

The General Plan for a Character Town

...from vision to strategy to action.

CHARACTER TOWNS ARE PRECIOUS.

The Nature of Cities and Towns. Cities and towns are both people and places. The character of the people, their emotions, memories and aesthetics are inherent to the place they inhabit; and to paraphrase Winston Churchill, we form cities and then they form us.

Character is important. Successful towns have a certain “character” about them; a personality, a charm, a grit, a disposition, a temperament.

Character is somewhat ethereal. It is emotional or behavioral; character is much more than the stereotypical reference to architectural character. Community character embraces the idea that the city is a composition of people, buildings, streets, parks and the social and economic systems of the place.

The collective population of cities and towns has a temperament, an authenticity, an integrity, a civic personality reflected through collective behavior. Kevin Lynch’s work, *The Image of the City*, eloquently develops this idea.

Now, the character of a person or town can be good or bad or bland. Character is not a pejorative term, but it is real, it is palpably visceral. Certain people and towns feel comfortable and welcoming and successful while others don’t. And that’s the point. How does one build and keep a town with an admirable personality that warrants defense, investment and love?

Envision a Pleasant and Prosperous Place to Live; a Place with Good Character. People seem to enjoy living in and visiting certain small cities and towns; and special neighborhoods and enclaves in bigger cities. Small places that are personal, evocative and understandable feel good. They possess an authenticity and personality lacking in places that have lost their history and their connection to purpose. Towns with good character create an emotional impact that is immediate and precious.

The Evolution of the Contemporary City. At the dawn of the 21st century, the cities and towns of the world have become the host to over half of all humanity. Since the invention of cities ten thousand years ago, they continue to prevail as the most-favored system for collective living. The success of this social, physical and economic construct is so solid that one has a hard time fathoming an alternative.

Many fine books, articles and lectures are available to document the history of city development [see READINGS]. While the history is not recounted here, an examination of the history of the city reveals the constancy of the fundamental functions of the city over its ten thousand year history; and lessons learned and not. Cities have always had districts for living, commercial centers, government centers and religious centers; they have always had transportation connections along with social and economic systems.

The Art and Science of City-Building is Evolving.

Building the city is never completed; there is no finish line. Once the first generation of growth fills the available space, a second generation of infill and redevelopment starts. The archaeological explorations of ancient cities have uncovered, literally, several layers of buildings, one atop another.

Cities and towns have been located and formed based on the transportation system and technology of the times. Infrastructure systems, after a brief appearance in Roman times, did not reach the Western masses until the 19th century and has yet to penetrate many global cities and smaller villages. While all cities have not reached the level of urbanity known in Adelaide, Vancouver or Vienna, the art and science of city building is known.

The General Plan is the vehicle for preserving and enhancing community character. The overwhelming lesson taken from history is that the ideal of the city has yet to be achieved; the city is still and always a work in progress.

Cities and towns are growing, sometimes substantially. Maintaining the essence of the town and its character in a growth environment requires constant evaluation, feedback, dynamic thinking with new concepts and philosophies that do not abandon worthy ideals. Not every city is interested in applying the lessons that growth demands in order to retain its character. Thomas Friedman quotes from the movie *The Leopard*, "If we want things to stay as they are, things will have to change".

Socially and economically, the art and science of city-building is deficient. While the cities' physical form has evolved and been the focus of public funding and sophisticated planning, the social and economic aspects of our cities continue to be neglected; equity has yet to be achieved. The social and economic concepts, philosophies and realities of American and global cities have yet to be fully formed.

Some of the Many Aspects of a Character Town

- Character towns are socially, economically and physically entrepreneurial; they have the courage to embrace change in order to protect what they value.
- Character towns are the places we feel good about as residents or visitors; these special places are growing in popularity.
- Character towns, even those of meager means, are warm, welcoming and winsomely sophisticated.
- Character places leverage physical assets to create social and economic benefits.
- Character places generally have people of good character.
- Towns known for their good character are the result of much love and attention.

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Character towns need not be rich towns.

Money always matters and it is generally better to have more money than less; and the pursuit of character in small cities and towns is not an argument in favor of poverty. However, character does not depend on wealth. Integrity, authenticity, respect for the past and hope for the future are the important beliefs of the people leading the charge to maintain, enhance or build character towns.

Pleasant and prosperous places do need to meet a certain socio-economic standard above abject poverty; standards that sustain a level of health, safety, welfare and education that enables people to pursue opportunities. The mission is to build cities and towns that enable people to be successful. A character town is a place where anyone would want to live, even if the surroundings are meager.

Vision Drives *The General Plan*. A character town is a vision. Incredible efforts are made across America by cities and towns as they search for a “vision statement” that reflects a consensus of their community’s aspirations for the future. The value of this work is as much in the process as in the product. Conversations, discussions, writings and tweets that describe the town’s future serve as a great focus for collective thought and energy; and hence, they form the basis for *The General Plan*.

Character towns are where we aspire to live.

Character towns may seem “Rockwellian”, but it is the emotional atmosphere of these idyllic small American towns that makes them pleasant and prosperous, not necessarily their physical form.

The idea of a character town is a place where we want to live, a place we want to visit. These towns sustain our interest and curiosity; they provide for our physical, social and economic well-being within a safe setting. Paraphrasing Winston Churchill, such towns build our character, as we build theirs.

Vision. At the end of the day, an agreed-upon, written and illustrated community-based vision is a powerful tool in large cities and small towns to guide day-to-day public policy decisions. It also provides residents and business owners with the stability of a community that knows where it wants to go. This community vision becomes an inherent foundation for The City’s General Plan.

Values are important. Community values rise above visions, strategies, plans and programs. Values describe the bounds of acceptable civic behavior. Town leaders set the tone for civic behavior and values that address:

- The idea of the “greater good”,
- The degree of transparency in public decision-making,
- Respect for individuals and groups,
- An understanding of the principle of “majority rules, minority rights”,
- Respect for the rule of law and
- Adherence to the ideals of public courtesy, integrity and general civility.

Vision and Value Integration leads to an understanding and articulation of the city’s view of its future and the way in which city leaders will work with each other and their citizens to pursue the vision. Values reveal the city’s heart.

CHARACTER TOWNS ARE SYSTEMS OF SYSTEMS.

