

# INTRODUCTION TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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*"Planning is the triumph of logic over dumb luck"*  
- Anonymous as quoted by David L. Pugh, AICP

*"The best offense is a good defense"*  
- Anonymous as quoted by Alan M. Efrussy, AICP

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the importance, purposes and elements of the comprehensive plan. This discussion represents the author's perspective and recognizes that there are a number of ways to prepare a comprehensive plan and that different elements may be included in plans, reflecting the particular orientation or emphasis of the community. What is important is that a community has a comprehensive plan.

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## **Definition of a Comprehensive Plan**

A comprehensive plan can be defined as a long-range plan intended to direct the growth and physical development of a community for a 20 to 30 year or longer period. Ideally, and if feasible, it is appropriate to try to prepare a comprehensive plan for the ultimate development of a community. This will allow for ultimate utility, transportation, and community facilities planning, and therefore can aid in a more time and cost-effective planning and budgeting program. The plan usually includes policies relevant to the development of various physical elements in the community such as

transportation, housing, recreation, and public facilities. It provides for the distribution and relationships of various land uses. The plan also serves as a basis for future physical development recommendations. These recommendations are supported by a set of goals and objectives drawn from existing conditions and the desires and aspirations of the citizens.

Policies are also established to assist in the achievement of the broader goals. Finally, programs and proposals are selected to fulfill the policies deemed appropriate for the community.

T. J. Kent, Jr., a major authority on urban planning, defines the comprehensive plan as a community's official statement of policies regarding desirable future physical development. He states that the plan should be comprehensive in scope, general in nature, and long-range in perspective.

The comprehensive plan is the single most important document for managing a community's physical growth because it can (and should) consolidate and coordinate physical planning needs and goals and policies, as well as all the separate community studies that address various aspects of physical development in the city. Further, comprehensive planning, to be effective, has to be an on-going process, involving periodic evaluation and updating; the comprehensive plan document, therefore, is one component of this process.

To further aid in its effectiveness, the comprehensive plan has to be based on a shared vision of the community. This vision is constructed through consensus-based planning. It should also be recognized that the planning process itself can be understood as a product. The continuing, on-going nature of contemporary comprehensive planning involves learning, mind/consciousness changing, community building, "healing of wounds", constructing new relations, and setting (and refining) direction. These functions are part of the roles of all who are involved in the preparation, implementation, and updating of the community's comprehensive plan.

### **The Importance of Planning in Our Society**

"Most every kind of business undertaking, however trivial, is thoroughly planned out before ever being undertaken. Who would build a structure of any consequence without first having secured the best of plans? Of how much more far-reaching consequence is the planning and building of a city? Not one individual is concerned nor one generation, but generations to come will pay very dearly for our mistakes of today.

It is an easy matter, for several reasons, to begin correcting our past mistakes right now. For changes become more costly in ratio to the increase in area and population. Then, too, a thing so easily accomplished if done in time may, if neglected become quite

impossible to alter later on in any way, thereby becoming a nuisance or great inconvenience in after years. We should certainly be broad enough to plan for the next as well as our own generation. For only a little forethought now may save untold expense later, besides adding greatly to the comfort of the present."

These words, written to the McKinney (Texas) Courier-Gazette newspaper by Miss Bessie Heard in 1916 concerning the need for a "definite city plan" for McKinney, Texas, are as true today as the day they were written. Cities may have developed sound planning documents in the past. These plans may have served those cities well, directing the growth and development of the community. However, times and physical, social, economic and environmental conditions change. What was a sound and rational decision concerning future development five or ten years ago, based on available information at the time, may not be a desirable solution today. A fundamental purpose, therefore, of the comprehensive plan is to re-evaluate past planning efforts based on current conditions in the community and its environs, and to project a desirable direction for future growth and development of the city: its vision, if you will. A comprehensive plan is a valuable growth-management and development tool for communities regardless of their size -- whether a four-hundred population village or an eight million population metropolis.

### **The Purpose and Use of a Comprehensive Plan**

**Purpose of the Plan** - The comprehensive plan should be used as a guide for public decisions which affect the physical development and maintenance of the municipality. For example, the plan may be used as a basis for:

1. Development of detailed physical plans for sub-areas of the municipality;
2. Analysis of subdivision regulations, zoning standards and maps, and other implementation tools;
3. The location and design of thoroughfares and implementation of other major transportation facilities and programs;
4. Identification of areas to be served with utility development or extensions;
5. The acquisition and development of sites for community facilities;
6. The acquisition and protection of major open space;

7. Provision of a framework by which short-range plans (zoning requests, subdivision review, site plan analysis), and day-to-day decisions can be evaluated with regard to their long-range benefit to the community; and,
8. Preparation of zoning regulations so that they can be adopted in accordance with a comprehensive plan.

**Use Of The Plan** - The maps and figures which describe the recommended locations of various land uses and facilities should not be assumed to be the entirety of the plan. They are only one component of the comprehensive plan. Their primary role is to show how policies and standards are to be applied to the actual physical form of the community. Recognize, however, that commitment of citizens to planning is fundamental to the implementation of the recommendations made by maps, figures, and other components in of the plan. Keeping in mind the welfare of the total community in the decision-making process, a user of the comprehensive plan is encouraged to consider the following procedural steps:

Step 1: Refer to the future land use plan text and map to ensure over-all consistency of pending decisions with the plan;

Step 2: Refer to the other elements of the plan (i.e., residential, commercial, transportation, etc.) for appropriate goals, objectives, and policies;

Step 3: Refer to related plans, technical information and/or individualized characteristics of the issue under study;

Step 4: Assess the public interests, the technical nature and/or time constraint of the issue under study; and,

Step 5: Evaluate information and take appropriate planning and decision-making action.

Used in this manner, the community's comprehensive plan will aid in implementing a sound growth-management program.

### **A Note on the Types of American City Plans**

There are many varieties of comprehensive plans. For purposes of this chapter, however, plans for American cities can essentially be characterized by three types:

#### **A Physical Plan:**

1. In some cases, characterized by a future land use plan map only;

2. A plan report (or separate plan components) addressing thoroughfares, open space, utilities, and land use mainly;
3. Typically have no goals or objectives;
4. Typical of U.S. plans in the late 1920's through the 1960's (although, of course, there were exceptions);
5. Generally exemplified through the U.S. Department of HUD "701" requirements of 1954;
6. Advantages: At least provides some basis for the management of future physical development of the city; and,
7. Disadvantages: Lacks the depth, stability, and flexibility of land use decisions afforded by goals and objectives.

