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LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY MANAGEMENT

Wayne Feiden, FAICP

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Photo by Juno Carlson, Omnitrans

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This PAS Report examines management issues for local government planning, especially management trends. Most planning managers are already leading, responding to, or at least considering most of these trends. The focus of this report is on key issues and management trends to help managers, planners, and students think strategically.

Planning, project reviews and approvals, and plan implementation often receive public notice, acclaim, and criticism. Management issues, on the other hand, tend to make news only when a new planning director is hired or an old one is fired; when allegations of corruption emerge; or perhaps when a mayor, city manager, or county supervisor proposes a major reorganization or budget. Generally, the public view of management issues is obscured by substantive planning issues, as it should be. Although the general public may not follow management issues, they may be as important as substantive planning issues for many municipal and county planning managers, line planners, and public users of planning services.

BASICS OF MANAGEMENT

The best organizations and agencies have strong and visionary leadership; excellent communication, coordination, and collaboration; and very strong employees. Arguably, the most important task for a planning manager is to build and maintain the best team possible. Key to any operation is hiring the right people; valuing, training, empowering, feeding, and protecting those people; and getting rid of unmanageable people. Political constraints, civil service restrictions, union contracts, the challenges of working in a fishbowl, and other legal structures sometimes limit a manager's ability to develop the right team, but building that team should always be the holy grail.

Hiring the best staff means hiring the best people available—even if that means knowing that staff will move on. It is critical for top managers to know how to get the best from every employee, whether that involves training, coaching, or simply providing assignments that will help staff members grow while also playing to their strengths. The same goal should apply to line professionals, which includes planning managers and leaders who set the policy direction and take political risks, and staff who support the agency mission, such as staff who work at the permit counter. In planning, the distinction between line and staff may be hard to see, but often the difference is about empowerment—such as a manager empowering and supporting employees to take risks and help advance a mission.

A clear mission and an optimized department organizational structure should also enhance a department's ability to excel at providing customer service. Providing excellent customer service is one of the most important functions of a taxpayer-funded public agency. Customer service, however, is perhaps the area where planning offices are most ripe for improvement.

PLANNING OFFICE ORGANIZATION

For some planning managers, office organization is the result of careful thought. For others it is the result of historical or legacy factors that never changed. Almost any organizational structure can work when there are willing and cooperative players who want to make it work and who have both strong political support and a culture of collaboration. Smaller communities are more likely to have a consolidated model in which planning, building, housing (including grants administration), and economic development are together in a single department. Large cities and counties typically house those functions in separate departments or in divisions within a larger department.

A very strong argument certainly exists to have current and long-range planning integrated in some formal way. Zucker (2007) recommends keeping current planning and long-range planning in the same department to ensure collaboration and integration of different functions. The goals and policies expressed in comprehensive and general plans and subarea plans are implemented by current planning functions, including site plan and development review, zoning, and form-based codes. Planning department leadership must focus on creating and embracing the vision of the department's work, coordinate all functions so that departments collaborate, and work toward a shared mission.

In planning management, as in planning, context is everything. The different contexts of inner city, urban, suburban, exurban, and rural communities; fast-growing and shrinking communities; and wealthy and working-class communities all lead to different management needs—to say

nothing of different values and perspectives. However, more similarities than differences likely exist within different communities, and an understanding of context simply reinforces the options. The same issues can be raised about the integration of economic development, sustainability, development services, housing, and planning.

Sustainability is one of the newer organizing principles in local planning. It involves finding integrative approaches to addressing the "three Es": environment, economy, and social equity. As sustainability becomes a dominant paradigm for planning, planning managers and communities are grappling with their organizational structures. There are no universal guidelines about where sustainability functions should be housed in local governments, what a sustainability function is, which professionals should take the lead in sustainability, or even what the relationship between sustainability and planning should be. Local government sustainability functions are typically located in one of four (all good) organizational structures:

1. Sustainability in an integrated planning department, often with major or minor restructuring or rebranding
2. Sustainability integrated into a chief legislative or executive office
3. Sustainability as a standalone department
4. Some combination of integration and separate departments

The reality is that all four models can work exceptionally well when planning managers ensure that there is good communication and collaboration; all four can also fail spectacularly without such communication and collaboration. What is most important for communities is that they carefully examine which organizational structures, within each community's context, will allow the best integration, strongest collaboration, sharpest focus, and most effective use of limited resources.