A. Overview.

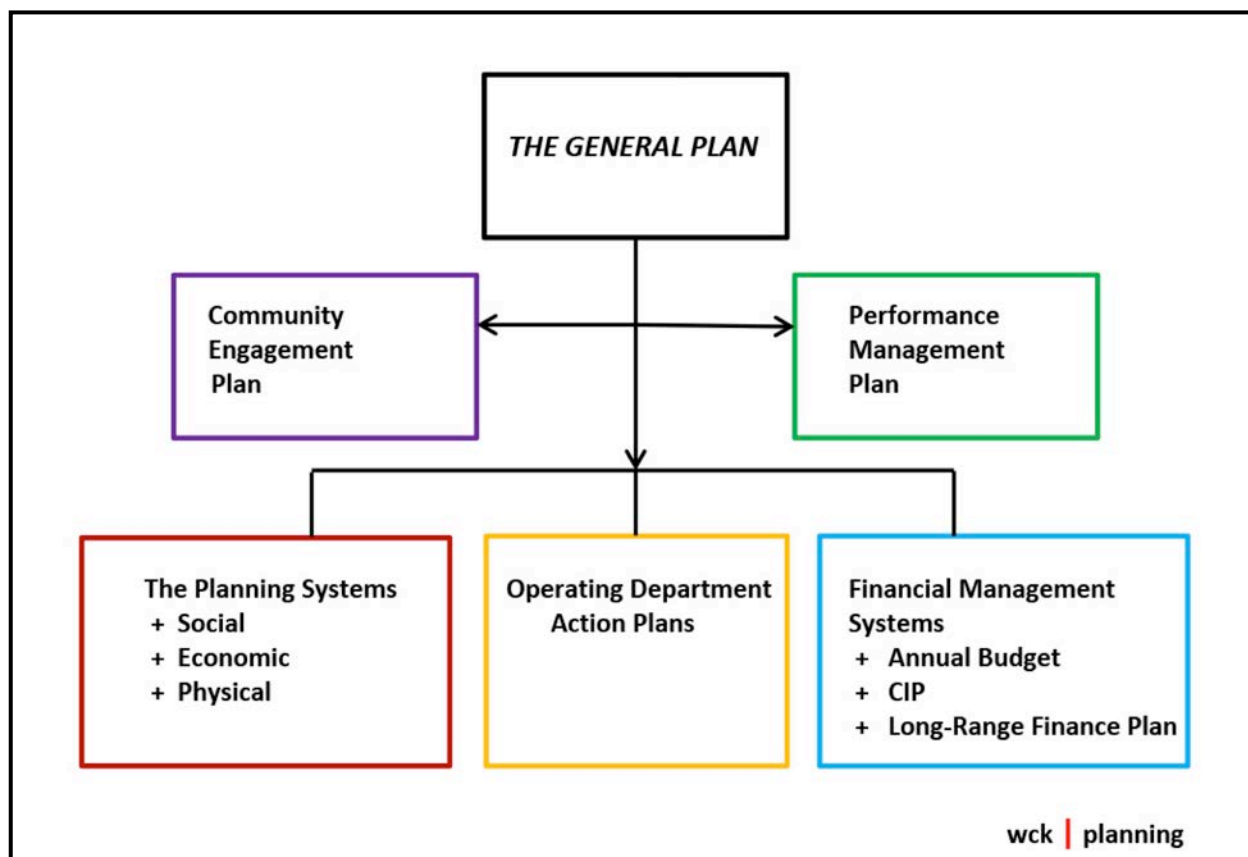
The mission of city builders - planners, urban designers, in-town developers, architects, attorneys, sociologists, economists, urban foresters and city officials, elected and appointed - is to understand how to preserve and enhance great character where it exists; and to re-create or create character in a place where it is absent.

The heart of the mission is to create places that evoke an emotional attachment between residents and business owners with the place they occupy. The emotion must be strong enough to engender personal responsibility for the social, economic and physical well-being of every person, family and business in town.

B. The General Plan.

The *General Plan* takes a holistic, vision-driven view of the town, its resources and its vision. It harmonizes the town's five strategic systems consistent with the city's vision and values.

- **The Community Engagement System,**
- **The Performance Management System,**
- **The Planning Systems:**
 - € **The Social Infrastructure Plan,**
 - € **The Economic Development Plan,**
 - € **The Physical Development Plan:**
 - Built and
 - Natural,
- **The Operating Systems, and**
- **The Financial System.**



C. The Enhanced Comprehensive Plan.

The General Plan is more than the future land use, transportation and infrastructure plan.

First, it is based on a vision-driven strategy for the future of the town.

Secondly, to be truly comprehensive, *The General Plan* must go beyond the traditional land use and circulation versions to include, as integral parts of the Plan, plans for economic development and social infrastructure with policies and budgets for job programs, education, health and public safety.

Public engagement policies along with performance management systems are provided as distinct planning components of *The General Plan* to give them the full weight, profile and staffing they require. Connections are also made to the town's operational and financial systems.

D. The Confluence of Four Big Ideas.

Two direct and powerful ideas about city-building intersected in the past millennium: sustainability culminating at The Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 and the new urbanism work of Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk. In combination, these two ideas provide the structure for understanding settlements of all kinds, especially cities and towns.

“Sustainable urbanism” supplemented by Western governance beliefs and comprehensive, long-range thinking provides the framework for *The General Plan*.

- **Sustainability.** The Brundtland Commission Report [1987] establishes a framework to balance economic and physical growth consistent with societal equity.

The Commission stated "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

- **Urbanism.** The basic idea is to preserve the natural environment and construct the built environment in a manner that improves the performance of society and the economy. The Congress for the New Urbanism [CNU] has constructed a way of thinking and doing based on principles to guide public policy and development practices, all focused on:
 - The region,
 - The neighborhood, the district and the corridor, and
 - The block, the street and the building.
- **Western Governance Beliefs.** Governance is the mechanism for planning, operating and maintaining society as a functioning and sustainable system. Professor Fukuyama [please see the Readings] highlights the go-forward ideas for fair and functioning governance:
 - Liberal Democracy,
 - Market Capitalism, and
 - The Rule of Law.
- **Comprehensive Thinking and Doing.** *The General Plan* features a long range horizon and a full range of community interests; it has breadth and depth. It is the best vehicle available to the town for consolidating and coordinating its many programs into a vision-driven strategic plan followed by strategic-driven action plans. *The General Plan* embodies the full range of social, economic and physical programs, policies, regulations and budgets needed to support the town's vision.

E. Systems Thinking.

Systems thinking is an extension of comprehensive thinking with emphasis on the idea that everything is connected to everything else. The trick is to understand the connections, the causes and effects and externalities of all of the town's policies, programs, plans and budgets; and then to leverage them to the town's advantage.

The traditional process uses analysis of history and current practices followed by synthesis which creates a holistic picture of the future. Systems thinking is critical when preparing and maintaining *The General Plan*.

F. Role of the Chief Planning Official.

The Chief Planning Official has two responsibilities. The first is to prepare the comprehensive social, economic and physical plans for the city in response to the community-driven vision for the town. The second responsibility is to integrate the plans for the town's five strategic systems into a coherent composite plan that reconciles the conflicts inherent in the multi-faceted *General Plan*.

G. Guiding Principles.

The fundamental strategic principles that guide the town's attitude and behavior are:

1. Committing to a Community-Based

Consensus Vision. The decision to undertake a plan for the city is a serious one. To be effective, it cannot be imposed from above or demanded from below. A commonality of community thought expressed by the town leaders provides the impetus for the plan. To be serious, there must be a sincere dedication to community engagement in the visioning process.

2. Constructing the Vision-Strategy-Action

Continuum. The strategic plan translates the community-based vision into strategy and then action. Vision drives strategy and strategy drives action. Properly driven action plans permeate the organization with an understanding of the city's strategic plan. It ensures that every city activity is vision-consistent.

3. Collaborating and Partnering, Constantly.

City building is too big to be done alone. Partnerships and collaborations based on a "win-win" philosophy are essential.

4. Taking the Long View.

Cities and towns will be around for a long time. The city plan need not solve all problems immediately; but the city's plan should reflect a full view of the community's future and have a long-term, persistent plan to achieve important objectives over time.

5. Honoring a Holistic, or Comprehensive

Approach. All aspects of community life, including school, community health, public safety and public civility must be included in the plan. If the school system, the library system, the utility system or other systems are separate units of government, they still need to be included.

6. Respecting Financial Resources.

From the outset, understand the potential financial aspects of the plan. Take a long-term, comprehensive examination of the sources and uses of funds and maximize their effectiveness.

7. Learning and Innovating, Aggressively.

Metric systems that measure performance are great learning tools that enable towns to identify risks and select those that push the town's performance without jeopardizing its future.