- **A Policy Plan:**

1. Contains only policy discussions, with no future land use plan;
2. Characterized many plans during the 1970's through the mid-1980's. A type of this management style is reflected in the "management by objectives (MBO)" approach which was practiced by business, industry, and government during this period, and continues to be a management practice favored by some;
3. Advantages: Provides broad-based guidelines for physical growth;
4. Disadvantages:
  - A. Does not graphically depict land use locations, and therefore does not visually discern land use compatibility and spatial relationships, the physical form of the community, or urban design opportunities;
  - B. Makes it difficult to prepare master thoroughfare plans, since the plan cannot accurately portray where land uses and/or densities will be and therefore cannot efficiently predict traffic generation or needed thoroughfare rights-of-way.
  - C. Difficult to prepare the city's zoning ordinance and zoning district maps, since these should be based on future land use plans;
  - D. Difficult to locate residential areas in relationship to community facilities, schools, parks, commercial and industrial areas; and,

- E. Difficult to prepare capital improvement programs that can be linked to growth-staging of land uses.
- F. Difficult to prepare long-range utility plans, since such utility plans are best made in conjunction with existing land use and future land use plans with associated densities and configurations.

- **Combination Physical Plan with Goals and Objectives:**

1. Characterized many plans from the mid-1970's through the present;
2. Contains goals and policies plus a future land use plan, supportive maps and illustrations, and text describing past conditions with directions for future actions or visions of the city;
3. Advantages:
  - A. Provides a technical and policy basis for land use decisions and locations;
  - B. Provides depth to decisions regarding physical development of the community; and,
  - C. Provides the opportunity for consistency of plan implementation through several generations of planning staff, planning and zoning commissions, and city councils.
  - D. Provides a more defensible basis for establishing zoning districts and their supportive requirements.
4. Disadvantages: There appear to be few, if any, disadvantages to this type of plan. Some criticisms have been that some social-oriented issues such as education and certain welfare programs are not typically addressed. However, this can be remedied if communities undertake these special studies as components or special-function studies based on the physical-orientation of the comprehensive plan.

**Other Types of City Planning Programs** - There are other kinds of planning programs and theories. Examples include, but are not limited to: continuous city planning (M. Branch, 1960's), delphi method (1970's); value constitutions (1970's); visioning (1980's); strategic planning (1970's and into the present); and others. Broader discussion is beyond the scope of this chapter. This

author believes the combination physical plan with goals and objectives outlined above is the most productive for comprehensive plans.

**Elements of a Comprehensive Plan** -There are several ways to organize and format the comprehensive plan document. What is important is to ensure that the major components of the physical development of the community are evaluated in conjunction with the goals and policies of the city. Text should be supported with necessary illustrative material. The following outline suggests an organization that will serve to address the major physical development needs in a community:

**Section 1: Base Studies**

1. Introduction
  - A. Historical influences
  - B. Relationship to the community's previous planning studies  
Comprehensive plans should be related to previous community planning activities, so the planning process remains continuous and evolutionary
2. Framework of the city.
  - A. Regional
3. Environmental Factors
  - A. Drainage
  - B. Soils, slopes, elevation
  - C. Floodplains and other water bodies
  - D. Vegetative and wildlife resources
4. Economic Development, Population, and Social Characteristics
  - A. Economic base
  - B. Historical population by age and sex, and other demographic characteristics
5. Existing Land Use
  - A. Categorize each major class of land use by location and acreage
    - (1) Residential, commercial, industrial, public (including unique uses such as military installations, etc.), and parks, recreation and open space
    - (2) Prepare map showing location of types of land uses
6. Transportation
  - A. Transportation systems and modes
    - (1) Motor vehicle
      - (a) Automobile
      - (b) Trucking/Goods Movement (and routing)
    - (2) Rail
      - (a) Freight

- (b) Passenger
  - (3) Air (passenger and cargo)
  - (4) Mass transportation
    - (a) Fixed guideway (light or heavy rail, commuter rail, people mover, etc.)
    - (b) Bus
    - (c) Dial-a-ride
    - (d) Van pooling
  - (5) Hike/bike/jogging trails system
  - (6) Major thoroughfare system
    - (a) Local streets
    - (b) Collectors
    - (c) Arterials
    - (d) Freeways and expressways
  
- 7. Parks, recreation and open space
  - A. Neighborhood parks
  - B. Community parks
  - C. Regional parks
  - D. Golf courses
  - E. Other open space/recreational amenities (either public or private)
  
- 8. Schools
  - A. Elementary
  - B. Junior High
  - C. Senior High
  - D. College and University
  - E. Parochial or private
  - F. Other (public and/or private)
  - G. Enrollment vs. school capacity
  
- 9. Housing
  - A. Age of structures
  - B. Owner/renter occupied
  - C. Number of dwelling units by type
  - D. Housing condition
  - E. Neighborhood revitalization opportunities
  
- 10. Community Facilities
  - A. Municipal buildings
  - B. Police
  - C. Fire
  - D. Library
  
- 11. Utility System
  - A. Water



- B. Sanitary sewer
  - C. Storm sewer
  - D. Solid waste
  - E. Natural gas, telephone, electric, cable T.V.
12. Community physical needs, problems, and opportunities (to be translated into goals, objectives, and policies)

**Section 2: Goals, Objectives and Policies**

1. Definition of goals, objectives and policies
2. Potential conflict in application between goals, objectives, and policies
3. Issues, opportunities, and problems related to the physical development of the community
  - A. Community's values
  - B. Uniqueness
  - C. Connective opportunities
  - D. Potential application of new planning concepts
4. Goals, objectives and policies should be prepared for each of the major elements in Base Studies, as well as for plan implementation
5. The Future Land Use Plan (see Section 3 following) should graphically reflect as many goals as possible
6. Growth strategies for annexations, utility extension, redevelopment, revitalization, etc.

