates prepared by the planning agency or other sources. A typical presentation of trend data would consist of a graph or chart showing population growth of the jurisdiction from its earliest recorded census to the most recent estimated population. Percentage growth or decline as well as the numerical change is often shown. Local growth rates are often compared to those of the region or state to help clarify the significance of the local data.

Population Characteristics. The population data is broken down by age group, sex, race and ethnicity, income, household type, occupation, educational attainment and other factors that may have some bearing on the final plan. Changes in these characteristics over time--the change in the number of elderly people, for example--are very useful in planning for future community needs. It is often helpful to compare local characteristics and trends to the region, state or nation to highlight any unusual characteristics of the local population. An example would be a community with a higher than typical percentage of young children; this would indicate that special attention should be given to educational, recreation, and daycare facilities.

Projected (Future) Population. Projections of future population size and age group composition should be prepared or obtained from other sources. The cohort survival method is commonly used for this purpose. It produces tables of anticipated population by sex and five-year age groups. Some plans include two or three projections based on alternate scenarios: continuation of existing trends, accelerated economic growth, and economic decline, for example.

Population Distribution. By mapping census tract and/or block data, population distribution studies show where population is concentrated and at what density. This is important for allocating services, such as mass transit, and facilities, such as recreation centers. Census tract maps are given symbolic shadings showing persons per square mile, percentage of persons over 65 or under 18, median family income, or

other factors considered relevant to the planning process. Taken together, these spatial studies provide a visual sense of where the people are and what their special needs may be. This mapping technique may also be used to indicate census tracts with high, medium or low rates of population growth or decline. Dot maps, with a dot symbolizing a certain number of persons (20, 50, 100, etc.) can be prepared using census block data.

Other data and trends that should be inventoried include:

Housing Characteristics. The census contains considerable data regarding owner or renter status, age of housing, housing type and relative housing cost. Historical trends and current conditions can be extracted from census documents. Projected needs can be derived from trend data, projected household characteristics, and population projections.

Economic Base Data. The breakdown of employment by sector (manufacturing, wholesaling, retail, services, etc.), unemployment rate, the extent of employment growth and distribution of that growth by sector, and trends in all of these phenomena should be collected and analyzed. Economic trends, aside from being influencing the economic development proposals of the plan, will have an impact on land use, housing and transportation needs. Projected increases in professional and financial services could indicate a growing demand for office developments; a decline in manufacturing employment could indicate an impending surplus of moderate priced housing. The economic data will also be needed to aid in preparation and analysis of population projections, since the forecasts for in-migration of new population are largely based on the projected availability of jobs. Detailed economic data is available in the census reports. Projections, economic base studies, and input-output economic analyses may be available from universities and regional or state planning or economic development agencies.

Existing Land Use and Development Trends. Most land use plans are preceded by an "existing land use survey", although some authorities argue that they are unnecessary. The land use survey consists of color coded maps showing how each parcel of land in the jurisdiction is used and tabular data showing the extent of each land use in acres and as a percentage of the total planning area. This data is often compared in a chart or table with similar data from comparable cities or counties. Some planners use the existing land data along with population statistics to project future land use needs. This is done by calculating the current acreage of residential, commercial, industrial, and public lands per 100 or 1000 population and then applying the same ratios to the projected population for a given year. The figures are usually adjusted to allow for changing trends in development methods; for example, the projected

need for residential land may be adjusted upward if it's clear that lot sizes will be larger than in the past. The most basic technique for compiling the existing land use data is the "windshield survey".

Economic Development

City and county economic development programs are intended to create jobs and expand the tax base. Economic development plans are often considered separate and apart from the comprehensive plan, because the economic development plan may have more of a short range (one to five year) orientation. Nevertheless, long range goals, objectives and policies are needed to provide the context for short range economic development actions. Even if there is not a section of the plan devoted to economic development, there should be consideration of the following basics somewhere in the document:

- Where will land be reserved for industrial, commercial, and office development? How much land should be reserved for these purposes?
- What is the existing industrial and employment base of the community. Are existing sources of jobs and tax revenue growing or declining?
- What types of businesses and industries does the community hope to develop and attract in the future? What must be done to attract them?
- What kind of public sector capital improvements, services and programs are needed to retain desirable existing businesses, attract new businesses, and help them grow? Examples might be improved roads, airports, schools, or business financing.