CUSTOMER SERVICE AT THE PERMIT COUNTER

With unlimited resources, staffing ideally would consist of senior-level staff that understand the context, represent the process inside and out, can give consistent help to the community, and can make consistent decisions. As a practical matter, front-counter work is usually assigned to junior staffers who are less expensive, have more time to spend with the public, and do not have the seniority to request other assignments. It is critical that planning managers set up procedures, training, and oversight so that those junior-level staffers are providing quality customer-friendly support while ensuring consistent treatment of new projects.

Consistency and reproducibility are especially important for development reviews. Checklists provide consistency and help planners avoid forgetting simple steps. They also provide two other critical benefits for overwhelmed planning offices. First, the more checklists can be used, the more steps in planning reviews can be delegated to junior professional staff and support staff. Second, and even more promising, many things that can be codified in checklists can now or eventually be moved online and made part of an interactive process with an applicant.

The first step in evaluating any application is to ensure that it is complete. One of the benefits that planning mangers have discovered when they use online application processes—with checklists incorporated into the permit applications—is that the applications cannot be submitted until at least the basic steps are complete: attachments included, fees paid, and questions filled out. Obviously, this same approach is done in most planning offices manually if the process is not automated. Until an application is judged complete, planners will find that understanding the context of an application and undertaking a substantive review will be more difficult.

Written and oral staff reports are a critical aspect of current planning, development permitting programs, and development-related plan and zoning amendments. Most importantly, planning managers require staff reports to provide the public and decision makers with consistent and informative reviews, regardless of the staff planners who actually write the reports. Reducing litigation risks and providing consistency in staffing and responses are also extremely important.

Disputes are probably more common in the permit process than any other aspect of planning. In the permit process, alternative dispute resolutions are an option for planning managers to consider. They can cool down affected parties to allow successful dialogues and agreement on mutually beneficial resolutions of issues. They are an alternative to the traditional permit process—that is sometimes winner take all—and to litigation. Alternative dispute resolutions may take many forms; they usually involve some variation on mediation, arbitration, and negotiation.

A critical part of any permitting system is ensuring that projects will be built as proposed and approved. Performance guarantees are the legal and financial mechanisms to ensure that improvements offered as part of the permit process are provided and that construction projects are properly completed, generally without the need to resort to criminal or civ-

il sanctions. Performance guarantees are the heart and soul of most government efforts that avoid after-the-fact criminal and civil sanctions, and they are generally much faster, less expensive, less complicated, and less adversarial than sanctions. The three types of performance guarantees are nonfinancial performance, third-party responsibility, and financial performance.

POLITICAL AND PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENTS

Planning, especially in local government in the United States, is a political exercise—not partisan, but political nonetheless. Planners are charged with managing change, which requires great sensitivity to the communities they serve, the political context, and the need to accomplish things at the end of the day. One of the best trends occurring today is a growing commitment within governments to create clear departmental visions and missions. Planning offices are mission driven. Ideally those missions are focused on implementing community master, comprehensive, or general plans. The job of planning managers is to ensure that their work remains mission driven.

Risk management, in the local government context, is used to identify potential events that may affect the government and to protect and minimize risks to the government's property, services, and employees. Planning and governments are often faulted for not being willing to address risks. This is especially a problem with long-term risks—from such things as climate change—because of the lack of short-term political payback and political and community support in light of enormous uncertainties. For local governments, the primary threats are litigation risk and political risk.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Planning managers need to ensure that their staff, policies, and procedures support community engagement. This engagement in turn influences the management of planning offices. Community engagement is at the core of the planning profession, particularly for public-sector planners. It is the planner's job to guarantee that low-income, minority, and historically underrepresented communities are engaged in the planning process Depending on the perspective, the actual process of citizen engagement is either an opportunity for collective empowerment and collaboration or the bane of the existence of local planners—or, for most planners, probably some of each.