**Section 3: The Future Plan**

1. Urban design standards and criteria
2. Future community facilities requirements
3. Future school plan map
4. Future parks, recreation and open space plan map
  - A. Joint school/park facilities by type
  - B. Open space plan
  - C. Coordination with other cities, county, and/or regional open space systems facilities
5. Utility system plan map
6. Transportation system plan

- A. Use components described under Transportation in Section 1: Base Studies
- B. Integrate, where feasible, the community's multi-modal transportation system
- C. Integrate, where feasible, subregional and/or adjacent city or county multi-modal transportation systems

7. Future land use plan map

- A. This is the most important graphic in the comprehensive plan
- B. The future land use plan map should reflect all the major land use categories
  - (1) This map should be a generalized plan illustrating patterns of land use density, location, configuration, and relationships of the various land use categories, configuration, and relationships of the various land use categories
  - (2) An example set of land use categories (legend) would be as follows:
    - (i) Private Use Of Land
      - (a) Residential
      - (b) Estate (0.5 to 1.5 dwelling units/acre)
      - (c) Low density (3.5 dwelling units/acre)
      - (d) Medium density (6.0 to 12.0 dwelling units/acre)
      - (e) High density (12+ dwelling units/acre)
        - (1) recommended location
        - (2) generalized location (as applicable)
    - (ii) Commercial
      - (a) Retail/community
      - (b) Office and/or office park
      - (c) General commercial
      - (d) Regional shopping center
    - (iii) Industrial
      - (a) Light industry and office-research
      - (b) Heavy industry
    - (iv) Agricultural rural and open space
      - (a) Public Use Of Land
        - (i) Schools--existing and proposed
          - (1) elementary
          - (2) junior high
          - (3) senior high
          - (4) other
        - (ii) Other uses
        - (iii) Parks--existing and proposed
          - (1) Neighborhood
          - (2) Community
          - (3) Regional
          - (4) Other
        - (iv) Floodplain
      - (c) Master Thoroughfare Plan
        - (i) Major thoroughfares
        - (ii) Local street

- (iii) Collector
- (iv) Arterial
- (v) Freeway and expressway

C. As much as possible, the future land use plan should be a graphic representation of the goals, objectives, and policies.

**A Note on Graphics in the Comprehensive Plan** - As the city's population is informed and involved through the comprehensive planning process in establishing and implementing their shared vision of the future, the plan's goals and objectives as well as other plan recommendations will aid in achieving that vision. That vision will be strongly enhanced through the incorporation of effective "visionary graphics" in the plan document.

As opposed to technical maps, site plans, charts, etc., visionary graphics can be free-hand sketches, photos, paintings, or renderings that indicate, for example: (a) how a street can be transformed into a landscaped thoroughfare that ties various land uses together; (b) how a park could look as it relates to surrounding neighborhoods; (c) how various heights of structures, in conjunction with other urban design elements, can frame a major thoroughfare (or freeway) and translate it into an attractive setting; and (d) how a commercial corridor can be translated into an attractive streetscape, with a positive relationship to surrounding residential areas, buffered with landscaping materials.

These are only several examples, of course. Those preparing the comprehensive plan should determine the level of acceptance and/or change, regarding visionary graphics, that can be comfortably accommodated by the planning commission, city council, and general public. Through this process, a consensus can be established regarding "how the community should look". Then, through implementation tools, like the zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, and development reviews, this vision can be created in reality. In summary, "visionary graphics" can capture the public's imagination and aid in understanding complex proposals and concepts. After all, a picture is worth a thousand words.

### **Plan Implementation**

A criticism that is sometimes made regarding the comprehensive plan is: "Hey, its no good; why it just sits on the shelf and gathers dust". This criticism is sometimes justified. If a plan just "sits on the shelf" it is because it has not been implemented. This sometimes occurs because the

planning staff/consultants (or others) who prepared the plan did not adequately involve and inform the citizens, planning commission and/or city council regarding plan implementation. Another reason for non-implementation is lack of linkage of the long-range comprehensive plan to day-to-day planning decisions carried out by the staff, the planning and zoning commission, and/or the council. Yet another reason for "gathering dust" is the failure to consistently keep the long-range physical vision of the community before municipal officials, the development community, and the general public. These pitfalls may be avoided by discussing within the comprehensive plan document those elements that comprise the plan implementation program. Again, implementation is one element in the on-going comprehensive planning process.

The comprehensive plan should contain recommendations for the utilization of land and resources as they relate to the future development of the community. The plan provides the community with a reference framework for undertaking and evaluating development projects in regard to long-range goals. It also provides short-range guidelines for reviewing proposals for site plans, rezonings, and proposed subdivisions of land.

The plan will be useful only to the extent that it is implemented. Implementation will occur as various actions are taken by the municipality and other public agencies, developers, business, industry, and private citizens. These action steps can include voluntary public compliance with the plan proposals, coordination by the planning and zoning commission of plans and proposals made by other levels of government with the recommendations in the plan, and municipal actions taken in regard to site plans, requests for rezonings, and new subdivision proposals.

Many communities already have the tools available that are necessary to implement the comprehensive plan. For example, many cities have adopted and are enforcing zoning and subdivision regulation ordinances. These will help eliminate many of the problems related to future development by giving local governing officials the proper instruments of control necessary to ensure orderly growth. It is especially important to provide adequate regulations for the unincorporated areas within the planning area, since these areas are oftentimes intended to be ultimately annexed. Currently in Texas, municipal zoning does not extend beyond city limits; however, subdivision regulations can be enforced within the city's extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ).

Other mechanisms available to a community to implement its comprehensive plan are described in the following paragraphs.

### **Public Acceptance by Citizens**

Because public acceptance of the comprehensive plan is important, public involvement in plan preparation is essential. Citizens who make individual investment decisions concerning future development must believe that the plan offers sound recommendations for growth issues and, therefore, assures them of both suitable return on and protection for their investment. This assurance will encourage voluntary compliance with the plan. Nevertheless, strong civic leadership, both inside and outside local government, is needed on a continuing basis to publicize the plan, emphasize its value, and encourage its acceptance as a guide to sound community development.

**Actions by the Planning and Zoning Commission** - The community's planning and zoning commission is an advisory body to the city council, and one of the commission's prime responsibilities is to develop plans for the future of the community. A major element in fulfilling this responsibility should be participation in development of the comprehensive plan. The commission should participate with citizens from all parts of the community in a series of public meetings set up for this purpose. It cannot be assumed that agencies or individuals (developers, businesspeople, etc.) will always desire to make their individual plans conform to the community's comprehensive plan. Planning and zoning commissions have authority to review zoning proposals and make recommendations to the city council for their approval or disapproval, and planning commissioners should work to assure that subdivision plats are in conformance with the comprehensive plan.