VISION-DRIVEN STRATEGIC PLANS.

A. Opportunities and Issues.

The *General Plan* and the planning process confront the issues and opportunities facing the town. While issues are generally the focus of planning efforts, the real prize is to find and exploit opportunities. Realistic plans grounded in social, economic and physical conditions, driven by a community-based vision, can achieve amazing results.

B. Strategy.

The city’s strategy defines the path for the city to pursue its vision consistent with its values. Strategy is the pivot point between vision and action. It provides the framework for the assignments we give ourselves every day as we go about building our community, our businesses and our neighborhoods.

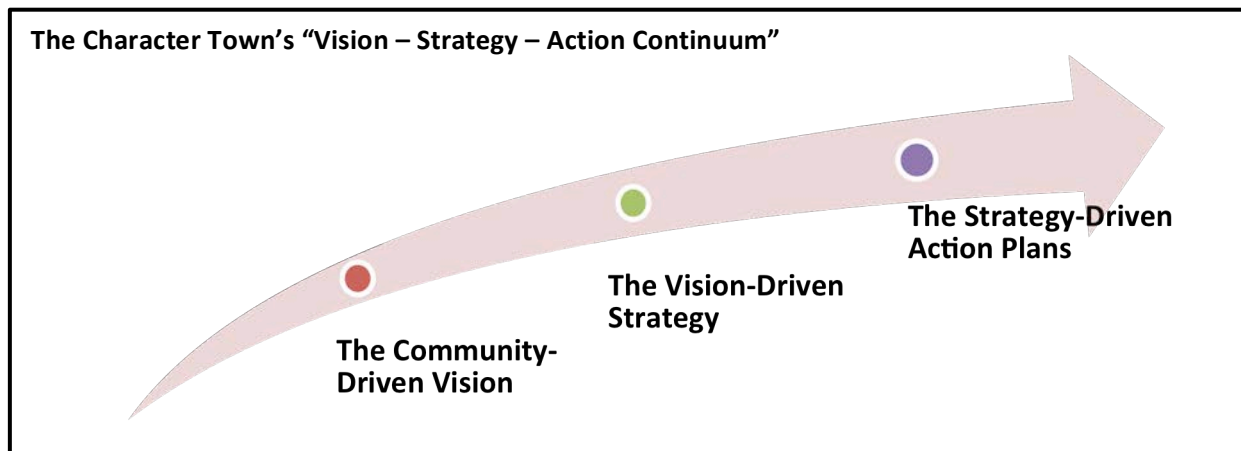
C. The Vision-Strategy-Action Continuum.

The continuum is iterative, non-sequential and multi-directional. At times, vision comes first and drives strategy and action; or action may come first revealing a long term city strategy that reflects an implicit vision. The continuum can be entered at any point as long as alignment and dependencies are honored.

D. Guiding Principles.

The work of Lafley and Martin provide a clear articulation of strategy and strategic planning. Their five questions start with aspirations [vision] and conclude with action and feedback. Organizational collaboration, vertically and horizontally, is imperative for a well-functioning strategy.

1. **Strategies are vision driven.** Design and construct the strategic plan with patience and perseverance.
2. **Strategies and strategic objectives drive The City’s General Plan,** including the comprehensive social, economic and physical plans and their elements.
3. **Strategies penetrate all levels of operation; they link vision with action.** Goals, objectives, policies, guidelines and standards are used to articulate the strategy found in *The General Plan* and link actions to performance metrics.
4. **Strategies thread together the individual action plans to fulfill the holistic vision.** Cities have many plans and many decision makers from senior managers to field engineers. Strategy is the single idea that can guide everyone in the town as they make discreet, vision-consistent decisions.



5. **Strategies depend on feedback.** Link vision, strategy and actions with the all-important Community Engagement Plan and the Performance Management System to offer public scrutiny of city programs.

*Michael Porter inspired A.G. Lafley and Roger L. Martin to write a book about strategy; namely, **Playing to Win, How Strategy Really Works** [Harvard Business School Press, Boston, Mass., 2013]. Lafley and Martin present strategy as “an integrated cascade of choices:*

- *“What are our winning aspirations?”*
- *“Where will we play?”*
- *“How will we win?”*
- *“What capabilities must be in place?”*
- *“What management systems are required?”*

Serious answers to these questions produce a strategy for defining and achieving the aspirations of the enterprise. The discussion in the book is very instructive and provides a clear picture of what strategy is all about.

THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SYSTEM.

A. Overview.

Feedback can come from two directions: “before the fact” when preliminary ideas and proposals are vetted and revised in response to good ideas, or “after-the-fact” when it is hard to change anything.

The community engagement idea is of growing importance. It is aimed at the “before-the-fact” scenario with traditional methods, new technologies and social media systems readily available for interactive, two-way community communication. As cities become larger and more remote, this approach is more important for all organizations, public and private.

Performance management systems have traditionally been used for the second scenario, the “after-the-fact” evaluation. This approach is changing as quality systems are increasingly designed and applied at the front end of projects. This is discussed in the next section.

There are fewer and fewer reasons for people not being informed about what’s happening in their city, their government, their neighborhood or throughout their community. Current information is available from a wide variety of sources. There are also fewer reasons why residents and businesses cannot share their views, information and ideas with city leaders.

B. Guiding Principles.

Community leaders have the obligation to promote civility as citizens collectively discuss issues of common interest. The principles for acceptable civic behavior are:

1. Mutual trust and expectation from all members of society,
2. Broad based respect for accepted rules of behavior,
3. Appreciation of cultural rituals and customs,
4. Mutual respect for community assets,
5. Capacity and belief in self-reliance,
6. Ubiquitous connections,
7. Common interest in beauty and fun.

C. Role of the Community Engagement Official.

The community engagement function is important enough to warrant staffing, funding and a seat at the city’s strategic table. It is not a cosmetic to be added to a project or decision at the last minute. The community engagement officer has the responsibility to ensure citizens are informed of pending city actions.

The officer coordinates closely with the performance manager and also serves as the catalyst for partnering within the government, with other governments, NGOs, neighborhoods and businesses.

D. Government: The Equity Mechanism.

Government is the system designed to provide equity in society. This Equity Mechanism integrates the city’s five strategic systems with governmental policies, programs, regulations and budgets that govern the social, economic and physical spheres of human endeavors.

Social equity depends on active citizen involvement to strike the right cord and provide direction to elected and appointed officials about priorities, factors to consider when resolving conflicts and how to view long term opportunities in light of present day needs.

E. Contents of the Community Engagement Element of *The General Plan*.

1. Two-way communication programs using surveys and ombudsman services, and
2. Training programs in conflict resolution, association management and community leadership.

THE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.

A. Overview.

Performance management systems have been surveyed by TheAmericanCity.org and published in May 2015 in an article entitled “Performance Management Systems”. The main thing to remember is from Edward Deming’s work that says quality cannot be “inspected into a product”, quality systems must be inherent to the production system from the start of the process.

The key findings of the survey are presented below. The recommended performance management approach for small cities and towns contains three elements.