Because citizen engagement is so important to the management of local planning, it should be thought of as one of the core constructs of any local government planning office. However, there is no "right" way to organize a planning office around such a construct. Some planning managers want to make sure that every staff member is good at community engagement and that this aspect of planning is part of everyone's work. Other planning managers assign especially skilled staff members to serve as community engagement experts and to help the rest of the staff with their projects. Ultimately, the organizational structure may be less important than the overall orientation of local government planning managers and their staff.

METRICS AND DATA

Planning offices use metrics and data in several ways: to evaluate planning office management, to support the planning process, to assess how well planners are doing, and to conduct trend analyses. Metrics and assessments are most useful when they are performance or outcome oriented. The number of ordinances or plan changes proposed is not a measure of success (although too-frequent plan changes might be a metric for failure to plan well). Implementing the plans and visions of communities and achieving community goals should be the focus. Performance measurements, however, should not just be about the big picture. Planning managers still need to understand the productivity and customer service abilities of their staffs and create metrics to measure and assess those areas.

Data of all kind are designed to help inform rational decisions. Planners like to believe that information provides unlimited answers, whether the criteria are indicators, benchmarks, assessments, performance measures, or other metrics. In a rational planning model, once but no longer the holy grail of urban and regional planning, decisions and alternative assessments are driven by data. Under that model, "correct" management decisions are made based on assessments of data. This approach has obvious problems, most notably that the public is typically excluded from the decision-making process. Regardless, planners like the idea that facts make a difference in decision making.

Metrics and data are critical for the management of planning offices and for creating positive futures. However, planning managers needing to carefully manage scarce resources must ensure that data are not being collected simply for the sake of collecting. This requires identification of needs, costs, and opportunities and development of the most

cost-effective data collection systems available. An effective strategy includes assessments of existing data—often collected by others—and data analysis, and identification of the ways these can serve planning needs and instances when new data collection systems or analyses are needed.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Perhaps no area of planning, or any other profession for that matter, is changing as quickly as information technology. The information technology available to planners evolves so fast that any discussion about it will be out of date very quickly. One of the most important rules of technology is that simply automating a function is not enough. Planners need to rethink how and why automating functions can take full advantage of new opportunities. Managers talk about ideas leading to innovation and innovation leading to implementation. Technology helps planners implement their ideas and innovations, and it can support a feedback loop to ensure that they are modifying what they do and using technology to think differently.

Citizens expect and deserve that many, if not most, government services will be available 24/7. This concept came about before the Internet, with older technology such as informative voicemail or automated fax responses, but the pace of change continues to accelerate. Most planners have embraced these changes for a number of years. In many municipal planning offices, for example, the number of visitors to the offices is a small fraction of what it was a few years ago because citizens can use the web and electronic services instead of coming in. This decrease alone can result in savings that more than cover any investment in these emerging technologies. The pace of change, however, continues to be daunting for most public agencies—not so much because of resistance to the changes themselves but because of the need for constant reinventing and investment. The new challenges for municipal governments are lowering the cost of such offerings so that they are available to smaller communities, lowering internal resistance to making all public information readily available, and addressing the digital divide of data access.

LEADERSHIP

Ultimately, the best planning directors, mayors, managers, and leaders of a community are those with compelling visions and who are willing to take risks to fulfill those visions. The most successful are those who can share their visions and their communities' visions in just a few sentences—the one-minute elevator pitch that inspires and brings along the community. Charisma in a planner is a great trait, but it definitely is not an essential one. Vision and an entrepreneurial risk-taking attitude, however, are irreplaceable.