**Adoption and Review of the Comprehensive Plan by the City Council** - It is recommended that, after public hearings and recommendation by the planning commission, the council should adopt the comprehensive plan. After adoption, the plan should be consistently used by both the commission and the city council as an important reference guide in their decisions regarding future rezonings, subdivisions, site plans, capital expenditures, and other decisions related to the physical growth and development of the community.

**Updating the Plan** - To keep the plan viable, it should be reviewed periodically as new information becomes available. Major reviews of the plan should typically occur every three to five years, with minor revisions being made annually or as necessary. The scope and extent of plan revisions, of course, depends on the rate and trends of growth, the availability of new data, and other changes which might have an effect on the viability of the plan.

## **Zoning Ordinance**

The zoning ordinance is one of the essential tools used for implementing the comprehensive plan. The ordinance contains provisions for regulating the use of property, the size of lots, yards and open spaces, and the height and bulk of structures. In addition, it establishes direct and indirect limitations on population density in areas through minimum lot area requirements. By these legal means for controlling development within the corporate limits, an orderly and desirable pattern of land use can be achieved. Since physical development occurs through individual projects, the zoning ordinance is an important aid in unifying the project planning efforts of many individuals.

Ideally, the zoning district map should reflect the generalized land uses shown on the future land use map in the comprehensive plan document. The future land use map does not legally require developers to build according to its recommendations. However, since the zoning district map is a legally enforceable document, it can require development to take place according to the district designations on the zoning map.

## **Subdivision Regulations**

Portions of the city are developed as a result of the subdivision of individual tracts of land. When street designs are laid out and land is subdivided into lots, the pattern of development becomes established for an indefinite period of time. Once land is subdivided and development takes place, it is usually extremely difficult to change the pattern or intensity of land use. Proper land subdivision is very important, therefore, to avoid problems inherent in inappropriate plat design. The subdivision regulations establish reasonable requirements and procedures that must be followed to protect the general welfare of the community. Subdivision of land involves expenditures (either public or private) for the installation and maintenance of streets, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, water lines, and sewers. The ordinance can be used to coordinate development in various parts of the community and to establish a logical street pattern. The ordinance also protects individuals who purchase lots or homes in a subdivision by assuring them that the design of the subdivision and the improvements installed will meet specific minimum standards. The comprehensive plan should be consulted to make sure subdivisions are compatible with residential neighborhood planning, commercial and industrial development, open space location and easements, and that sufficient rights-of-way are included as reflected on the master thoroughfare plan within the comprehensive plan.

### **Economic Development Program**

Many cities have economic development programs which encompass activities that foster new commercial, industrial and residential development; which provide an environment conducive to existing business growth and expansion and new business start-up; and serve as an ombudsman with the business community to the city government. These programs may include tax abatement, public improvement districts, municipal management districts, tax increment financing districts; etc. All these functions should be coordinated with recommendations in the comprehensive plan.

### **Capital Improvement Program and Capital Budget**

A capital improvement program is a short to mid-range study to identify: (1) public improvements needed in the community; (2) their estimated costs; (3) the anticipated revenues and sources with which to finance them; (4) the relative priorities or importance of the projects; and, (5) the programmed time frame and budget by which such improvements are to be developed. The community's comprehensive plan should be used as a guide to aid in prioritizing and recommending capital improvement items during each fiscal year budget program.

A capital improvement program has several advantages for the community including the following:

1. Projects can be undertaken in their order of urgency;
2. It coordinates projects proposed by all municipal departments, maximizing efficient use of available funds;
3. All municipal projects can be evaluated in relation to each other, eliminating wasteful or overlapping projects;
4. Projects are not prematurely undertaken, but attention is called to community needs;
5. Future city plans are made known to all citizens; and,
6. Annual revision and updating of the capital improvement program permits priorities to be changed and new priorities inserted on a regular basis, and in light of budget opportunities or constraints.

**Impact Fee Ordinance** - Many Texas communities have established impact fee ordinances to determine fees for water facilities, sanitary sewer facilities, or roadway improvements imposed on

new development pursuant to state law, in order to fund or recoup the costs of capital improvements or facilities expansions that are necessitated by and attributable to such new development. The comprehensive plan, again, can provide direction regarding land use assumptions and the application of impact fees.

### **Floodplain Management Studies and Accompanying Stormwater Management Ordinances**

Floodplain area protection and enhancement including use for active and passive recreational activities as well as environmental protection, are essential components of a comprehensive plan. A floodplain management study (where applicable) and accompanying ordinance could provide a city with a program that will aid in ensuring the safety of residents living in proximity to identified floodplain areas, as well as provide direction for the orderly development of flood fringe areas and aid in the identification and preservation of important environmental resources within the community's floodplains.

**Master Water and Wastewater Systems Plan** - Municipalities should have a master water and wastewater systems plan for improvements that will provide the adequacy and reliability necessary for serving the projected growth within the planning area. The future land uses, including type, density, configuration, and location, identified by the comprehensive plan should provide the basis for all land use considerations in this engineering systems study.

### **Coordination with School Districts within the Planning Area**

It is important for coordination to occur between the school district(s) and city during the preparation and implementation of the comprehensive plan. This is necessary so that the plan can aid in realistically reflecting the physical needs of schools, such as sites by types of school, size and location of site(s), and potential timing of construction based on population, location and density.

Such coordination will also aid in joint school-park programs. This can aid in optimizing joint use of contiguous schools and parks. This will increase use potential and can reduce public costs (e.g., parking) through more efficient use of both kinds of sites.

### **Special Area Studies**

The comprehensive plan should make recommendations regarding the general physical development of the entire city. However, certain areas may require more detailed study, which go



beyond the scope of the plan. Such special area studies could evaluate, for example, unique neighborhood problems or opportunities, detailed commercial development elements, specialized corridor problems, transition areas, targeted area plans, or other particular planning issues facing certain areas within the community. Here, again, the comprehensive plan can provide a physical framework for development of these more detailed studies, and further, provide a broader context by which to evaluate the recommendations for special area studies.

### **Annexation Program**

As part of many cities' comprehensive planning programs, the ultimate planning area is comprised of land within the current city limits, the extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ), and areas beyond the city's current jurisdiction. To obtain and protect these areas, the city should undertake an annexation program (where feasible), to be implemented over a period of years, that will ultimately bring all of the planning area within its jurisdiction. This will allow implementation of the future land use plan through the application of zoning districts and subdivision regulations. This process also aids in defining a planning area that is sensitive to logical urban form.