Key Findings of the Surveyed Performance Measurement Case Studies

1. ***Outcomes, not outputs, are the important measure of success.*** These are the quality of life reasons for enacting regulations, providing community infrastructure and public services. Outcomes are the justification for collecting and spending revenues for taxes and fees. Outputs are the quantity measures, like the lineal feet of sidewalk constructed. Outcomes are increased walking that both improves health and increases retail sales that adds to the pleasantness of a city street.
2. ***Managing performance is much more important than merely measuring it.*** The objective is for the enterprise to learn and improve. Managing the system of performance evaluations best achieves that result.
3. ***The vision-driven strategic plan directs all operational activities.*** The performance management system is a great technique to ensure that the activities of each operating department are fully aligned with the community’s vision-driven strategic plan.
4. ***Performance measurements are all about learning, education and innovation.***
5. ***The leaders of the organization must believe performance management is important.*** Active, sincere CEO/CAO interest is mandatory.

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B. Elements of the Performance Management Plan.

1. Systematic Evaluation.

Performance by administrative and operating departments can be systematically measured and reported with surveys and interactive communication systems based on pre-determined standards that reflect the quality of service and the level of expense established by the community through the planning process.

2. Collaboration.

A collaborative community communication program is essential. Technology greatly improves the capability of any organization to evaluate its performance in a strategy-based, real-time, transparent way. Public evaluations of city performance that lead to learning and innovation are the final measure of success. Systems designed primarily for punitive purposes are destructive and rarely useful. Learning-based performance evaluation systems lead to progress.

3. Senior Staff Leadership and Training.

Evaluation systems persist only when senior managers find them important and devote the time to training and follow-up.

THE SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN.

A. Overview.

The Social Infrastructure Plan includes programs, partnerships, multi-use facilities and pride-building activities that build social capital and form the city's social infrastructure. They demand as much forethought, perhaps more, than their physical cousins. Social infrastructure performs best when it is in sync with the physical, economic, operating and communication plans for the community. Social infrastructure consists of operating programs and capital improvements.

B. Engaging Programs.

The town, working with civic clubs, businesses, educational institutes and homeowners' associations can undertake many activities to engage citizens in civic activities, volunteerism and leadership that build "home town" pride.

1. Leadership Training. Leadership training for community leaders and volunteers builds a spirit of public service and civil behavior.

2. Education. Life-long learning programs at public schools and colleges can offer educational events responding to the quickening pace in the growth of human knowledge, the pressure associated with increasingly demanding jobs and the growing "entertainment" value of learning.

3. Community Communication Systems.

Many towns use traditional methods and web-based social networks. The point is to foster two-way and multi-way conversations between residents, business owners, employees and public officials. There are fewer and fewer reasons for someone to not "get the word".

4. **Volunteerism.** Philanthropic and volunteer organizational education to serve charities, clubs and foundations.
5. **Private Government Training.** Pre-designed processes and standards for private governance systems such as mandatory homeowner and property owner groups.
6. **Staffed Activity Programs.** Towns, NGOs and developers of new communities have program directors and socialization agents for car clubs, the “welcome wagon”, singing and dancing clubs, continuing learning centers and community theaters. Publicly accessible places encourage and enable face-to-face exchanges of ideas and informal chats. Staffing this function is essential. Nothing long-lasting happens without staff – paid or not.

C. Aggressive Partnering.

The aggressive pursuit of cooperative and collaborative activities with public, private and institutional enterprises benefits the town and its residents. Proactively sought partnerships are important and necessary.

1. **Private Businesses.** Partnerships with private businesses are readily available in most cities and towns. Local businesses support sports, cultural, historic and recreational activities. Honoring these private investments in civic systems is of strategic importance to the city.
2. **NGOs.** Institutions, foundations and non-governmental organizations provide many services and goods that benefit the community. They engender philanthropy, entertainment, education and other participatory activities. They can operate in new buildings or retro-fitted into existing community supported buildings and spaces.

3. **Public Agencies.** Partnerships with other governmental agencies have traditionally produced many benefits from reducing costs to increasing service. Well-conceived inter-local agreements have been successful.

4. Pre-Designed Private Governance

Organizations. Homeowner and property owner associations can develop and enforce standards, manage infrastructure, raise funds with dues and assessments, sponsor programs and determine respect for rules. Private governments can become abusive without guidance and leadership training.

D. Leveraging Physical Facilities to Enhance Social Capital.

A fundamental strategic objective is to use physical and economic assets to build social capital, promote civility and enhance the town’s social infrastructure.

1. **Places for planned assembly.** Gathering places must be provided. Outdoor assembly areas can be incorporated into parks, places of worship, school yards and public squares. Indoor assembly places can be the town hall, community centers, the school cafeteria, auditorium or gym. Public places can serve a variety of community purposes.
2. **Multi-purpose buildings are best.** Special purpose or single purpose places are expensive and encourage a segregation of community activities instead of their integration. The best individual public facilities are flexible and adaptable enough to serve multiple purposes.

3. Public building locations are important.

The town's physical development plan must locate civic buildings, streets, ponds, parks, libraries, post offices, transportation centers, and public amenities in places to leverage them to promote community socialization. Connections and beauty promote social capital formation and economic development.

4. Connections are critical. Future land use and circulation plans delineate and articulate mixed use centers and neighborhoods that provide connected places and spaces for social engagement.

5. Gathering places matter. Meeting spaces, private and public, with community rooms and auditoriums are often made available for arts, theater or garden clubs, business and community education centers and job clearinghouses for temporary, part-time and volunteer programs.

6. Places for chance encounters. Post offices, libraries, plazas, grocery stores, hardware stores, diners and schools bring people together randomly. While some post offices are disappearing; they will need to be functionally replaced to enable the chance encounters that invite community cohesion.

7. Streets are for people. Complete streets that encourage walking, playing and enjoyment of an outdoor space with trees, flowers and a nice atmosphere.

8. Places for walking and biking. Walkways, trails and bikeways are the best; they get people out of their houses and cars for physical and social exercise. Transit also plays a role in communal life. Sidewalks are often places for extended conversations; pleasant sidewalks with benches and shade trees help this happen.

9. Beauty. Beauty is important for its inherent quality; and also as a power to bring people together. Be it a puppy, a flower garden, a public sculpture or a café, beautiful things create chatter. The socialization aspect of beauty and art is critical.

E. Growing "Home Town" Pride.

Community spirit rarely happens on its own. People create the right atmosphere; facilities support community gatherings, small and large; formal and informal. The economy provides enough wealth and income to enable people to spend time and energy on community activities. Creating and maintaining community pride and spirit is the result of conscience thought, effort and love.

F. Elements of the Social Infrastructure Plan.

There are five elements of the Plan:

- 1. Schools and Community Education Element.**
- 2. Community Health Element.**
- 3. Emergency and Protective Services Element.**
- 4. Neighborhood Services Element.**
- 5. General Welfare Element.**

Each Element of the Social Infrastructure Plan can benefit by being constructed using the framework described in sections A, B, C and D above and outlined as follows.

As an example, the town's community health program becomes meaningful when the Element describes it in terms of engaging programs, aggressive partnerships, leveraged physical facilities and growing pride.

G. The Structure of Each Element.

Each of the five elements of the Plan benefits by exploiting the following structure.

- **Engaging Programs.**
 1. Leadership training.
 2. Education.
 3. Volunteerism.
 4. Staffed activity programs.
 5. Community communication systems.
 6. Private government training.
- **Partnering Aggressively.**
 1. Private businesses.
 2. NGOs.
 3. Public agencies.
 4. Pre-designed private governance systems.
- **Leveraging Physical Facilities to Enhance Social Capital.**
 1. Places for planned assembly.
 2. Public building locations are important.
 3. Connections are critical.
 4. Gathering places matter.
 5. Places for chance encounters.
 6. Streets are for people.
 7. Places for walking and biking.
 8. Beauty.
- **Facilitating Growth of “Home Town” Pride.**

THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN.