Community Facilities

The plan should provide goals, objectives, policies and proposals for major public buildings and facilities such as water and sewer systems. The plan should take a long-range approach to these facilities. The Capital Improvements Program, discussed later, will focus on a shorter range action plan for the highest priority community facilities. Some of the types of community facilities that may be included in comprehensive plans include parks and recreational facilities; fire and police stations; city halls and county courthouses; public museums, theaters and convention centers; libraries; public schools; water, sanitary sewer, sewage treatment and storm drainage systems; and solid waste disposal (landfills, incinerators or composting facilities.)

Most of the facilities listed above can be viewed as systems. Parks and recreation needs, for example, can't be addressed by a single facility or type of park. Instead, there are different types of parks, each with their own standards for site selection, size, service area/population, and basic amenities. Neighborhood parks serve an area of about one square mile, should be a minimum of 5 acres, and should be located in the interior of a neighborhood, away from arterial streets. Improvements should be primarily for elementary school aged children and younger. Community parks should serve several neighborhoods or four to eight square miles, should have a minimum site size of 20 acres, and should be located on an arterial street for ease of access. Improvements should be designed with all age groups in mind. Regional may be in excess of 100 acres and serve an entire city, county or region.

Basic information sources on planning and development standards for community facilities systems are available in at least two widely used texts: Chapin's Urban Land Use Planning and De Chiara's Planning Design Criteria. Professional groups, such as the National Recreation and Parks Association, state educational agencies, and librarians associations publish standards for their respective facilities. Obviously, the staff of city or county departments providing these facilities are valuable resources and should be included in the project team.

For the purposes of the comprehensive plan document, it may be desirable to keep the level of detail in plans for community facilities very general and conceptual, not going beyond goals, objectives, policies and a graphic depicting a system-wide plan. These general conceptual plans would then form the basis for more specific "facility plans", dealing with the subject matter in more detail and including cost estimates, funding sources and perhaps designs for specific facilities.

Land Use. The land use plan is often viewed as the key element of the comprehensive plan. The land use plan will be used constantly by planners, planning commissioners, and elected officials as the basis and justification for zoning decisions. At a minimum, the land use plan should include a map depicting the general character, location and extent of recommended land uses in the planning area 20 to 30 years in the future. The plan should also provide policies to guide land development. The land use plan map should not be used in isolation; its recommendations should be considered within the context of the written policies.

Here's an example of how the map and policies interact.

Suppose the land use plan map proposes commercial development at most locations where two arterial streets intersect. This is generally

sound planning, but there needs to be some consideration of how the commercial development will affect any nearby residential properties. The plan might contain written policies like these:

- 1) There shall be no street connections, other than arterials, between commercial developments and residential neighborhoods.
- 2) Buffer strips, consisting of landscaped open space and an opaque landscaping screen at least six feet in height, shall be required along any property line where commercial development abuts residential development.
- 3) Outdoor loading docks, shipping receiving, and garbage disposal facilities shall not be located within 100 feet of any residential property line.

These policies would be used to provide guidance for discretionary approval of site plans and revision of zoning ordinance development standards. Without the policies, the literal interpretation of the land use plan map could result in incompatible residential and commercial developments.

The information needed to prepare the land use plan comes from several places, including: land use and demographic data and analyses prepared in the inventory and analysis phase of the process; input from citizens, developers, and other participants in workshops, hearings and surveys; and principles, concepts and standards from the planning and land development professions. One of the best sources of the latter is the Urban Land Institute's Community Builder's Handbook series. Individual volumes of this series focus on residential, commercial, industrial, business park, office and downtown development. The methods and standards advocated by the Handbooks are generally well respected by both planners and developers.