**Consistent Administration of the Plan** - It is important that public officials, decision makers, city staff, public and private development interests, citizens, and special interest groups be committed to work toward the consistent, equitable, and coordinated application and administration of the policies and recommendations in the comprehensive plan. Whenever feasible, city staff and city officials should instigate continued coordinated efforts to implement all phases of the plan.

**Park Dedication Ordinance** - A number of cities have implemented park dedication ordinances as a systematic means of acquiring land and/or fees in lieu of land as a function of residential development. These ordinances should be linked to the master park plan component of the comprehensive plan.

**Public/Private Partnerships** - Increasingly across the nation, partnerships have been established between the public and private sectors. Efficiently programmed and managed, they can be cost and time effective for both sectors. Such partnerships can address a variety of development activities or single projects.

**Intergovernmental Coordination** - As all municipalities typically continue to grow and/or redevelop, it is important that continual coordination occur with surrounding municipalities, to aid in ensuring compatible land use and zoning at the boundaries of nearby or contiguous communities. This process should also be coordinated with county planning and council of governments programs. Intergovernmental coordination will become increasingly more important as Texas cities and regions continue to grow.

**Fiscal Impact Analysis in Conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan** - Fiscal impact analysis addresses the anticipated fiscal impact of major new developments and aids in determining costs to be borne by the city, as well as revenue gains generated by new development. Fiscal impact analysis is a direct reflection of a city council's long-term commitment to ensure quality and self-sustaining economic growth for the benefit of all residents.

A fiscal impact analysis for the comprehensive plan can encompass the entire land area of the city that is envisioned to develop over the time period covered by the plan. The current fiscal year budget can serve as the base for revenue and expenditure data. This data is applied to various existing measures within the community to estimate unit costs for each type of service. An oversimplified example would be to divide the total cost of providing public safety services by the population in order to arrive at a unit rate per capita for the provision of police and fire protection for each citizen. This unit rate is then applied to the forecast population trends for the entire planning period to estimate the future cost of providing the service, in addition to projecting staffing and facility needs. All dollar values in the fiscal impact analysis are typically reflected as constant dollars excluding the effects of annual inflation. The fiscal impact analysis is meant to be a fiscal decision-making aid to the overall process of community development and is not intended to be regulatory in nature. Although it can be an integral component of the comprehensive plan, the fiscal impact analysis may be a separate document from the plan.

**Other Implementation Tools** - Individual communities may utilize other mechanisms that uniquely aid in implementing their comprehensive planning programs. Implementation techniques should be periodically evaluated to ensure that they are providing the required on-going support to the planning

program. By these methods, therefore, the comprehensive plan will not be "gathering dust on the shelf."

### **The Role of Urban Design in the Comprehensive Plan**

"The building of cities is one of man's greatest achievements. The form of his city always has been and always will be a pitiless indicator of the state of his civilization. This form is determined by the multiplicity of decisions made by the people who live in it. In certain circumstances these decisions have interacted to produce a force of such clarity and form that a noble city has been born. It is my premise that a deeper understanding of the interactions of these decisions can give us the insight necessary to create noble cities in our own day."

- Edmund N. Bacon, noted American city planner, architect, and former executive director of the Philadelphia City Planning Commission, in Design of Cities.

**What is Urban Design?** - Urban design is that component of city planning primarily concerned with the functional and visual relationships between people and their physical environment and the means by which those relationships can be improved. As a result, urban design is specifically involved with many areas of planning, including housing, transportation, open space, community facilities, business, industry, and the general relationship between various land uses. Urban design is typically understood to function as an element of the public sector, where it can serve to stimulate, guide, and influence actions of the private sector. Further, guiding the physical design character of public sector uses (e.g. utilities, open space, transportation, etc.) is an important method for improving environmental quality and providing an incentive for private sector investment. It is recommended that an urban design element be included within the comprehensive plan.

The urban design process should be comprehensive. That is, it should be influential in integrating the functions of employment, housing, transportation, public facilities, and services. The urban design process should also reflect social, economic, and environmental goals.

Urban design encompasses aspects of the disciplines of planning, landscape architecture and architecture. It concerns itself with the large-scale organization, function, and design of the city. It deals with the massing, scale, and organization of buildings and the spaces between them, more than the design of individual buildings.

**A Contribution of Urban Design to the Comprehensive Plan** - Future land use plans are typically two-dimensional, reflecting future land uses and their relationships on a map. There is a

need, however, for a three-dimensional planning perspective in comprehensive planning which may be achieved through urban design. This is recommended because: (1) The future land use plan can enhance the organized arrangement of land uses; and, (2) Urban design can add additional aesthetic qualities to orderly land arrangement and growth management.

**Elements of Urban Design** - Some of the major components of urban design are outlined for the purposes of this chapter. Elements of urban design include:

1. Urban form (physical configuration of the municipality):
  - A. Relationship to existing corporate limits;
  - B. Relationship to the extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ); and,
  - C. Consideration of the ultimate planning area of the city: This is advantageous because it allows the municipality to address, for example, its master thoroughfare plan, open space and recreational needs, utility planning, capital improvement programming, and other land use considerations based on the potential ultimate boundary of the community, in conjunction with a sense of the potential ultimate population, density, and acreages devoted to various land uses.
2. Points of entrance to the city.
3. View and movement corridors.
4. Districts of the community.
5. Screening and buffering.
6. Variation in design.
7. Architectural structures.
8. Signs.
9. Lighting.
10. Utilities.
11. Parks and open space, and open space linkage systems (e.g., hike and bike trails, greenway/floodplain corridors, etc.). Opportunities should be evaluated to see if open space linkages can occur with nearby and/or contiguous communities, as well as regionally.

12. Landscape architectural features.
13. Landscape plantings.
14. Street furniture.
15. Building massing and scale.
16. Historic structures.
17. Public art - Public art is clearly an urban design element, and opportunities should be evaluated to place public art in areas that will enhance the aesthetic quality and reinforce the unique identity of each community. An elaborated discussion is included for this element, because it is a relatively new component when considering urban design.
  - A. Definition - Works of art may include but are not limited to the following categories: sculpture, murals, fountains, paving designs, plantings, and lighting. These categories may be realized through such art forms as: carvings, frescoes, mosaics, mobiles, photographs, drawings, collages, prints, and crafts, both decorative and utilitarian in clay, fiber, wood, metal, glass, plastics, as well as other materials. Landscaping items such as artistic placement of natural materials or other functional art objects may be included.
  - B. Criteria - Criteria to evaluate community public art projects may include:
    1. To stimulate recreation, creativity, and imagination;
    2. To promote contact and communication among all members of the community;
    3. To provide comfort and amenities;
    4. To stimulate curiosity and interest in the community's heritage;
    5. To promote a sense of membership and harmonious coexistence among various community groups;
    6. To represent and encourage a positive community character, such as the wealth of historic heritage that may exist; and,
    7. To encourage an overall community identity.
  - C. Location - Potential locations of public art may include but are not limited to parks, open spaces, recreation areas, rights-of-way medians, selected vehicular and pedestrian intersections, the town square, or in relationship to other public and/or private structures or land uses. Other locations should be evaluated as property develops.