A. Overview.

The Local Economy. Every town in America and the world is a part of the global economy, either because it participates or because it has been by-passed. The ease of communication and travel, the mobility of capital and the trend to more free-trade agreements have enabled connections and trading partnerships between towns next door and across the globe.

Community Wealth. The extent of participation in the global economy determines a town's prosperity, its economic base, its job market, income levels and tax base. Aggressive programs to promote the town's wealth through aggressive economic development programs and a strengthened town balance sheet are necessary activities of contemporary town governance.

The town's economic development strategy relies on two interconnected financial instruments: the city's capital improvement plan and a long-range comprehensive finance plan that anticipates the sources and uses of funds for at least twenty years in the future.

B. Guiding Principles.

Underlying the economic policies of the town are nine guiding principles:

1. The success of the city's economic development is based on the success of jobs created by the private sector. Cities build their capital foundation to secure a stream of business income that supports the lifestyle of residents and businesses.

The city's economic base consists of the businesses that provide 85-90% of the town's jobs and incomes for residents. The economic base provides the tax base required for public goods, services and the education system that trains the workforce for growing businesses.

- 2. "Entrepreneurialism" as a town attribute is a strong strategic approach.** A town known for its entrepreneurial spirit has several advantages over its competitors. First, it reflects the fact that the town is aggressive in pursuing its goals, it is prepared to take calculated risks and it moves fast to take advantage of opportunities. Second, it portrays a business friendly community that appreciates the importance of private business.
- 3. Infrastructure and entitlements are essential for business growth.** These are needed by current and future businesses for their growth and development. The town controls both the Land Development Code and the Capital Improvements Plan. These assets demand judicious management and application.
- 4. Special districts effectively can create a competitive advantage.** A strategic tool of the town is its capacity to create special taxing districts, community redevelopment agencies and other unique methods to fund and finance economic development in downtown districts, economic zones and development corridors. The successful use of special districts requires a close and supportive connection between the town's economic development plan, its physical development plan and its finance plan.

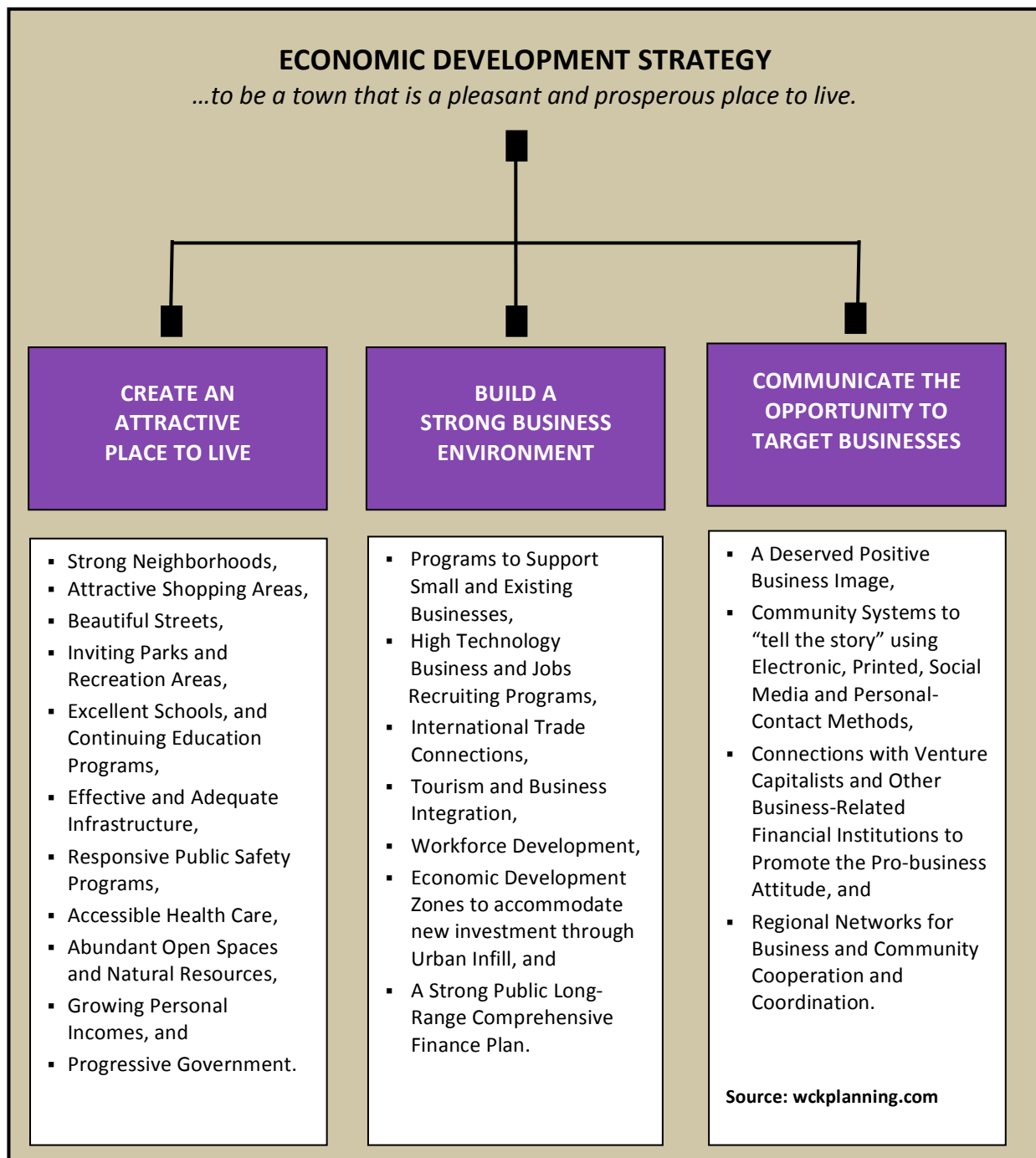
5. **Planning Strategic Investments.** The town has two strategic tools. It can make strategic investments in infrastructure and its can direct the location of public buildings to desirable areas of town. Both are incentive to entice employer of the desired profile to invest in the town. Strategic expenditures also discourage growth in residential and natural areas that rely on the town's protection.
 6. **Retaining and recruiting businesses and employees depends on the town's quality of life and the quality of the workforce.** Job descriptions, personal growth potentials and salaries are primary factors in an employee's mind when deciding to stay in her current job or take another opportunity. But, increasingly, the employee is assessing the quality of life in the town with the job, including the quality of the neighborhoods and the mobility system along with the town's crime factors, schools, parks and shopping. Taking a good job or staying in a good job in a bad town is a tough decision to ask of anyone.
 7. **Workforce Development is imperative.** The collaboration between the school board, the town and the business community is essential to provide a steady flow of job-ready employees in the right occupations and industries. Training for current and future jobs is critical to retaining and recruiting businesses for the town.
 8. **Improving blighted areas creates business and job opportunities.** Blighted neighborhoods and sections of town are important factors as new employers survey the town. They are also major beneficiaries of an economic development plan with jobs and incomes foundational to their success.
 9. **Self-identifying as an international town builds connections to the global economy.** Every town is either connected to the global economy or by-passed by it. Global regions are emerging with international airports, seaports, tradeshow centers and blue-chip corporations operating world-wide using the tremendously effective communication and transportation systems available to contemporary businesses. Towns can participate in this wealth-building activity directly with employment centers or indirectly by housing the talent.
 10. **A business friendly attitude yields positive results.** Towns with taxes, regulations and programs that help businesses be successful are important. However, friendliness to business that compromises the quality of life in the town is self-defeating. Balance and fairness are the important virtues.
- C. The Town's Economic Development Strategy.**
- The strategy is three-fold: first, to create a nice place to live that is attractive to "talent"; second, to create a truly business friendly environment without compromising the first maxim of having a nicely livable town; thirdly, to communicate the local opportunity and attitude to target industries.
- The economic planners must constantly monitor the Social Infrastructure and Physical Development Plans to ensure that they deliver a great community for them to market. Capital improvements that build social infrastructure and physical development venues can also support businesses as they decide to remain in town or relocate from another city.

