

**DEFINITION & HISTORY
OF PLANNING**

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DEFINITION & HISTORY OF PLANNING

2.1 WHAT IS PLANNING?

Defined in broad terms, planning is a continuous process to guide the preservation, development, or redevelopment of a neighborhood, community, or region. Its purpose is to create and maintain a desirable environment and to promote the public health, safety, and welfare guided by the aims, goals, and ambitions of its residents.

An established planning program will help local officials in making decisions. It is important that planning is comprehensive, pragmatic, and continuous; that it deals with all aspects of development; and that it provide realistic goals and strategies for development. Planning tools must comply with statutory requirements and incorporate a community vision or ideal. Planning is the first step in the preparation of development and preservation regulations that put into practice the long-range goals stated in the community's plan.

2.2 DEFINITION OF TERMS

We have attempted to minimize the use of jargon in this Handbook, but the following terms have a special meaning in planning and will be referenced. Appendix A provides an extensive glossary.

GOALS

Broad, long-range statements that represent future visions of the community.

OBJECTIVES

Often used interchangeably with the word “goal”, an objective is defined here as a measurable and verifiable method of achieving a goal.

STRATEGIES

Strategies are specific actions that identify what will be accomplished, by who, when, and how. If the goal sets a general direction for action, then the strategy specifies exactly how to get there.

POLICIES

A policy is a brief, direct statement of what you intend to do to implement your goals and objectives. Ideally, policy formulation is the result of group identification of goals and objectives, represents group consensus, and sets criteria for decision-making.

The relationship between these concepts may be illustrated as a planning continuum where goals are the “thinking” phase and strategies lead to the “doing” or implementation phase.

PLANS

A plan is an official policy document to guide the physical development and conservation of a community. Plans often contain a variety of maps to illustrate existing and proposed conditions. Counties and municipalities are mandated by Arizona law to develop comprehensive and general plans, respectively.

ZONING:

Zoning is a tool to implement the policies and goals established in a community’s plan as they relate to land use. It specifies activities allowed on each parcel of land as well as any associated standards or exceptions.

Creating a municipal general plan or county comprehensive plan involves a series of steps that are discussed in greater detail in later chapters. The process includes:

1. Data gathering on existing conditions
2. Evaluating community resources
3. Organizing public discussion and input
4. Analyzing alternatives for the plan
5. Preparing, adopting, implementing, and updating the plan

2.3 HISTORY OF PLANNING

Urban planning in the United States has been influenced by historic events, the national economy, and changes in social attitudes. The Puritan work ethic formed the basis for the agrarian philosophy associated with Thomas Jefferson. This philosophy is based on the belief that the agricultural life has the most human value, and reflected the largely rural settlement pattern in the country at that time.

With the industrial revolution, cities grew in size and importance. The Public Health, Garden City, and City Beautiful movements of the 19th century raised issues of health and aesthetics in the city, and profoundly affected the design and development of cities during the first half of the 20th century. Planning gained acceptance as a discipline with the publication of the 1928 Standard City Planning Enabling Act (SPEA) by the U.S. Department of Commerce. This model law provided for the creation of a local agency comprised of both elected officials and appointed citizens, charged with the responsibility of

preparing planning studies and programming the future development of the municipality. Today many states, including Arizona, have planning enabling legislation that follows the guidance established in this model act.

Contemporary planning issues have emerged from various interest groups and challenges throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, including the following:

► **Public Health Movement**

The Public Health Movement developed in the late 1800s from a concern for public health and workers' safety. This movement focused on the establishment of industrial safety requirements, maximum work hours, minimum housing standards, public recreation amenities, and ensuring the provision of light and air in cities.

► **Garden City Movement**

The Garden City Movement began with Ebenezer Howard's classic work, *Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*, published in 1898, later republished in 1902, *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*. A reaction to industrialization and poor living conditions in cities, this movement was predicated on the inherent immorality of the city, a return to the country village, and the sacredness of nature. The Garden City Movement proposed public greenbelts and agricultural areas surrounding self-supporting, satellite communities ringing a central garden city with maximum populations to prevent sprawl.

The impact of the Garden City Movement was seen in the 1920s with the first comprehensive suburban neighborhood designs made up of residential areas with open space, parks, shopping facilities, and schools.

► **City Beautiful Movement**

Emphasizing design and aesthetics, the City Beautiful Movement emerged from the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The Exposition provided a prominent American

example of a great group of buildings designed in relation to each other and in relation to open spaces. Contributions of the movement included: a revival of city planning and its establishment as a permanent part of local government, an emphasis on physical site planning, the professional consultant role, and the establishment of quasi-independent planning commissions composed of citizens.

► **City Efficient Movement**

The City Efficient Movement saw the passage of new laws and court cases relative to land use, zoning, subdivision control, and administrative planning regulation. Civil engineers, attorneys, and public administrators began to play a larger role in city planning with an increase in demand for public services and facilities such as highways and sanitary sewers.

► **City Humane Movement**

The City Humane Movement developed as a result of the Depression of the 1930s. It concentrated on social and economic issues and ways of alleviating the problems of unemployment, poverty, and urban plight.

► **City Functional Movement**

The City Functional Movement developed in the 1940s with the growth of the military and renewed industrialization. This movement emphasized functionalism and administrative efficiency, and contributed to the federal government's increased involvement in local planning and the passage of Section 701 of the Housing Act in 1954. The 701 program subsidized thousands of general plans and special projects for cities, counties, regional councils of government, and states until 1981. Many Arizona communities benefited from this program.