The application of these urban design elements through the comprehensive planning program can aid the aesthetic quality of each community. Again, since the comprehensive plan is

implemented over time, these design elements should be applied as part of individual zoning, subdivision and site plan review approvals, as feasible.

**New Urbanism/Neo-Traditional Town Planning** -New urbanism or neo-traditional town planning has been advocated by many as a cure for many of the problems created by suburban development patterns. There are several interrelated concepts and characteristics that define neo-traditional, or new urbanism, development. First, neo-traditional developments have mixed use downtown cores within walking distance of the community's residents. The cores include commercial and retail establishments, offices, public buildings and spaces, and residential uses. Second, the neo-traditional concept typically provides for employment centers. Third, neo-traditional developments try to establish a sense of community by making streets more pedestrian-friendly for the purpose of generating street activity. Fourth, they attempt to generate a sense of tradition by referring back to a period often considered to be the era from the 1920's to the 1950's: this is considered a time when people believed that their neighborhoods had distinctive characteristics.

Although they are essentially suburban in location, neo-traditional developments are not suburban in character. In comparison to typical suburban developments, neo-traditional developments have smaller lots for single family homes and a higher percentage of multi-family housing. They also have a mix of uses designed to encourage more interaction and to create a sense of community. This kind of land use pattern, which is termed "fine-grained," mixes uses on a very small scale.

Therefore, where a typical suburb or town will have relatively large blocks of land allocated for certain individual uses, such as, residential, commercial, or industrial, a neo-traditional or new urbanism community will mix uses by block, parcel, and even by building. Within a very small area, then, there will be homes, offices, stores, and public areas. Apartments can be located above stores or offices, or an office can be on the same plot of land as a single-family home. The mix of uses in neo-traditional development is intended to result in a sense of place, which may not typically be present in planned unit developments or other existing suburban forms.

In summary, the concept supporting neo-traditional or new urbanism development is that these features will allow people to feel a greater sense of belonging to a community. In theory, for example, being able to walk to the grocery store from home allows people to have a greater interchange with their friends and neighbors along the way. This concept then, can be contrasted

with a traditional suburban development in which there may be very limited contact because so many people are in their automobiles. Further, the street system in neo-traditional developments, and building lots, are at a smaller scale than in typical suburbs thereby creating another incentive for walking. In the process of evaluating and/or recommending new urbanism/neo-traditional town planning design and planning concepts within comprehensive plans, it is recommended that city planners review the literature that discusses the potential pros and cons of new urbanism/neo-traditional town planning.

### **Geographic Information Systems (G.I.S.)**

A G.I.S. program can provide excellent data and analysis capability for a comprehensive planning program . G.I.S. is a hardware/software system for managing and displaying spatial data. It is similar to a traditional Data Base Management System (DBMS), however it now allows us to think in spatial rather than tabular terms, and where the “report writer” now allows output of maps as well as of tables and numbers. Therefore, we can consider a G.I.S. as a “spatial DBMS” as opposed to traditional “tabular DBMS’s.”

**G.I.S. in Relation to Preparing the Comprehensive Plan** - The opportunities of G.I.S. are found in their unique ability to: (1) integrate spatially related information that may have been previously maintained by different agencies; (2) manipulate this information with regard to its attributes and its location; (3) perform spatial analysis; and (4) quickly and easily prepare attractive and informative maps to help display and understand spatially-related information. Examples of information that can be graphically portrayed through the G.I.S. include the following:

1. Regional location of a municipality
2. Master Thoroughfare Plan (MTP)
3. Land use (including the MTP)
4. Waterway system
5. Aviation system
6. Contours/elevations
7. Parks and recreational facilities
8. School system

9. Capital Improvement Plan (e.g., proposed and approved infrastructure improvements)
10. Housing/apartments distribution
11. Unique features (e.g. historic districts, etc.)

It can be seen, therefore, that Geographic Information Systems can be a valuable tool for the preparation and implementation of the comprehensive plan.

### **Public Participation**

Two things to remember about a comprehensive plan: first, have one; and second, keep in mind that the plan belongs to the citizens in the community, and not the staff, consultants, committees, or elected and appointed officials who prepared it. In that light, citizens should be aware of and involved in the development of the plan as early as possible, understand what is to be involved in its preparation at strategic junctures, and recognize that the city will use the plan on a continuous basis for growth-management. Here, then, are some thoughts regarding public participation. Each community can establish a program of public participation, based on its own unique characteristics and/or circumstances.

1. Advise the citizenry as soon as the community commits to preparing/updating a comprehensive plan. Use a "flyer" inside the utility bill mailings, etc. This embraces the public, and diffuses concerns regarding preparing the plan "in the back room". Many technically excellent plans have not been supported or implemented because citizens were not aware of or did not have the opportunity to participate in its development.
2. Don't forget the kids. Go to the elementary, junior and senior high schools and explain the plan program. You will get some interesting ideas regarding land uses, and particularly parks, recreation, open space, and bike trails. Remember too, that if these children remain in the community when they grow up, they will be voters, address bond elections and be taxpayers. Some may sit on boards, commissions, or even become mayor or city manager. They should understand the function of the comprehensive plan as early as possible, so they can provide support, direction and leadership, as well as funding, when they reach adulthood.
3. Use the media to get the message out that the city is preparing a plan. Have staff/consultants discuss the program on public-access TV. Talk to



newspapers and other community publications and ask them to do a series of stories describing the process and progress of the plan.

4. After the base studies have been drafted, hold a series of public meetings to obtain citizen input. If possible, have these meetings at schools, as opposed to the city hall; this reduces the anxiety some people may have regarding making public comments at the city's official place of business. Most people are more familiar and comfortable with school buildings.

It is recommended that these be informal public meetings, where notes and possibly tape-recordings may be made by the staff. Avoid a public hearing at this point, since it is more structured and may be intimidating to some citizens at this early stage of the process.