D. Sell “Quality of Life”.

The town’s strongest strategic play is to create a nice place for people to live. Increase the town’s livability, don’t lower development standards. This attracts businesses as they consider relocating and recruiting “talent”.

E. Build and Communicate Pro-Bias Business.

Many towns are anti-growth and anti-business, so a positive attitude is a competitive advantage. Other communities are aggressively seeking new businesses; being positive towards new business is also a competitive advantage.



F. Elements of The Economic Development Plan.

The Economic Development Plan is the vehicle for growing the town's private economy. The five Elements structured on the ten Guiding Principles will deliver a program that is competitive for keeping, growing and attracting new businesses and their skilled employees.

1. The Data Base Management Element.

Business is a great user of data; give them all they want...a real-time, interactive and accessible data base.

2. The Livability Enhancement Element.

The town must be a nice place to live for executives and talent. The Social Infrastructure and Physical Development Plans are critical to business recruiting.

3. Workforce Development Element.

Education, training and life-long learning are important community values.

4. The Business Retention and Recruiting Element.

Keeping and attracting employers and employees is constant work. Incentives are of growing importance; linking the economic development and capital improvements is useful.

5. The Business Partnership and Collaboration Element.

Use every opportunity to partner for the win-win.

G. The Structure of Each Element.

Each Element of the Economic Development Plan can be constructed using the Guiding Principles described above and outlined below. As an example, the town's workforce benefits greatly from private business involvement; an emphasis on fostering entrepreneurialism; exploiting special districts to fund training facilities; and tapping blighted neighborhoods as a reservoir of talent.

Consider imbibing each element with:

1. **A private business orientation.** The success of the city's economic development is based on the success of private sector jobs. Tout existing corporate citizenship.
2. **An entrepreneurial bias.** A climate of "entrepreneurialism" is a strong attribute.
3. **Infrastructure and entitlement readiness.** Be ready with these essential ingredients for business growth.
4. **Targeted special districts.** Use special districts to create a competitive edge.
5. **A passion for retaining and recruiting businesses and talent.** Keeping and growing businesses and "talented" employees depends on the town's quality of life and the quality of the workforce programs.
6. **Strategic Capital Investments.** Use the Capital Improvements Element to build improvements that promote economic development.
7. **Tailored Workforce Development programs available to employers, existing and new.** A strong relationship between the school board, the local college and the business community builds an effective work force.
8. **An attack mentality towards blight.** Improving blighted areas creates business and job opportunities.
9. **A global perspective.** Self-identifying as a global town builds connections to the world economy even before the town is ready. Relationships and connections to global networks demonstrate competence.
10. **A smiling attitude.** A business friendly attitude always helps yield positive results, especially when accompanied by incentives, entitlements and infrastructure.

THE PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN.

A. Overview.

The Physical Development Plan, traditionally called the “Comprehensive Plan” has historically not been very comprehensive. It typically did not include elements for schools, public safety, community health and other topics of concern to the town’s citizens, as previously discussed.

This deficiency is solved by complementing the Physical Development Plan of *The General Plan* with the Social Infrastructure and Economic Development Plans to complete the planning system triad. This collaboration of Plans mimics sustainability theory and offers a truly comprehensive planning program.

The Physical Development Plan addresses future land use, circulation, utilities and natural resource preservation, but also extends to the physical systems, facilities and policies that facilitate and expand social capital and economic development. The elements of the Physical Development Plan can be prepared for future land use, circulation, utilities and natural resources, but preferably, the plan is constructed with elements focused on the venues that compose the community.

Focus of venues forces the operating departments to think and act holistically by understanding their regulatory and facility improvement role in the context of an actual community venue, such as a neighborhood or downtown. There may be other ways to achieve this holistic thinking and acting, but orienting the plan on the venues is a direct way to achieve the desired result.

B. Guiding Principles.

The principles guiding the Physical Development Plan and its implementation are:

1. **Compatibility:** Adjacent and related developments will be compatible; no one development causing harm to another based on adopted compatibility standards.
2. **Concurrency:** Adequate public services will be available to development when the development becomes occupied based on adopted development standards.
3. **Financial Feasibility:** The local government will determine that it has the short-term and long-term financial resources to properly serve the new development.
4. **Sustainability:** Development will employ the latest practical technologies, old and new, to install facilities and enact programs that conserve water and energy.
5. **Beauty:** While beauty is in the beholder, design standards will be promulgated to determine design parameters that reflect the values of the town.
6. **Generational Thinking:** To plan and design the first generation of development anticipating second generation development.
7. **Development as a community enhancement.** Planning and designing development that not only “does no harm” but actually improves the surrounding environment.
8. **Practicality.** To determine the constructability and long term maintenance considerations of development prior to its approval.

C. Elements of The Physical Development Plan.

Traditionally, comprehensive plans were organized by the physical components of the city, i.e., future land use, transportation, utilities and the rest. *The General Plan* described below takes the tact of organizing itself by the venues that host people throughout the town, i.e., neighborhoods, downtowns, corridors and open spaces. The infrastructure Element draws upon the venue-centric elements to present a holistic picture of the utility systems.

The venue-centric elements of the Physical Development Plan are:

1. The Neighborhoods Element.

Residential neighborhoods can host a full spectrum of housing types and prices. Preserving and enhancing neighborhoods is the primary mission of every city.

PRINCIPLES OF NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN

- They are walkable from end to end,
- They have a civic core and a mix of uses and amenities,
- They have an interconnected street network,
- They have recognizable boundaries,
- They provide for chance meetings and privacy, and
- They have a variety of housing types.

Source: Urban Land Magazine, May 2004, p63.

2. The Downtown and Mixed Use Centers Element.

Downtowns and neighborhood centers of various sizes, shapes and compositions are great vehicles of community socialization, business success and service consolidation.

Downtowns and mixed-use centers provide:

- a. A mix of people, uses, buildings and travel modes are valuable city assets. They are to be nurtured for their social and economic asset value,
- b. Civic buildings create critical mass and encourage private development in downtowns and other centers,
- c. Spaces/Places such as gardens, dog parks, ball fields, walking trails, seating plazas can be discovered or created for scheduled and random encounters, and
- d. Buildings that house coffee shops, newspaper stands, libraries, community centers, fire houses, post offices and shoe shine stands build social and economic value.

3. The Multiple Use Development Corridors Element.

Highway corridors and “commercial strips” are the location for multi-modal mobility systems for people and freight, venues for multiple uses such as apartments, offices, and retail centers. They are the places for utilities and the movement of water. Even though the ugliest commercial corridors found in every town have pretty well been written off as hopeless, this trend can be reversed. Commercial strips can become productive multi-use corridors that become valuable economic, tax-generating assets for the city.

- 4. **The Urban Open Space Element** includes, parks, school grounds, recreation amenities, visual amenities, places and corridors for animals, corridors for human recreation trails, utilities and stormwater. They are the places that are beautiful settings based on nature and the built environment that enhance our lives.

