

## Why Plan?

### Packet Synopsis

Some dictionary definitions of a **plan** are as follows:

**Plan** *n.* – **1.** a scheme of action or procedure: *battle plan*. **2.** a project or definite purpose: *plans for the future*. **3.** to project a plan, act, or course of action for: *to plan one's vacation*. **4.** to make plans: *to plan ahead, to plan for one's retirement*.

Planning in these senses is to look ahead and to try to address future perceived needs, circumstances or goals with a coherent strategy or strategies and to assure that the resources needed are identified and available and intelligently applied, when needed.

Plans can be very simple or quite complex. But even a simple plan, for example that vacation trip to Yellowstone with the family is not so simple; transportation has to be arranged, clothing needs determined and weather needs considered, some research may be in order as to what to see and where to stay and what might be of interest on the way to and from for example. When projecting into the future, plans becomes more complex because the further one thinks out, the more unknowns or imponderables must be considered that require assumptions. But reasonable assumptions can be made if soundly based upon what is known now and what has been.

The question is “**Why Plan?**” The best answer can well be, can one afford not to plan?

The following from the literature on comprehensive land use planning are provided in this packet because they do give good direction to the question “**Why Plan?**”

Under Construction: Tools and Techniques for Local Planning, Minnesota Planning, June 2002 – This a Minnesota guide written for Minnesota Local Governmental Units to help them through the comprehensive land use planning process from conception of need to final implementation of a land use plan. It specifically on its page 3 addresses the question of the needs for “**Why Plan?**” and then identifies the ten reasons for developing a comprehensive plan.

Community Visioning Handbook: How to Imagine, and Create a Better Future, Maine State Planning Office, 2003 – This paper's Part I question is “Why Vision?” It makes the point that a land use plan is a *vision*. It is “a mental picture of what residents want their community to look and feel like in 20 years”. It is the way to work with change. In a box, it correlates the vision to the comprehensive plan. In answering the question “why vision?” it in essence answers the question of “**Why Plan?**”.

Oregon's Statewide Planning Program, Department of Land Conservation and Development, Salem, OR – The introduction outlines the goals of Oregon's statewide planning program, perhaps the most comprehensive in the nation, and how these goals are accomplished. The second part, “What Oregon's Planning Does For Oregon” explains

*why Oregon plans*: Enhancing economic development; Makes housing more affordable; and 13 more reasons. All are universally valid reason as to “**Why Plan?**”.

Fact Sheets: Comprehensive Planning, Local Community Resources, University of Illinois Extension – In its Introduction, this paper states, “An old saying amongst those in the planning profession is that if you fail to plan, what you are in reality doing is planning to fail.” A very sufficient reason as to “**Why Plan?**”.

Citizens Guides to Land Use Planning, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Queen’s Printer for Ontario, Ottawa, 2002 – “Good planning leads to orderly growth and the efficient provision of services. It touches us all and helps us to have the kind of community we want.” This simple statement explains why they plan on the Province of Ontario and that land use planning is not an American phenomenon.

## **LEGAL NOTES**

The authority for its Local Units of Governments to plan has been conveyed to them by the Legislature through the following statutes:

**For Townships** - Minnesota Statutes § 366.10 through § 366.18 convey to townships the authority to enact zoning regulations, zoning districts and establish zoning commissions and prescribes the manner in which this is to be done. Minnesota Statutes § 394.33 also conveys to townships the authority to plan and zone with the stipulation that any official controls, after adoption, must not be inconsistent nor less restrictive than any adopted official controls of the county within which it belongs. Minnesota Statutes § 462.352 Definitions, subd. 2. Municipality defines "municipality" to mean any city, including a city operating under a home rule charter, and any town, thereby extending all of the authority granted to municipalities to plan per Minnesota Statutes Chapter 462 - Housing, Redevelopment, Planning, Zoning - to townships as well.

**For Counties** - Minnesota Statutes § 394.21 specifically grants to all counties, except those in the defined seven-county metropolitan Area, the authority to “carry on county planning and zoning.” Minnesota Statutes § 394.23 gives county boards the power and authority to prepare and adopt by ordinance, a comprehensive plan, “a comprehensive plan or plans when adopted by ordinance must be the basis for official controls adopted under the provisions of sections 394.21 to 394.37.”

**For Municipalities** - Minnesota Statutes § 462.353 grants municipalities their authority to plan. Subdivision 1. states, “A municipality may carry on comprehensive municipal planning activities for guiding the future development and improvement of the municipality and may prepare, adopt and amend a comprehensive municipal plan and implement such plan by ordinance and other official actions in accordance with the provisions of sections 462.351 to 462.364.”

The seven metro counties are governed by Minnesota Statutes Chapter 473, the Metropolitan Planning Act.

For cities in the seven-county metropolitan area, Minnesota Statutes § 473.858 - Comprehensive Plans – governs.

With these statutes, the Legislature has recognized the importance and the need for comprehensive land use planning.

The **Local Planning Assistance Center at the Department of Administration** helps local governments with planning efforts, including comprehensive planning, zoning, hazard mitigation planning, GIS applications and development issues.

Upon request, this document will be made available in an alternate format, such as Braille, large print or audiotape. For TTY, contact Minnesota Relay Service at 800-627-3529 and ask for the Department of Administration.

**Local Planning Assistance Center**

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