Provide a condensed written synopsis of the basic findings of the base studies, and make them available at least several weeks before these public meetings. Ask the citizens to be prepared to identify objectives, issues, concerns, and opportunities they perceive that may bear on the comprehensive plan. If there is a large community turnout, overhead presentations are effective. By having the basic information, the citizens can provide more informed input into the plan making process. This input from the public can aid in developing the goals, objectives and policies section of the plan.

5. After the draft goals, objectives, and policies are prepared, make them available to the citizens for approximately one month. Have copies available at the schools, library, city hall, chamber of commerce, and other public places.

Hold a second series of public meetings and ask the citizens for their input. What do they think of the draft goals? Do they have additions and revisions? This process will provide input and refinement to the plan, and will aid in educating the citizens, as well as provide consensus building between the public and the direction the plan is taking.

An option for communities is to hold a simultaneous series of public input meetings with the various groups and organizations in the city, such as, for example, the Lions, Rotary, chamber of commerce, historic preservation group, industrial development board, AARP, boys and girls clubs, and homeowners associations. The advantage of this is that it provides the opportunity to address the special needs, concerns, and perspectives of community organizations, as opposed to individual citizen interests.

6. After public input regarding goals, the staff (and/or consultants) can prepare a draft future land use plan map with several alternatives and a draft plan document. A third series of public meetings should then be held, to obtain citizen input regarding the draft plan. The staff should indicate how the draft plan satisfies/does not satisfy the draft goals and objectives, what "trade-offs" exist, and the level of goal-satisfaction achieved by the alternative draft plans. Place several copies of the draft plan map and plan document in public places and allow several weeks for public review prior to a third series of meetings. This entire process (several series of public meetings) provides incremental education, consensus development, and opportunity for on-going direct citizen involvement in the plan preparation process.
7. After this series of public meetings, staff should then prepare a final draft plan map and document. The citizen participation mode should now change, and the city's officials should hold several public hearings, for the purpose of plan refinement and adoption.
8. Citizen involvement should continue, through the plan up-date, revision, and refinement process. This keeps the planning process alive and before the citizens, and provides for their involvement in the continuous planning process.

### **The Comprehensive Plan and Planning Law**

Over the years, Texas courts have interpreted the concept that zoning regulations must be adopted in accordance with a comprehensive plan quite broadly and have accepted a comprehensive zoning ordinance as a "comprehensive plan." However, in the Sunnyvale case, the court ruled that zoning changes should conform to the comprehensive land use map, if a city has such a map as part of its comprehensive plan and has adopted the plan by ordinance. Interpretations of the Sunnyvale case are a concern of Texas planners and land use attorneys; however, the impact of the court's decision emphasizes the need for a continuing planning process to address changes subsequent to the adoption of a comprehensive plan.

The TLGC has stated that "The policies of a comprehensive plan may only be implemented by ordinances duly adopted by the municipality and shall not constitute land use or zoning regulations or establish zoning district boundaries". Professor Pugh has stated, relative to this, that

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<sup>1</sup> This author very much appreciates the work of David L. Pugh, AICP, Professor of Planning at Texas A&M University, and a lawyer who for many years has provided Texas planners, planning and zoning commissioners, and city council members with insight and interpretations regarding the relationship of comprehensive planning and planning law. Statutory references to the comprehensive plan may be found in the Texas Local Government Code (TLGC).

the comprehensive plan map and the city's zoning map are not one in the same. He recommends (and this author agrees) that a city is well-advised to have a comprehensive plan preceding the zoning ordinance, although this interpretation has not always been clearly distinguished by Texas courts. It should be noted that a number of other states have enacted laws which to some degree place the comprehensive plan as a condition precedent to land use control.

The TLGC has stated in part that "(a) The municipal authority responsible for approving plats shall approve a plat if... (2) it conforms to the general plan for the extension of the municipality and its roads, streets, and public highways within the municipality and its extraterritorial jurisdiction, taking into account access to the extension of sewer and water mains and the instrumentalities of public utilities...." This section of the TLGC is interpreted to indicate that plats should conform to a comprehensive plan. In analyzing legal decisions, Professor Pugh has stated that "...the presence of a good comprehensive plan would seem to be not merely advisable, but legally indispensable to the survival of almost any Texas community". This author strongly supports this position.

### **The Role of the City's Planning Staff**

The staff should take the following responsibilities regarding preparation and use of the city's comprehensive plan:

1. Prepare technical studies;
2. Aid in development of goals, objectives and policies;
3. Encourage and obtain citizen input;
4. Present technical studies and recommendations to the planning and zoning commission;
5. Present technical studies and planning and zoning commission recommendations to the city council/city commission;
6. Aid in administering public hearings and community meetings;

7. Use the recommendations in the comprehensive plan to evaluate and make recommendations regarding zoning, subdivision, site plan and small-area studies, as part of the implementation process for the comprehensive plan;
8. Recommend adoption of the comprehensive plan to the planning and zoning commission, and ultimately, to the city council;
9. Manage and review data and studies prepared by consultants;
10. Prepare, or have prepared by consultants, studies to implement the comprehensive plan, such as, but not limited to:
  - A. Special area studies;
  - B. Zoning ordinances; and,
  - C. Subdivision regulations.
11. Manage the activities of consultants, and serve as liaison between consultant work and the planning and zoning commission and city council;
12. Recommend and undertake periodic updates and revisions of the comprehensive plan; and,
13. Provide continuity by introducing new community officials to the comprehensive plan, provide training, and understanding of the plan's purpose, content, use, implementation, and vision.

### **The Role of Consultants**

Some communities may elect to use consultants solely or in conjunction with their planning staffs to prepare plans. The following are suggested guidelines:

1. The consultant(s) may facilitate, through community consensus, the development of goals, objectives, and policies;
2. If a city planning staff exists, the consultant(s) may provide technical data in support of the city staff activities;
3. The consultant(s) may supplement city staff capability through intense short-term effort in the development of the comprehensive plan; and,
4. If there is no city staff, the consultant(s) may prepare base studies and other elements of the comprehensive plan, to be submitted for review and approval by the planning and zoning commission and city council, through public hearings.