5. **The Urban infrastructure Element** includes multiple modes of mobility, utilities and stormwater systems that support parks, schools, shopping areas, medical campuses, employment zones and civic activities. The Infrastructure Element extracts the facility needs from each venue-centric element to create a system plans for each utility.

6. **The Rural Lands Element.**

Rural Lands provide four important functions. They serve as an incredible visual amenity; they also define urban boundaries, provide agricultural lands and host large environmental systems with appropriate perpetual protection.

a. **Agricultural Lands** are tricky since most farmers and ranchers demand the flexibility to be able to sell their land for urban development while wanting protection for their agricultural operations. Programs that use agricultural easements, “sunset” tax preference programs and rural development clustering opportunities solve some of these conflicting desires and keep land in agricultural production for as long as possible.

b. **Natural Lands, especially regional environmental systems,** require preservation and can provide access to nature and the casual encounters with animals and vegetation with paths and trails that sensitively traverse wetlands, upland habitats, water management areas, lakes and streams.

7. **Special Elements.**

a. **Small Area Plans** are for defined areas of town with special opportunities or issues.

They generally have multiple owners thereby precluding use of a planned development or other single-owner technique to create entitlements and infrastructure funding plans. Small area plans may be sector plans, community redevelopment agency [CRA] plans, community development district [CDD] plans or other legislatively offered tools. In most cases, the planning process employs the “rational” planning process first described by Professor Chapin in *Urban Land Use Planning*.

b. **Livability Enhancement Plans** are associated with the Economic Development Plan. They are intended to “sell quality of life” to employers tempted to move out of town and to prospective employers considering a move into town. They draw heavily on the standard plan elements of the Physical Development Plan but they are more. They include aspects of the Economic Development Plan and especially the Social Capital Plan to demonstrate to existing and potential employers that the town is a good place to live and recruit employees.

8. **Economic Development Implications.**

People with choices choose to live in nice places; places where they are comfortable raising their families and running their businesses. Richard Florida’s work, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, best describes the community qualities sought by people with high-value skills that can locate anywhere. A strong Physical Development Plan helps create and maintain a nice place to live.

9. Be the “Best”.

Since employers are perpetually searching for skilled employees, businesses are locating in places that appeal to potential employees. The national designations of the “best places to live” and similar accolades are taken seriously by business location experts. Seeking designations is an important function since these designations influence the location of high-skilled workers and hence, the location and re-locations of high-value businesses.

10. A Bonus for Residents.

Great neighborhoods with a variety of housing types and prices, schools, shopping districts, parks and trails, transit systems, cultural facilities and events are among the community assets that attract and keep businesses. The Physical Development Plan contains a list of livability factors, evaluates the current condition of these assets and makes plans for enhancements. A bonus is that these community assets and amenities are also valued by current residents.

D. The Structure of Each Element.

The structure of each of the six elements of the Physical Development Plan will vary based on the specifics of the way each needs to be organized to be useful.

However, in general, each Element should have a similar look that enables the users to make sense of the composite picture.

The common structure of each Element is:

1. Inventory of physical conditions including existing land use, circulation, utility and open space inventory,
2. Inventory of “soft” conditions including existing policies, regulations and financial plans,
3. Future Land Use plans and policies,
4. Future Circulation plans and policies,
5. Future Community Services plan for School, Hospital and EMS Facilities plan,
6. Future Utility plans and policies and
7. Future Open Space plan and policies.

E. Composition and Reconciliation.

Once the elements are completed, they are ready to be stitched together with the plans from the other venues. Whether the conventional approach of functional based elements or the venue based elements is used, the time always comes to put them all together.

In the case of the venue-based elements, the neighborhoods plans, the downtown plan, the community facility plans and the open space plan are combined to form a city-wide composite. Once done, reconciliation becomes the order of the day. The utility plans are then calibrated to accommodate the composite.

THE OPERATING SYSTEMS.

A. Overview.

The Operating Plans of each department in the city consist of plans, budgets and procedures for operating, managing, maintaining and evaluating the city's infrastructure systems and programs. These draw upon the venue-centric elements of the Physical Development Plan. Streets and drainage, utilities, parks, public safety and a myriad of other activities are provided by the city. Operating plans also exist for special districts, public authorities and/or private community governance systems.

B. Operating Department Action Plans.

Most of the city's staff and budget is devoted to the operating departments. Operating departments handle functions such as roads and bridges, drainage systems, waste management, grounds maintenance, security and emergency response. They can be budgeted annually and for several years. The level of service provided is directly linked to the strategic plan.

C. Guiding Principles.

The principles that guide the town's many operating departments are varied and depend on operational specifics. However, ideas about honesty, integrity, fairness to fellow employees, high standards of service and sound safety practices transcend the differences found in the individual departments. Having a set of guiding principles for all operating and administrative departments is a wonderful thing.

D. Contents of the Operating Department Action Plans.

The action plans are typically facility systems plans for the road network, drainage system,

water and sewer system and the like. Plans also exist for fire, police and emergency response facilities, equipment, staffing and standards.

These plans are comprehensive, designed to correct any existing deficiencies, to maintain existing facilities, to collaborate with other departments and agencies, to keep up with changing standards and to anticipate the city's growth. The departmental plans are a major part of the city's capital improvement plan.

E. The Structure of Operating Department Action Plans.

The action plans will each address:

1. The rules and regulations that govern their facilities,
2. Five year capital improvement needs,
3. Long-range comprehensive capital needs for 20+ years,
4. Partnerships and collaborations with other departments and agencies that improve service and lower costs.

F. Performance Management.

Metrics are more easily applied to activities that have obvious outputs. The length of sidewalk constructed or the extent of property-damaging flood events are examples of the easy ones. Response times for ambulances, crime statistics and student achievement results are harder.

However, in all cases, measures can be established and monitored. Over time, they can be improved based on experience. Postponing the implementation of measures because it is hard is a false justification for inaction. Metric systems are an important part of all operating department action plans.

THE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.

A. Overview.

The town's financial management system focuses on three specific elements: the Annual Budget, the Five Year Capital Improvement Plan, the Long-Range Comprehensive Finance Plan. Bond documents draw upon these three elements plus information from other town resources.

B. Annual Budgets.

The town's annual budget draws the most public attention since it specifically determines the projects to be funded and the tax and fee programs that will support the operations.

Towns that prepare their annual budget within the context of the community's vision and *The General Plan* generally have less raucous budget hearings. The Plan reflects the levels of service that have become accepted for the town's facilities and services. Millage rates and other fees are set to collect the amount of money necessary to fund operations, debt and reserves for the year.

The annual budget implements the previously agreed-upon longer term social infrastructure, economic development and physical development programs in *The General Plan*.

C. Capital Improvement Plans [CIP].

Funding and financial systems that support the design, construction and maintenance of physical and social infrastructure systems are traditionally the subject of the Capital Improvements Plan [CIP].

The inclusion of social infrastructure and economic development expenditures in the traditionally physically-oriented capital improvements planning process helps leverage physical improvements to provide multiple benefits for social capital formation and economic development success.

D. The Long-Range Comprehensive Finance Plan [LRCFP].

The Finance Plan anticipates the sources and uses of funds for twenty or more years into the future. The Financial Plan, by being comprehensive and long range, is in some sense, the business model for the city. It provides the framework to fund, and/or finance, the social infrastructure, the economic development programs and the physical development necessary to establish and maintain a successful community.

