Thinking About Thinking.

THE NEW DECADE.

As the "teens" become the "twenties", a pause is permitted to contemplate to past and the future. Rather than add to the plethora of prognostications proliferating on-line, in journals and television, the challenge may relate to process related outcome.

BEING THOUGHTFUL IS THE IMPORTANT SKILL.

It is useful to understand different types of problems and the various techniques used to solve them. All efforts will be required to continue to address climate change, international trade relationships and the evolving politics of the world's nations; not to mention urban issues, affordable housing deficits, natural system abuses along with personal safety and community security.

ARTICLES THAT FOLLOW.

Being Analytical addresses tools available to planers and designers when examining community conditions. Tools include, at least:

- SWOT, An analysis of a system's internal strengths and weaknesses and its external opportunities and threats.
- Community Scans broadly examine the community's assets and liabilities.
- Reverse Engineering starts with the outcome and works backwards to identify the determining factors.
- "Big data" analysis relies on construction of a large body of data with algorithms and analysis to find the underlying relationships between variables. In a simple sense, this is the technique used over a century ago to discover the source of diseases.

"SMART SYSTEMS",

Blockchains, sensors, dashboards and other "smart system" tools are available to analysis problems, construct and evaluate scenarios and select solutions based on data and analysis. Technology is a tsunami invading city hall.

CRITICAL THINKING.

Urban planners and designers are constantly faced with issues that require a thought process that is comprehensive, covering a broad range of disciplines and areas of expertise; and long term. Think about solutions that address problems that have been decades or centuries in the making requires solutions that may take as long. Comprehensive, long-term think is essential.

SYSTEMS THINKING.

Recognizing that few events, assets or processes are stand-along encourages the search for relationships and connections. Systems rule.

TYPES OF PROBLEMS.

Different types of problems require different approaches. The best example to illustrate the point is "Wicked Problems" They relate directly to urban planning issues. As always, understand the problem before getting to far along with the solution.

THINKERS.

Seeking out the thinkers of our age and previous times is useful. Herman Kahn, Robert Brown, Donella Meadows are a few. William McDonough, Alvin Toffler, Richard Florida and many other. Find help from professionals.