Converting the vision into a mission-driven operation is the next step for planning managers. A mission-driven operation may start with a mission statement, but it needs to be far more than just a statement. A mission needs to be the compass that drives the organization. At the same time, the head of a department cannot be the only person articulating a vision and a mission and providing leadership. Many very good planners see themselves as technicians, and they may not always be great leaders. Great planning managers, however, need to also be leaders. Planning leaders need to possess key characteristics that reflect great leaders: visionary and entrepreneurial perspectives, an openness to new ideas, the willingness to work collaboratively and to bring people together, a focus on problem solving (instead of a focus on why problems cannot be solved), and the ability to generate enthusiasm and respect.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This PAS Report examines management issues for local government planning, especially management trends. Most planning managers are already leading, responding to, or at least considering most of these trends. The focus of this report is on key issues and management trends to help managers, planners, and students think strategically. The report starts with a discussion of planning management and identifies the strategic issues and trends in the field.

For many planners, their work on planning, planning implementation, good governance, and sustainability is their first joy; the work that they share with colleagues, friends, and family; and also perhaps their elevator pitch. Most do not quite leap up and down when discussing planning management or permit programs, even though they know those are critically important elements. One of the contributors to this report—an excellent manager himself—said that writing his part was difficult because management can be boring. The pesky details of the management of municipal and county planning offices and current planning functions may not be a sexy or exciting subject, at least to some people. However, planning in different contexts around the United States and the world makes clear that ignoring the details of good management can be perilous.

Planning, project reviews and approvals, and plan implementation often receive public notice, acclaim, and criticism. Management issues, on the other hand, tend to make news only when a new planning director is hired or an old one is fired; when allegations of corruption emerge; or perhaps when a mayor, city manager, or county supervisor proposes a major reorganization or budget cuts (see "Planning Reorganizations in the Media," p. 11). Generally, the public view of management issues is obscured by substantive planning issues, as it should be.

Although the general public may not follow management issues, they may be as important as substantive planning issues for many municipal and county planning managers, line planners, and public users of planning services. Communities might gut regulations in the interest of "streamlining" when the problem is a poor permit process. In some settings, planners may become over-politicized, diverted from the real issues, or under-politicized, refusing to acknowledge that much government decision making is a political process. In the perennial era of budget cuts and reorganizations, people may forget that some reorganizations can be devastating, but others can strengthen an agency's mission and sense of purpose.

A considerable body of literature exists about planning and many planning specialties, but surprising little comprehensive work is available about the thinking that goes into planning office administration and management. While this information is limited, two books stand out as extremely useful resources for the management of local planning offices. The first is *ABZs of Planning Management* (Zucker 2007), which is probably the best resource focusing solely on planning management—often in intimate detail, right down to telephones and office space. The second is *Local Planning: Contemporary Principles and Practice* (Hack et al. 2009), which presents one of the most comprehensive approaches to local planning practice and includes a chapter on management.

The American Planning Association (APA) has an enormous amount of information on planning office and current planning management available through various Planning Advisory Service publications (e.g., the PAS Report and *PAS Memo*), the *Journal of the American Planning Association* planning practice articles, and *Planning* magazine. For example, *Performance Guarantees for Government Permit-Granting Authorities* (Feiden and Burby 2002) is of great use to planners needing detailed information, but it may be too detailed for more casual readers wanting a summary on local government and permit-granting practices.

This report is organized around the following eight topics:

1. **The basics of management (Chapter 2):** All organizations, including public planning agencies, need excellent management. As is the case with other organizations, planning agencies need skilled professional planners who have mastered the substantive aspects of the field and can become great managers.
2. **Planning office organization (Chapter 3):** Planning office structures have always been in flux to meet the needs of the communities that they serve and to respond to changing political and professional environments. The ongoing evolution of office layout will always continue, and communities have an opportunity to think about what models best serve their needs. Local government and public interest in sustainability—including energy, climate change, linkages between public health and planning, and food—is perhaps the most dramatic change to the planning field in the past couple decades. The incorporation of sustainability functions into local government offices or into offices outside of planning is changing the practice of planning for some. It is also at times blurring the distinction between planners and other professionals in local governments.
3. **Customer service at the permit counter (Chapter 4):** Current planning is where the rubber meets the road, and it involves the routinized side of planning: the coordination of private development and permit application and review processes, environmental analysis, code revisions, code enforcement, and city projects. This world is being transformed by community expectations, fiscal and economic pressures, and technology.
4. **The political and professional environment (Chapter 5):** The environment in which planning occurs is changing in many communities, whether it is driven by budget constraints, changing community expectations, new opportunities and leadership, or other local and national trends.
5. **Community engagement (Chapter 6):** For most local government planners, community engagement is a core part of their jobs and their identities. While public participation has been a central part of local government planning for decades, the practice is rapidly evolving. This evolution comes as a result of the changing nature of community expectations, community composition, technology, and an increasing political commitment to more meaningful engagement and community collaboration.
6. **The use of metrics and data (Chapter 7):** Planning offices of all sizes are increasing their use of metrics and all types of data. This comes from a desire for greater accountability, the balancing of limited resources and greater productivity, the need for metrics for planning and for the tracking of progress and trends, and the availability of standardized measurement systems, such as STAR Communities (2015).
7. **Information technology (Chapter 8):** The availability and rapid evolution of new technology, especially information technology, has created opportunities and expectations that are transforming planning offices, along with most professions.
8. **Expectations of leadership (Chapter 9):** The need for effective, strong, and professional leadership is perhaps the one constant in local government planning. Tomorrow's leaders must have the professional backgrounds, skill sets, and forward-thinking mindsets necessary to prepare for a changing future and to envision and understand local government planning issues.

These eight topics represent the most important current challenges in managing local government planning offices, as well as those emerging in the next couple decades. None of the issues related to these concepts are static, the opportunities and expectations will evolve, and a focus on both internal and external aspects of these issues is critical.

PLANNING REORGANIZATIONS IN THE MEDIA

Reorganizations of planning functions are a quick way to get headlines, and they happen with some regularity. Realigning functions, merging departments, and splitting up departments may come about as a result of a blue-ribbon study committee or a new mayor, manager, or supervisor, or as a way to address budget cuts. Often reorganizations happen in quick succession, as one leader strives to undo what is perceived to be the last leader's mistakes or signature initiatives.

City's Plan to Merge Departments Hits a Snag

An ambitious plan to reorganize city of Pittsburgh planning and development functions has apparently resulted in little more than orphaned furniture. Yesterday Mayor Luke Ravenstahl confirmed that an effort to reshuffle city functions to streamline development, outlined in his November budget address, is "more dead than alive. . . . I would characterize it as on hold right now with no plans to revisit it in the near future."

(Rich Lord, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, May 1, 2008, excerpted with permission)

Blueprint 2010–2011: The Los Angeles Planning Department Announces Major New Reorganization and New Staff Assignments

The Los Angeles Department of City Planning recently announced a major reorganization to better align the department's resources for processing development applications and performing long-range community planning. Developed in response to significant budget cuts in the City of Los Angeles, the plan, entitled "Blueprint 2010–11, Doing More with Less," seeks to create a more efficient planning process and improve service to developers and the public.

(Mitchell B. Menzer and Edgar Khalatian, *Paul Hastings: Stay Current*, January 2011)

Planning Department Changes in San Diego

In the 1990s, San Diego's city manager Jack McGory eliminated the planning department through a reorganization. However, the planning department was reborn under the next city manager.

In 2011 Mayor Jerry Sanders again eliminated the San Diego planning department, moving planners together with building permit processors. The mayor said that "the consolidation [would] allow the staff of these two related departments to work more closely together and create efficiencies in management and information sharing."

Mayor Bob Filner restored the San Diego planning department in 2013. The mayor said then, "We will restore long-range community planning to its rightful place as an important component for city business.". Observers noted that San Diego dismantled its planning department in hard economic times but brought it back when things improved—what was termed "that historic yo-yo."

(Roger Showley, "Mayor Abolishes City Planning Department," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, April 22, 2011 and "Planning Lives Again at City Hall," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, October 29, 2013)

CHAPTER 2

MANAGEMENT 101 AND BEYOND

The basic rules of management in any field certainly apply to planning. Planners are primarily trained in planning, not management. Yet being a great planning manager requires mastering many aspects of management.