Two basic approaches to land use plan maps appear in comprehensive plans. One approach is to produce a map that, while not as detailed or specific as a zoning map, shows major land uses approximately "to scale". Natural or man made features are often used to define boundaries between land uses. The projected acreage needed for each category land use is calculated and distributed throughout the planning area, using the particular locational standards for each land use and keeping in mind the need for compatibility and orderliness. Urban Land Use Planning by Chapin provides a good methodology for this approach. The benefit of this kind of map is that it minimizes the need for interpretation, since its recommendations are specific and meant to be taken at face value. The problem with this approach is that the map becomes outdated because worthwhile land use proposals not foreseen by the plan are approved.

Another approach is to prepare a schematic, conceptual plan that illustrates the major proposals for the form the community is to take. Instead of scaling in a projected need for a 20 acre shopping center on a specific parcel of land, a symbol, such as a red dot, would be located at an appropriate intersection. Details of the development, such as which of the four sides of the intersection it will be located on and exactly how big it is are left to be worked out in the zoning process. The written policy content of the plan is very important when working with a schematic land use plan map. A combination schematic/policy plan can be very effective because it provides guidance on what the community hopes to achieve in terms of urban form, quality of development and relationships between land uses, while leaving the details of site selection and specific land use mix to the developers. A disadvantage of the schematic approach is that, since the map is not literal, it requires some interpretation. It also puts more reliance on written policies.

Land use regulations and capital improvements programming are used to implement the land use plan. They are discussed later in this manual.

Transportation. The transportation element of the comprehensive plan covers, at a minimum, major roads and highways, and may also include mass transit, pedestrian and bicycle routes, airports, and waterborne transportation facilities such as ports and ship channels.

For an urban or suburban jurisdiction, the following essentials should be covered by the transportation plan:

Definitions and standards (right of way requirements and paved surface width) for the major roadway types and an explanation of their functions. The major roadway types are freeways (or limited access highways); arterial roads, collector roads, and local or minor streets. Arterials and collectors may be broken down into primary and secondary facilities. Clear definitions of these roadway types are very important. If the land use plan is based on the idea that a certain road is an arterial, but it actually has all the functional characteristics of a minor collector, there will be major problems and controversy over land use and traffic decisions.

A major street and highway plan map, showing a proposed network of freeways, arterials and collectors. This plan should show the ultimate, "built out" network; it may be necessary to show road connections and extensions that are thirty or more years in the future in order to show the complete network.

Policies regarding the relationship of land development to the roadway network. Issues that might be addressed include "how frequent should curb cuts and minor streets intersect arterial streets" and "what types

of land uses should be encouraged or prohibited along freeways?"

Policies specifying who will pay for major road improvements needed to support new development: the public or private sector?

Policies setting standards for the geographic areas served by transit, sidewalks and bikeways.

Detailed transportation studies, computer modeling and engineering work are needed to determine the precise alignment, design and timing of major transportation improvements; it is not necessary or practical to do this work as part of the comprehensive plan. The comprehensive plan should outline the basic policies and standards and show the general layout of the major road network.

In preparing the transportation plan, representatives of local public works, traffic engineering, and transit agencies and the state transportation agency should be consulted or included on the planning team.

Capital Improvements Program. A capital improvements program (CIP) is a multi-year schedule for financing and construction of major public facilities such as roads, parks, buildings and sewers. A five or six year time frame is commonly used. The first year of the CIP is adopted each year as a part of the city or county operating budget. The CIP can be prepared as a part of the comprehensive plan, but more often it is a separate, annually updated planning document. The CIP has been described as a "mid-range (as opposed to long-range) bridge" between the comprehensive planning process and day-to-day implementation of the plan. Preparing the CIP requires participation by the planning, engineering, and finance departments, as well as every department involved in building or operating capital facilities.

Steps in a basic CIP process include:

- 1) Finance department provides a financial analysis indicating what funding sources are available and the maximum recommended level of new debt that can be assumed to finance the CIP.
- 2) Planning department meetings with all participating departments to explain the process to be followed. A "CIP Manual" explaining what is expected of participants is distributed.
- 3) A package of project request forms is distributed to all participants. The completed forms should explain the nature, justification, cost, funding source, and location of each project requested. Maps and photos are often included.