The magic of looking out twenty years at the sources and uses of town funding is not that the projections will be correct, but that rising and falling revenue sources will be monitored and the costs of town programs will be evaluated based on their long term sustainability.

E. Special District Plans.

Public financial resources in the early 21st century are retreating, and therefore, public goods and services that used to support established livability standards are either no longer available or provided "fee for service." Special districts shift more of the cost burden for necessary and accustomed general revenue public services by charging user fees to residents and businesses directly benefitting from the improvements or services provided.

Special Districts are growing in number, size and breadth of responsibility; they are in essence private governments. Long term thinking is required to evaluate the impact of these private governments and the rights of the residents.

Financial management and community leadership skills are necessary for the private government managers. Training and oversight by public agencies for this growing number of private government officials will be required.

1. Homeowners and condominium associations, property owners' groups, improvement districts and special taxing districts are becoming a bigger part of the system for providing what used to be public goods and services.
2. Private taxation in the form of dues, fees, assessments, surcharges and other revenue-raising methods are becoming widely used by private governments.
3. The public role in these private governments is generally undefined, however, the obligations of the public entities approving these private communities seem to be:
 - a. Early notification to property owners and residents of their new obligations,
 - b. Financial and leadership skill training for the private government managers so they can effectively manage these private governments, and
 - c. Oversight to avoid abuses.

FINAL THOUGHTS.

The *General Plan* that addresses the five strategic systems of the city can touch every aspect of city operations that affect the lives of the town's citizens, visitors and businesses. Town planning and management is a serious business that requires comprehensive, long-range thinking and doing to create a sustainable town that is a pleasant and prosperous place to live.

**THE ELEMENTS
of
THE GENERAL PLAN
for
A SUSTAINABLE CHARACTER TOWN**

- A. Community Vision and Values
- B. A Vision-Driven Strategic Plan
- C. The Town's Five Strategic Systems, Harmonized and Synchronized:
 1. The Community Engagement System
 2. The Performance Management System
 3. The Planning Systems:
 - Social Infrastructure Plan
 - Economic Development Plan
 - Physical Development Plan
 4. The Town's Operating System
 5. The Financial Management System

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APPENDIX A ANALYTICAL TOOLS.

Environmental or Community Scan.

Before problems can be addressed, they must be understood. Time spent plumbing the depths of community issues, resources and capacities enable a better understanding of the needs to be addressed through strategic and action plans.

- **The Scan.** A city must understand its residents, its businesses, their need for public goods and services and their capacity to support responsive community programs. A town must also understand its business model; management needs to know where their money comes from and what influences its growth.
 - More and more households have either single heads of the household, or they are singles. The city’s housing stock and business model must get beyond the nuclear family prototype.
 - Gas tax rates are fixed, consumption is declining; future revenues from gas taxes will decline; a plan to supplement this anticipated short fall is required.
 - Environmental and community health issues are growing in importance.
 - Economic constraints persist as family incomes continue to stagnate.
 - Public goods and services are increasingly needed by people less willing or able to pay for them.
 - The number and power of private community governments is growing.
 - Public education is a city responsibility.
- **Breadth and Depth.** Strategies are comprehensive, long-range and forward-thinking; they consider the full range of internal and external factors that influence and affect the enterprise. The key is to scan the local environment to deeply understand the range of issues facing the city, its residents and businesses; then to design an effective strategy.
- **Strategic Objectives.** Strategy is the pivot point between vision and action; it describes the general path to be followed. Strategic objectives add depth and focus to the strategy with specific areas of interest; but they are still ideas, they cannot be directly implemented. Strategic objectives help articulate broad strategies and translate the strategy into actions.
- **Examples.**
 - A city government may want to be “green”. It might decide to bring all departments along at the same pace, or to first target a few departments for complete transformation.
 - Strategy helps set economic development priorities to: 1) recruit new industry, 2) help existing businesses expand or 3) foster new start-ups.
 - Historic buildings are an asset that attract visitors and educate residents. Conflicts between historic preservation and new development need strategic guidance based on community values.

- **“All of the above”** may be the desired choice; however, actions are usually limited by resources. Strategy is an organized, vision-driven process for allocating limited resources. The benefit of a strategy, especially one that has broad support, is that it serves as a framework for choosing the “best” path, measuring the results and continuing to move ahead.
- **The Test.** A good strategy considers all the important issues, internal and external, and finds action plans designed to achieve the established vision. The performance measurement system, designed at the outset, is the test to use in evaluating the effectiveness of the action in achieving the vision. If the action plan outcomes cannot be directly connected to the vision, something is wrong.
- **Example** – If the consensus vision is to be a larger city, should the territory be enlarged through annexation or should the current boundaries be intensified with quality enhancements to the current city? Or both?
- **Example** – If one’s vision is to work on interesting assignments in your area of expertise, is it more effective to be in a small, boutique specialty practice or to be a subject-matter specialist within a large, multi-disciplinary firm?
- **Example** – To fund the services and facilities the city residents want in their park system, should revenues come from general taxation or user fees?
- **Example** – To be a pleasant and prosperous place to live, should a city pursue an economic development approach to attract large businesses from outside the city or support smaller local businesses to improve their growth opportunities?

SWOT Analysis.

There are many ways to develop a strategy for an enterprise, be it a business, municipality or institution. The “SWOT” analysis of analyzing Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats is a useful tool for strategic planning.

Strengths and weaknesses form the internal evaluation part of the analysis. Opportunities and threats look outside the enterprise to examine the eco-system within which the enterprise operates.

A SWOT analysis can help answer important questions that will lead to an approach that includes a vision-driven strategy and then a strategic-driven action plan.

Example – An economic development strategy for a city to realize its vision of being a sustainable place that is pleasant and prosperous could include three strategic objectives with supporting action plans:

- Create an attractive place for people to live as an asset for executives to re-locate their businesses and recruit talented employees.
- Build a strong business environment that values businesses and helps them thrive.
- Communicate the opportunity for business success offered by the town to existing and new businesses.

Reverse Engineering.

Reverse engineering can be viewed as the contrarians' approach to strategic planning. Reverse engineering is an instructive exercise to determine if the action plans are linked to the vision, forward or backward. It enables entering the system at any point.

For example, start with an action plan, any plan, and work backward to see if its outcome can be linked to the town's vision. If not, question the action plan or the vision and make changes accordingly.

The process can start at the end, with the performance measurement system. What do you want to use as a measure of success? Family incomes? Starting at this outcome, what determines family incomes? Where does that trail of thought lead? To increase family incomes, the end of the trail must be jobs which are determined by two factors: successful business recruitment and a successful history of building a strong, attractive city. Follow the thread backwards.

Case Studies.

The success of other towns can be studied. Most successful towns are proud of their achievements and rarely consider a nearby

town to be a competitive threat. Look around, see what works and what doesn't work. Learn from others and reject the notion that ideas will not be used if "not invented here."

Combine the case study approach with the idea of collaborations and partnerships. The goal is to build and keep a pleasant and prosperous town, not to be considered the brightest bulb in the box. Document what other towns do, understand why they work, solicit advice and pick the best practices that apply to your town.

Two important results are:

- Best Practices and
- Lessons Learned

Many professional organizations offer case studies. The International City and County Managers Association [ICMA], the Urban Land Institute [ULI] and the American Planning Association [APA] are three great sources for examples of successful towns and developments.

Gap analysis, location quotients and comparative studies all depend on case studies to set a base line for evaluating local performance. Each has advantages and disadvantages that should be evaluated as applications are considered.

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