According to Axson (2010, 65), "best practices are a recipe in which the right mix of ingredients combined with the right preparation is the key to realizing value." A best practice can be distinguished from a better practice if it meets the following criteria (Axson 2010, 27):

- Effect a measurable change in performance
- Apply to a broad spectrum of organizations
- Be proven in practice
- Exploit proven technologies
- Ensure an acceptable level of control and risk management
- Match the skills and capabilities of an organization
- Be capable of operating effectively in an uncertain and turbulent world

The trick is to know when to follow best management practices (usually) and when particular political and legal structures require a different approach (ideally rarely). This chapter offers a quick overview of Management 101, which is well covered in the public administration literature. Its focus is on what is especially important and specific to local government planning.

The best organizations and agencies have strong and visionary leadership; excellent communication, coordination, and collaboration; and very strong employees. Arguably, the most important task for a planning manager is to build and maintain the best team possible. Key to any operation is hiring the right people; valuing, training, empowering, feeding, and protecting those people; and getting rid of unmanageable people. Political constraints, civil service restrictions, union contracts, the challenges of working in a fishbowl, and other legal structures sometimes limit a manager's ability to develop the right team, but building that team should always be the holy grail.

Planning department leadership must focus on creating and embracing the vision of the department's work, coordinating all functions so that divisions collaborate and work toward a shared mission, hire and coach the best staff, and develop critical relationships inside and outside of the department. People should be hired who will implement the vision and mission of the department. In a modern department, staff members at all levels need to be full partners in creating the vision and a collaborative environment. That is why hiring the best staff and providing training, coaching, more coaching, and responsibility to allow the staff to shine should be the top priority of any planning manager.

While training and coaching can transform workers, there is a limit. Restarting a job search is better than hiring the wrong person. Even though it is increasingly rare that people stay in the same job for their entire careers, staff should be hired as if an expectation exists that new hires will be around for a long time; hiring decisions should include consideration of growth potential. A single hiring decision can be a million-dollar or more decision, if the person stays long enough. Getting it right the first time is a worthwhile goal.

HIRING SMART

There is an adage that says *there are two ways to quit: quit and leave or quit and stay.* A manager's worst nightmare can be the employee who has given up caring but stays in place. Often this is management's fault and its responsibility to repair, but if the situation cannot be fixed then cutting nonperforming staff members who clearly do not have growth potential—even in environments where removing staff can be difficult—is preferable to tolerating bad staff. However staff who are known to bring different ideas and perspectives and

who challenge existing practices in a department should not be automatically labeled as bad or removed for the sole reason that they stir the pot.

Hiring the best staff means hiring the best people available—even if that means knowing that staff will move on. It is critical for top managers to know how to get the best from every employee, whether that involves training, coaching, or simply providing assignments that will help staff members grow while also playing to their strengths. Money certainly helps, but what may be most important for many people is working in a great environment where they make a difference. This is the case as long as their salaries are not ignored and the organization shows that they are at least respected in the work place, especially in comparison to other agency employees.

The approaches may be subtly different, but the same goal should apply to line professionals, which includes planning managers and leaders who set the policy direction and take political risks, and staff who support the agency mission, such as staff who work at the permit counter. In planning, the distinction between line and staff may be hard to see, but often the difference is about empowerment—such as a manager empowering and supporting employees to take risks and help advance a mission.

If the team is one critical component of a planning organization, the other is developing the right culture, defining mission and goals, and making sure that the team is working toward those goals. Organizational structure (discussed in more detail later in Chapter 3) is largely built on the concept of creating a structure that defines and advances the mission and develops the team collaboration necessary for that work. Mission statements are critical (also discussed later in this report, in Chapter 5), but a mission statement without an organization designed to achieve that mission may just result in a department spinning its wheels or, worse, working without a clear purpose.

Most effective managers emphasize staff empowerment, delegation of authority and decision making, and coaching. As with the participatory planning process, staff empowerment will grow staff capabilities, effectiveness, and commitment. Some managers are especially good at identifying their staff's weaknesses and opportunities for growth, and some are especially good at identifying their staff's strengths. Both approaches are critical to avoid rose-colored glasses while rewarding some employees and stigmatizing others. Evaluation systems should be heavily focused on positive reinforcement and celebrating success. All employees have their own work style, everyone makes mistakes, and almost all employees can grow and improve their performance. The small percentage of employees who are truly problem employees should, however, be let go rapidly rather than being allowed to stay around and infect employee morale. That said, failing to grow an employee is often both the failing of the manager and the employee.