4) Projects are ranked according to priorities by a committee. Usually, the top priority ("Priority A") is reserved for projects required to meet minimum public safety regulations or needs. An example would be replacement of a deteriorated bridge that has been cited as unsafe. Other levels of priority could be "Priority B", projects essential to providing adequate service to the public; "Priority C", desirable to meet the demand for services; and "Priority D", desirable, but deferrable, projects.

5) The annual costs for the total list of projects are calculated. Adjustments must be made to bring cost in line with financing capabilities. If there has not been citizen involvement up to this point, this is a good time to review the projects and priorities with citizens to get their viewpoints on what should be funded.

6) Using the priority rankings, financial capabilities, citizen input, and comprehensive plan proposals for guidance, a draft CIP is prepared for review by the planning commission and elected officials.

7) Revisions are made based on the outcome of public hearings and directives from the elected officials. The revised document is adopted and the process repeats itself each year.

IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPREHENSIVE PLANS

There are three major tools for implementing comprehensive plans. These include land use regulations, capital improvements programming, and voluntary compliance by the private sector. This section will focus on land use regulations. The capital improvements plan discussed above. Voluntary compliance with the plan, which will not be discussed in detail, occurs when private developers build in accordance with the plan because its proposals offer them sound financial opportunities or simply because their own objectives happen to coincide with the plan.

Zoning. Zoning regulations consist of an ordinance and an official zoning map. The ordinance establishes a number of zoning districts, provides a list of permitted land uses in each district, specifies development standards such as minimum lot size, depth of yards and maximum ratio of floor area to site area in each district. The map designates a zoning district classification for each parcel of land in the jurisdiction. The process used to change the classification of a parcel of land, known as rezoning, is subject to the legal requirements and procedures contained in the state planning and zoning enabling law.

Advertised public hearings are held by the planning commission and governing body. Public comment for and against the rezoning is heard. The planning commission makes a recommendation, which is passed along to the elected officials for final action. (In some jurisdictions, rezoning requests denied by the planning commission simply "die" and are not passed on to the elected body.)

All zoning ordinances list "permitted uses" for each zone. Permitted uses are automatically allowed in the appropriate zones, provided all development standards are complied with. Most ordinances also include uses subject to conditional approval. A use permit or special exception must be approved for these uses, following public hearing procedures similar to those for a zoning change. The major difference between conditional uses and permitted uses is this: a rezoning must be either approved or denied. If it is approved, any of the permitted use are allowed on the property. In the case of a conditional use, the application can be approved, denied, or approved with conditions. The conditions would require site improvements or operating policies intended to make the conditional use more compatible with surrounding properties. Using a day care center as an example, a use permit for the day care center might be conditioned upon providing a circular driveway for dropping off children and operating hours might be limited to 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM. These conditions would protect neighbors from undue traffic and noise impacts.

Rezoning should be consistent with the policies and proposals of the comprehensive plan. Aside from consistency with the plan, other factors to be considered are compatibility with nearby development, adequacy of roads, utilities and other services for the development that could result from the rezoning, and the impact of the rezoning on future development patterns. Demonstrating that the original designation was a mistake or that conditions have changed to the extent that the original zoning no longer makes sense are other considerations used to justify rezonings.

Over the past thirty years, the link between zoning and comprehensive planning has become more and more important. The courts are more likely to support zoning decisions based on adopted comprehensive plans than decisions made arbitrarily. Today, there is a trend toward linking the text of zoning ordinances to comprehensive plan policies. Some states, most notably Florida, Oregon, and California, require, rather than encourage, consistency between comprehensive plans and zoning decisions.

Subdivision Regulations. Subdivision regulations do not restrict the use of property by land use category; that is left to the zoning ordinance. The subdivision ordinance provides the standards and procedures for dividing land into parcels for sale or development. The ordinance includes standards for the shape of lots, their access to roads, and design of roads and utilities.

Some of the types of comprehensive plan policies that might be implemented by a subdivision ordinance include: prohibitions against dense development in floodplains or on hillsides; requirements that subdivision streets be linked to streets in adjacent subdivisions to promote larger scale neighborhoods; and a requirement that each lot have its own frontage on a public street to avoid creating future slums.

