



Why do communities need up-to-date, detailed Master Plans?

- to prevent conflicts between landowners or between private and public interests
- to consider direct and indirect effects of community activities on landowners in the community
- to promote or discourage certain land uses or activities
- to prepare for infrastructure requirements and costs
- to qualify, quantify, and guide community assets
- to provide backing for “on the ground” zoning ordinances.

Why shouldn't communities just copy another perfectly functional Master Plan?

Because that's cheating, and cheaters never prosper!

- What may be good for one community may actually go entirely against the interests of another:
- Visions, goals, and objectives can (and should!) differ greatly from one community to another. And even if goals are similar, feasible courses of action can be widely varied.

*Issues are community specific.
Communities are land area specific.
Land areas are people specific.*

When should a community revise their Plan?

- When the plan does not give any direction regarding a pertinent community issue (No Direction).
- When the plan does not give enough guidance for useful instruction (Inadequate Direction).
- When the plan does not reflect the prevailing public interest on community issues (Misguided Direction).
- When community factors change to the extent that the plan does not capture the spirit and intent of community residents.
- In general, a formalized review process should occur about every five years.

How can Cooperative Extension help?

Detailed Introduction to the Master Plan Process.

Our goal is to provide community leaders and interested members of the public an introduction to the Master Plan process, particularly geared towards the revision of already existing master plans. We will outline three major phases of the master plan process in a thorough, quick discussion (see following pages for details):

- I.) Planning Phase
- II.) Preparation Phase
- III.) Implementation Phase

Public Involvement Assistance

Cooperative Extension can give guidance on effective public involvement techniques for gathering information for the Master Plan revision process.

We can conduct and facilitate a public forum specifically geared to help provide input for the Master Plan revision process.

We can also help your community construct survey material for use in reaching a broader population segment of your community, including assistance on survey design, acceptable sampling methods, distribution techniques, and instruction on how to tabulate and use results.

Resource Connections

While we cannot write your community's Master Plan or develop zoning regulations for you, we can help link you to information sources where you may be able to find specialists or other planners with the same types of issues and questions that you have, or point you towards assessment and analysis tools helpful in the preparation phase of the process.

We are in the process of constructing an entire database of information that would be useful to municipalities undergoing revision processes all over the state.

Follow-up

We are here for you as a continuing resource to address questions resulting from the Master Plan process, either in formulation, implementation, or monitoring after the whole process is completed!

Introduction to the Master Plan Revision Process - an Outline

I. Planning Phase

A. Planning to Plan

- allocation of time, money, and energy
- establish a planning committee
- identify and notify key community stakeholders
- make realistic projections for how long the process is going to take
- determine the life-span of the plan
- notify key individuals (stakeholders and government bodies) who may have tight schedules or excessive time constraints

B. Structure and Schedule the Process

- enumerate all of the planning activities
- assign individuals to each identified task
- schedule an expected due date

C. Organize the Thought Process

- determine what kind of role the public will play
- top-down or bottom-up participation?
- decide on a plan format: chapters, sections, themes, etc.
- decide what role governing bodies will play

II. Preparation Phase

A. The Vision Statement

- gives direction to the development of goals and objectives
- should reflect what the community intends or wishes to become (or remain)

B. Resource Inventory

- data collection phase on existing community components
- what kinds of data are needed and how much should be collected?
- mapping components
- common resource inventory categories:
 1. Natural Resources
 2. Housing
 3. Transportation
 4. Public Services and Facilities
 5. Public Utilities
 6. Business and Industry
 7. Recreation
 8. Conservation and Preservation
 9. Demographics

- find a balance between too much data and not enough

C. Identify Problems, Issues, and Concerns (Strengths, Opportunities, Weaknesses, Threats)

- these will function as the foundation for goals and objectives, and therefore are the foundation of the whole master plan
- engaging the public at this early stage of the process can be very helpful, and is in fact necessary to make the plan accurately reflect the interests of the community.
- some potential issue areas to consider:

General economy and income
Satisfaction with local services
Police and fire protection
Cultural atmosphere
Safety and security
Attitudes towards local business
Visual appearance of community
Unique qualities of community

Attitudes towards growth
Employment Opportunities
Educational assessment
Emergency services
Arts and entertainment
Opportunities for elderly
Stability of property values
Recreational opportunities
for children and adults

Availability and affordability of
housing
Health care and social services
Condition of neighborhoods
Opportunities for volunteerism
Reasons why people leave/come
Opportunities for youth
Opportunities for tourism
Open space considerations

D. Create Goals and Objectives

- Goals: outline things you want to achieve
- Objectives: determine how you are going to go about getting the things you want.
- Develop statements of policy or recommendations outlining what needs to be done and how the time necessary for selecting goals and objectives will vary depending on how homogeneous the community is.
- Involve the public so that the plan accurately reflects the interests of the community members, especially if public involvement has not been obtained before this time.
- Utilize the inadequacies of old plan as a springboard for developing new goals and objectives.

E. Create and Evaluate Plan Options

F. Select a Preferred Plan

III. Implementation Phase

A. Implement

B. Monitor