Delegation requires the willingness to take risks. But it is critical to growing esprit de corps, dedication, happiness, skills, perspective, and productivity. Delegation is also critical to allowing managers to free up time to do their own work and think and act strategically. Delegation should never be an opportunity to set up an employee for failure, and it must be accompanied by adequate training, coaching, support, authority, trust, a commitment to achieving employee potential, and an acknowledgement that mistakes are inevitable. The goal should be to avoid making the same mistake twice but not to eliminate mistakes. Even in light of mistakes, however, the ultimate responsibility remains with the manager.

Coaching is a close cousin of delegation. Coaching involves helping employees grow and taking advantage of their distinct skills, perspectives, and innate abilities. A key aspect of coaching is acknowledging that each employee is different. Some employees need to build proficiency in their technical skills, and some need to build confidence. Some need to feel in control, and some thrive in chaos. Some are detail and solution oriented, some are process and people focused, and some want to keep the focus on the big picture. Some staff members have learning, physical, and mental disabilities and other challenges that require them to develop systems that work for them. Everyone's values, perspectives, feelings, and needs are different. Perhaps the most important rule of coaching for planning managers is not to try to make clones but to listen and identify specific employee needs and opportunities.

Old adages, revised in the retelling, may be especially useful to coaching. *We have two ears and one mouth to listen more than we talk* (in different versions, by Epictetus and Mark Twain) certainly applies to coaching. *Praise in public; criticize in private* (most famously said by Coach Vince Lombardi). *Listen, ask, explore, do not instruct, and listen again*. All true.

The same rules of coaching—respect of employees and their ideas, empowerment, a diversity of ideas—should apply to both individual employees and the collective staff. Empowerment means fostering a positive environment and counteracting the rise of a negative culture in the workplace. This could require, for example, addressing employee gripes before they take on a life of their own.

It also means that a planning manager is committed to ensuring that staff view the department as "us" and not as "them." Empowerment does not mean delegating decision making that should be made at the managerial level or pretending that the internal workings of a public agency are democratically run. Active and empathic listening, respectful but assertive verbal interaction, collaboration, and a nonjudgmental approach are ways in which managers can foster empowerment. Arnstein's (1969) ladder of citizen participation also applies internally to planning offices, except it is a nonjudgmental ladder in which staff members have no expectations that all decisions are empowerment focused. Rather, the kind of internal participation will depend on the issue, and the managers should honestly disclose when staff are sharing in the decision making and when they are not.

Sorkin (2014) tells the story of Berkshire Hathaway's radical strategy, trust. He reports that the corporation, one of the largest and most successful in the United States, has no general counsel and no human resources department. Instead of departments whose role it is to oversee or limit other departments, Berkshire Hathaway follows the approach of finding good managers and empowering them to make the right decisions. Perhaps this is a fitting model for planning managers and local government.

PLANNING AGENCY MANAGEMENT REVIEWS AND ACCREDITATION

Local governments regularly conduct internal reviews or hire experts to conduct external reviews of management structure and internal operations. Such reviews aid departments in thinking about their missions and management practices, compare practices with national or regional standards, identify opportunities, and help make the case for proper resources. The self-study process that most planning managers go through to prepare for management reviews is an opportunity to step away from day-to-day crises, deconstruct all aspects of their operations, and identify how those deconstructed elements contribute to the big picture. Of course, the challenge for public agencies living in a fishbowl is that any management review must have the highest expertise and credibility—not just for public acceptance but for acceptance by the planning manager.

Accreditation programs typically have five components: (1) a set of minimum standards that must be met, (2) a set of aspirational principles, (3) self-study guidelines for agencies and organizations undergoing accreditation, (4) an outside peer and expert review, and (5) an accreditation report from the accreditation agency. Most professional planning degree programs in the United States, especially at the graduate level, are accredited by the Planning Accreditation Board (PAB). The accreditation process includes a clear set of standards, a planning program self-evaluation, a site visit and report by a team of two planning educators and one planning practitioner, and review and action by the full PAB.