Environmental Regulations. There are many regulatory tools to implement the environmental policies of the comprehensive plan. Most jurisdictions have floodplain ordinances that restrict and control development in flood hazard areas. Some cities and counties have erosion and sedimentation control ordinances that require developers to take precautions to prevent silt from being washed off graded land into streams. Many cities have adopted "tree ordinances which require preservation of significant trees or stands of trees, or require replacement of any trees cut for development with new trees. The Federal government has enacted regulations protecting tidal and non-tidal wetland areas. State agencies are involved in enforcement of these regulations, and many jurisdictions have adopted their own wetlands protection ordinances. In coastal areas, many states and localities have

adopted special water quality and dune protection ordinances.

Infrastructure Financing Ordinances. A growing area of land use regulation consists of ordinances intended to provide funding for the streets, utilities, schools and parks that new development may necessitate. Impact fees assess charges on new development based on projected costs of providing new public facilities and services. A new branch of the planning profession, fiscal impact analysis, has evolved to prepare the studies assessing the public costs of new developments and justifying the impact fees imposed to recover the costs. Another new technique is the development agreement. The infrastructure needs and costs are identified and reduced to writing. The locality and the developer sign the agreement, with the developer agreeing to build a certain square footage of taxable development or create a certain number of jobs; the locality agrees to build certain infrastructure, to be financed by tax revenues from the project or with funds provided by the developer. Some states, including Virginia, allow a mechanism called "conditional zoning". Although "contract zoning", whereby zoning approval is exchanged for right of way, land, cash or other valuable considerations is regarded as illegal, conditional zoning has been found legally acceptable in some states. The conditional zoning applicant "proffers" off-site public improvements needed for his or her project voluntarily applies to the governing body to include these proffers in the rezoning ordinance.

CONCLUSION

Comprehensive planning fills a special niche in the process of local government. Preparing a comprehensive plan gives a wide range of participants an opportunity to formulate a positive vision for the future, learning from past mistakes and taking advantage of strategic opportunities to create a better community. The plan encourages long-range thinking and puts the public interest above private interests. A basic policy statement for the community's future physical development is made available to guide private developers in planning their projects and to provide elected and appointed decision makers a policy context for making major and minor decisions. The process is difficult, frustrating and time-consuming, but without it communities develop by accident rather than by design.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

NOMINAL GROUP TECHNIQUE APPLIED TEAM PROBLEM SOLVING

Goals

1. To increase creativity and participation in team meetings involving a problem-solving and/or fact-finding task.
2. To develop or expand the team members' perception of critical issues within a specified problem area.
3. To obtain the input of as many individual team members as possible without the dysfunction of unbalanced participation.

Time Required

Two hours.

Materials

- A copy of the Nominal Group Technique Task Form for each team member.
- Several 3" x 5" cards for voting, or
- Copies of the Sample Ballot Card (Figure 2)
- Blank paper and a pencil for each team member.
- A newsprint flip chart and several felt-tipped markers.
- Masking tape for posting newsprint.

NOMINAL GROUP TECHNIQUE APPLIED TEAM PROBLEM SOLVING

Page Two

Physical Setting

A room with a table and chairs for the team members. Plenty of wall space should be available for posting newsprint.

Process

1. The process leader states that the role of everyone present is to contribute his or her perceptions, expertise, and experience to defining the critical issues within the problem at. The leader stresses that the theme of the experience is "problem centering" rather than solution finding."
2. After announcing that the approach to be used during this session is the nominal group technique, the leader states the issue to be centered upon, and asks each participant to write down his/her ideas on the named problem or issue.
3. Each participant writes down his/her ideas on the provided Nominal Group Technique Task Form. This part of the activity should be done silently and independently. Participants who finish first should take time to review their lists until all participants have finished this step.
4. Next, the ideas are presented "round robin" style. The ideas are written down on a blackboard or flip chart for all members to see. Use the format shown in Figure 1, attached. No discussion of the ideas should occur until every person's ideas have been presented and written down for general viewing.