As the need to institutionalize the planning function under a single public authority became apparent, planning became a component of local government administration. Commissions made up of local leaders were established to guide local

planning and zoning decision-making with some autonomy from the political process (i.e. the city or town council). Many pioneers in the field recognized that the success and effectiveness of a planning program also required citizen participation.

At one time, the municipal plan was perceived as an objective, technical document that focused solely on the physical development of the community. The 1960s and '70s saw a renewed emphasis on social, economic, and environmental issues with the **Advocacy Movement** and the **Environmental Movement**. During this period, some planners actively promoted social reform, supporting the interests of low-income and minority groups, wildlife, the preservation of open space, and the conservation of natural resources. It has become common for plans to more explicitly address the impact of physical development on economic, social, and environmental issues, to ensure greater consistency among policies and goals for the community.

Planning in Arizona has had a relatively short history. Cities were not specifically authorized to prepare general plans before the Urban Environmental Management Act (UEMA) was passed by the State Legislature in 1973. However, Arizona previously had adopted a version of the Standard State Zoning Enabling Act that implied the authority for local jurisdictions to plan.

In 1998, the Arizona Legislature passed the Growing Smarter Act. The purpose of the Act was to strengthen the ability of Arizona's communities and counties to plan for growth, acquire and preserve open space, and develop strategies to comprehensively address growth related pressures. The Act requires new elements - Open Space, Growth Areas, Environmental Planning, and Cost of Development - to be included in general and comprehensive plans and also calls for more effective public participation, mandatory rezoning conformance to plans, and more regional cooperation.

A Growing Smarter Commission was created as part of the Growing Smarter Act. This body proposed revisions to the legislation, which were passed as the Growing Smarter Plus Act in 2000. The provisions of the Growing Smarter Plus Act included requirements for a water resources element and ratification of large and fast growing communities' general plans by the electorate. The Growing Smarter Oversight Council was created by Executive Order in 2001 to monitor the implementation of the legislation and make recommendations for changes. More information on the mandates for jurisdictions in the Growing Smarter/Growing Smarter Plus legislation is provided in Chapters 6 and 7 and on the Arizona Department of Commerce web site at www.azcommerce.com.

2.4 PURPOSE OF PLANNING

Planning for the future development of a community is important and it makes sense. The planning process provides an opportunity for jurisdictions and citizens to determine the vision for the future of the community. An effective process brings the appropriate stakeholders to the table to work through issues and ideas, so that the resulting plan can function as a policy guide for implementation efforts.

Communities plan to:

- ▶ Prepare for the future
- ▶ Accommodate the present
- ▶ Anticipate change
- ▶ Maximize community strengths
- ▶ Minimize community weaknesses
- ▶ Respond to legislative change
- ▶ Secure a sense of community coordination
- ▶ Deal with scarce resources
- ▶ Build a sense of community
- ▶ Provide for public health, safety, and welfare

Many communities in Arizona have established planning programs, appointed planning commissions, and hired professional planning staffs. The direction a community takes in relation to planning depends on its size, location, natural environment, finances, and level of development, the attitude of local officials and the willingness of citizens to participate in guiding development. Planning for our cities, towns, and counties is one way in which Arizona's physical and economic environment can be improved and preserved.

The planning process requires community members working together to develop a vision. This process involves professionals providing information, citizens expressing desires and needs, and elected officials ensuring the implementation of shared goals. Planning is an ongoing process that needs to be reassessed periodically.

2.4.1 Six Functions of Planning

- 1 | Planning is a means of preparing for the future. Addressing community needs only when they have become so urgent that they demand immediate action can result in temporary, costly, or ineffective solutions. With proper planning, for example, school and park sites may be reserved in advance of need while reasonably priced, vacant land is still available.
- 2 | Planning is a tool for identifying the causes of complex urban and rural problems and developing sound, cost-effective solutions.
- 3 | Planning helps do first things first. With an inventory of existing conditions, community strengths and weaknesses, and a comprehensive or general plan, officials can better manage resources while preparing for the future.

- 4 | Planning helps make sound policies for development. Good planning includes policy-making based on needs and priorities. For example, street improvements should be planned to accommodate the type of land uses that they serve.
- 5 | Planning provides procedures for making sure that new physical development is coordinated with other uses and needs related to it. The comprehensive and general plan, and the capital improvement program in particular, help local officials to coordinate decisions and projects.
- 6 | The planning process is a means of educating and informing. When policies are adopted based on public input, they are better understood and more likely to have community support.

2.4.2 What Planning Can & Can't Do

Planning **CAN...**

- ▶ Help to stabilize a community in transition, to ensure orderly growth by identifying where it is going, and how it needs to get there.
- ▶ Protect property values by maintaining the integrity of a neighborhood.
- ▶ Improve the economic base of the community by providing a climate for business creation and expansion.
- ▶ Identify resources, opportunities, and constraints.
- ▶ Clarify community needs, goals, and objectives.
- ▶ Provide a forum for action.

Planning ***CAN'T (or shouldn't)...***

- ▶ Be a one-shot deal; it's an ongoing, evolving process.
- ▶ Automatically solve all problems.
- ▶ Correct all past mistakes.
- ▶ Be successful unless supported by policy and an action-oriented program.
- ▶ Be used to promote special interests.
- ▶ Be used to exclude others from the community.

Planning allows communities to meet challenges by setting a direction based on public consensus. It takes full advantage of opportunities while anticipating and minimizing weaknesses and threats inherent in any development process.

2.5 ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

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- American Planning Association web site:
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- Arizona Planning Association web site:
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Common Questions newsletters are developed by the Community Planning Office, and are available at
<http://www.azcommerce.com/communityplanning/resource.asp>.