### **The Role of the Planning and Zoning Commission**

The planning and zoning commission is the chief official body in the community responsible for aiding in creating and serving as the caretaker for the long-range vision regarding physical development. Therefore, the following guidelines can aid in the contribution made by the commission regarding the comprehensive plan:

1. The planning and zoning commission should take major responsibility for the preparation and implementation of the comprehensive plan;
2. Advantages of one planning and zoning commission as opposed to a separate planning commission and zoning commission include:
  - A. Zoning is an implementation tool of the comprehensive plan. Since the planning commission should prepare and implement the plan, that same body should administer zoning decisions for the community.
  - B. This aids in providing continuity and consistency in zoning decisions.
  - C. A separate zoning commission may not be privy to the rationale and developmental thought process that occurred as the planning commission directed the preparation of the comprehensive plan;
3. Encourage citizen input to the city's planning program;
4. Use the goals, objectives, policies and other elements of the comprehensive plan (long-range) to evaluate (short-range) planning elements such as zoning requests, subdivision plats, site plans, and other development proposals. This keeps the plan alive and implemented through continual use of the plan as part of the on-going planning process; and,
5. The commission should recommend adoption of the plan to the city council.

### **The Role of the City Council**

As the major governmental and legislative body in the municipality, the council also has important functions regarding the plan, including:

1. Providing commitment and funding for the preparation and updating of the comprehensive plan;
2. Evaluating (short-term) planning projects in light of the (long-range) comprehensive plan;
3. Supporting the planning and zoning commission and staff (and/or consultants) regarding the preparation of and adherence to the plan;
4. Encouraging citizen input;

5. Recognizing and supporting the fact that, to be effective, the recommendations in the plan most likely will transcend a number of planning and zoning commission appointments and city council elections. This recognition is necessary to maintain the long-range recommendations and integrity of the plan;
6. Adopting the comprehensive plan. This action by the council reflects the commitment of adherence to the plan;
  - A. Adopting the plan advises the citizens, other agencies, staff, elected and appointed officials, and the development community of the city's commitment and consensus to use the plan as a guide to manage sound and aesthetic growth.
  - B. Adoption also responds to the Texas Local Government Code that refers to the plan as a basis for zoning.

There are different viewpoints regarding the vehicle for adoption - should it be by ordinance or resolution?

1. Adoption by Ordinance:

- Pros:
- A. It carries the weight of law, since it represents a police-power enforcement tool, like a zoning ordinance or subdivision regulations.
  - B. It makes the comprehensive plan "easier" to implement, because the policies become regulatory tools, as opposed to recommendations.
  - C. It signifies the commitment of the community to comprehensive planning.
- Cons:
- A. The plan becomes more rigid, as opposed to serving as a flexible guide. Revisions and updates to the plan must be adopted by ordinance in the same procedure as the original plan.
  - B. It makes negotiation of development recommendations more difficult using the plan as a basis, since the plan would be fixed regarding the intent of its language.
  - C. Historically, the comprehensive plan has been used as a guide, allowing flexible interpretation given on-going changing circumstances. The ordinance format could stultify creative implementation and/or development concepts on the part of those who have to administer or work with the plan - e.g., staff, consultants, planning commissioners, councilmembers, and the development community.

2. Adoption by Resolution:

- Pros: A. Signifies the commitment the community has to embracing comprehensive planning.
- B. Indicates importance of planning to the citizens, development community, and staff, yet provides more plan flexibility and interpretation than is available through a plan adopted by ordinance.
- Cons: A. Some may be concerned that adoption by resolution does not provide the enforcement strength found in an ordinance format.

### **The Worth of the Comprehensive Plan**

The value of the comprehensive plan was concisely summed up several decades ago by Allan B. Jacobs, AICP, former Director of Planning for the City of San Francisco, California, providing further credence to the value of the physically-oriented comprehensive plan. This perspective is still currently true:

"Ever since I was awarded a degree in city planning from a school that stressed, I thought, the worthiness of comprehensive, long-range physical planning for urban areas, I have heard that whole notion criticized. Repeatedly, I have heard the quality, content, usefulness, and effectiveness of the comprehensive plan challenged, as often as not by those who teach city planning. The critics say that the comprehensive plan is too vague, too subjective, too biased, too specific. It is elitist and divorced from the people, ...full of end-state visions that are unrelated to the real issues of a dynamic world...."

"There are certainly elements of truth in these assertions. But, in general, they coincide neither with my sense of reality nor with the centrality of the idea. Comprehensive plans have always been policy documents, even if they have not been read that way. They have become less and less end-state, static pictures of the future. They regularly deal with pressing current issues: housing, transportation, jobs, public services, open space, urban design. ...Any planning efforts are remarkable in a society that could never be accused of having a bias toward city planning in the first place, a society that has tended to look at land and urban environments as little more than high-priced consumable commodities. And isn't it grand that plans are visionary! Why shouldn't a community have a view, a vision of what it wants to be, and then try to achieve it?"

- Excerpted from Allan B. Jacobs, Making City Planning Work (Chicago: American Society of Planning Officials, 1978), 307.

### **The Comprehensive Plan: A Closing Note**

The comprehensive plan should represent a composite of all the land use elements: residential areas, recreation facilities, environmental considerations, community facilities, commercial and industrial areas, thoroughfares, and supportive urban design considerations.

A prime objective of the plan is to achieve a balance of land uses that will economically, physically, and socially benefit those who live and work in the city. Thus, to achieve this balance of land uses, each of the above elements should propose a general plan for a specific land use type. In turn, each element should be combined to form a general plan of land use that will serve to guide the long-range land development of the entire planning area as shown on the future land use plan map within the comprehensive plan document. Preparers and users of the comprehensive plan should keep in mind both the following limitations and purposes of the plan:

The Comprehensive Plan is Not:

- The municipal zoning ordinance;
- Any other ordinance that regulates the use of land;
- A rigid unchanging plan or statement concerning land use, growth, and development; and,
- The final answer to the problems of the future.

The Comprehensive Plan Is:

- Based upon present knowledge and goals;
- Flexible so that it can be changed when the planning and zoning commission and/or other municipal officials and citizens see the need for such change;
- A basis for making rational decisions, but it does not replace the decision making process;
- A guide that can aid communities in implementing a sound growth-management and growth-inducing program; and,
- A component of the on-going planning process that recognizes that sound city planning and zoning pay for themselves many times over --- in terms of cost-effectiveness and the timely and efficient use of public and private resources.

## FURTHER READINGS

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#### B. Examples of Plans

It is recommended that the reader contact Texas municipalities and review their comprehensive plans, to see various examples of the scope and variety of such plans.

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