Participants may use the blank paper and pencil provided to record reactions and questions to the issues as they occur.

NOTE: A time-saving variation of steps 1, 2, and 3 would be to distribute the Nominal Group Technique Task Form to each participant prior to the meeting. Each participant would fill out the form and return it to the process leader prior to the meeting. The process leader would come to the meeting with the prepared flip chart of ideas (Figure 1). Meeting time could then be used to restate the ideas, and proceed with the voting.

5. After the ideas have been presented round robin style, and are listed on the prepared flip chart, there is an open discussion of the ideas for the purpose of clarification and evaluation. This part of the discussion should be spontaneous and unstructured.

After the discussion, a secret ballot is taken during which each group member votes for preferred solutions or ranks the choices and goals presented.

NOMINAL GROUP TECHNIQUE APPLIED TEAM PROBLEM SOLVING

Page Three

The process leader may ask each member to rank all of the items listed, or if the list is too long, a certain percentage may be rated (i.e., rate your top 10, or top five items). On the 3" x 5" ballot card provided, place the number of the item you are ranking. Each participant ranks each of the choices listed on the flip chart, by placing the item number in the left hand corner. In the right hand corner, each item is assigned a rating. The item with the felt strongest about should receive the highest number, and the ones that are felt to be least important, with a lower number. The adopted decision is the one that receives the most votes or the highest rankings.

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❖ **Nominal Group Technique Task Form**

Instructions: List all of the facts and resources that your team will need to solve the problem stated below. Do not discuss this task with anyone; work silently and independently. If you complete the task with time to spare, please sit quietly and reconsider your list until everyone has finished and you have been given further instructions.

Problem:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____
17. _____
18. _____
19. _____
20. _____

Figure 1

Item Number	Ranks Assigned by Team Members	Average of Ranks
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

Figure 1. Example of Newsprint Tally Setup

[illegible]

*Substitute “yes” or “no” for Rank Order in a document review.

29

Figure 2

APPENDIX 2

EXERCISE B

Roleplaying Scenario: Foothills County

Foothills County is located thirty miles from a major southeastern city. It has always been a stable, rural county with little population growth. Now, however, suburban growth from the city has begun to create subdivisions, strip shopping centers, overcrowded schools and increased traffic. The County Commission has responded to this by addressing growth-related problems only when they become intolerable. The County Executive believes that, correctly managed, all this growth can be beneficial to the county and its residents. He is afraid, however, that if things continue the way they are going, the county will suffer a decline in quality of life and will need a tremendous tax increase to catch up with all the unmet demands for new services and infrastructure. He has prepared a proposal for preparation of a comprehensive plan, capital improvements program, and land use control ordinances. He must convince the Commission that the benefits of this process outweigh the costs.

Costs include:

- financial outlay for the planning process
- operating costs for staffing a planning department
- political unpopularity of anything that would restrict individual property rights
- and the political risks and uncertainty surrounding the whole concept of planning and regulating growth.

Your class will be divided into three groups.

- One group will represent the County Commission. They will have to decide whether to approve the Executive's proposal to prepare the plan.
- The second group will play the roles of the County Executive and his staff. They will have to present the pro-planning arguments to the Commission.
- Individuals in the third group will portray "special interests": major property owners, subdivision residents, potential new industries, the chamber of commerce and environmental activists.

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The basic goal of the university public service effort continues to be to bring to the citizens of Tennessee—their business, their industry, and their government—the problem-solving capabilities uniquely embodied within their statewide university system.

Public service includes all services offered to those outside the University, including teaching in certain non-degree situations, technical assistance, and applied research which are conducted specifically at the request and for the benefit of non-University organizations in Tennessee.

IPS provides (1) a systemwide focal point for urban and public service, (2) a means to coordinate the various system-level public service activities, and (3) an organizational base for communication and program development that relates to both outside service clientele of the University and the campuses of the University system.

The operating units of the Institute and their dates of creation are: Center for Government Training (1967), Center for Industrial Services (1963), County Technical Assistance Service (1973), Municipal Technical Advisory Service (1949), and Center for Telecommunications and Video (1989).



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