

Community Master Plans



So What is a Master Plan?

A town's view of how it would like to look in the future!! A master plan consists both of policy statements and maps.

Who prepares it? Who adopts it? What is its authority?

Preparing and adopting the master plan is the responsibility of the local planning board which often assigns the task to a Master Plan Committee. And the planning board may hire staff and/or consultants to work with them in its preparation.



The master plan is to be adopted by the planning board, after a public hearing has been noticed and held. Like all public documents, it is subject to the right to know law.

A master plan is guidance document—not a legal instrument for managing community growth. The plan is implemented through a **zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations and site plan review regulations** as well as other community programs. **The capital improvement plan** is another vehicle for implementing the master plan.

What has to be in the Master Plan?

Master plans can take a variety of forms and formats, depending on the community's desires. Some are extensive documents. Others are more basic. Some communities have printed them like a newspaper while others have a simple poster or fold up one piece document.

Under current state law, a municipal master plan must include only two elements: **A vision statement, and a future land use plan**

It is recommended, however, that the master plan at least comment on each of the following topics:

Transportation
Community Facilities
Economic Development
Natural Resources

Natural Hazards
Recreation
Utility/Public Service
Cult./Historic Resources
Regional Concerns

Neighborhood Plans
Community Design
Housing Needs
Implementation

How long does it take?

Usually it takes one to two years, but may vary depending on the level of effort the community devotes to the project.

Make No Little Plans. *They have no magic to stir men's blood and probably will themselves not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that noble, logical diagrams, once recorded, will not die.* Daniel Burnham, Chicago Architect and Planner, 1846 – 1912