Formalized accreditation programs do not yet exist for planning departments. Perhaps it is time. Such programs already exist for many other public agencies, including the following:

- **Park and recreation agencies:** Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies
- **Police departments:** Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, or more localized programs such as the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission
- **Public health departments:** Public Health Accreditation Board, a relatively new effort
- **Public schools:** AdvanceED, Middle States Association Commission, New England Association Commission, North Central Commission, Northwest Association of Accredited Schools, Southern Association Commission, and Western Association Accrediting Commission

The standard methods used as part of an accreditation processes can be applied by planning managers and outside consultants to study the progress of a department in meeting its mission, to audit department operations, and to review management approaches and options. These review methods can include the following elements:

- Internal department reviews by planning managers (formal or informal)
- Internal reviews by city managers, auditors, or other administrative or political agencies
- Consultant reviews and external audits
- Program reviews by peers (e.g., planning directors from other cities)
- Benchmarking of community performance against other communities (as an element of any internal or external review or a freestanding product)
- Regulatory reviews—for example, a smart growth or sustainability audit of existing zoning and land development controls

- Review of programmatic (not management) aspects (e.g., the STAR Community rating system does not review planning management but does provide communities with a standardized way to look at their planning and sustainability effectiveness, which indirectly may suggest how effectively a department functions)

There are additional, specific departmental tasks and processes that can be addressed as part of an organizational performance analysis:

- Customer service systems, including web-based user interfaces
- Staffing, training, and professional development
- Interdepartmental and intradepartmental communication processes
- External communications channels (e.g., media relations and public comment loops)
- Internal information technology functions, including document management, permit processing, grants administration, and integration needs between other government departments

Compared to external reviews, internal department or local government reviews can often be done at lower cost and in more detail and can be more closely aligned with that local government's mission. Such approaches, however, may not have the independence or gravitas of an external review that is important for external validation (see Salt Lake County 2009, an example of an internal review involving an analysis of planning and development services in Salt Lake County, Utah).

External management reviews by private-sector, nonprofit, or university-related consultants allow departments to learn about current best management practices and gain the credibility that is often needed to change management practices, assuming that the consultants are experts in the field (Carson 2009). An organizational review of the City of College Station, Texas, includes written records, interviews with customers and policy makers, and a wide range of planning department interactions—in essence a 360-degree review of planning operations (College Station 2005). Extensive analysis of this information is used to create recommendations.

External reviews may look at many departments across a city, including planning (see Greenbelt 2013, an analysis of the City of Greenbelt, Maryland). An external review might be contracted by the community and prepared by a consultancy (as in Greenbelt) or independently prepared by a mission-driven organization with the cooperation of the affected departments and cities (see AIA San Francisco and SPUR 2007, an analysis of San Francisco's planning and related departments). A review by peers is usually less rigorous and less in depth. Such reviews, however, may be more effective at getting managers to challenge existing assumptions and encourage much needed paradigm shifts, and may be less threatening to staff because the reviews are from respected peers.

Not surprisingly, comprehensive management reviews often come in response to internal or external perceptions that customers, especially development services customers, are not being well served (Carson 2009). Newly elected mayors or new leadership brought about by turnover on a city council or plan commission may also trigger the desire to undertake a comprehensive review of planning management. Entitlement and permit processing systems—everything from permit tracking systems to the flow of paper, staff training, and consistency—are a common target or focus of management reviews. But not all reviews need to be comprehensive. A narrow strategic review to address a specific issue is sometimes a more appropriate use of resources, and it is an approach that is less threatening to staff.

For some planning managers, identifying the optimal organizational structures and missions may be most important in defining their departments. Mission creep is always a risk for planning operations. Over the years, new tasks are added and embraced, even while old systems and staffing approaches apply. Identifying what is mission critical, and what skill sets planners need to accomplish those missions, should be a focus of any internal or external management reviews.

For other departments, reviews may be around a specific programmatic function. For example, Story County, Iowa, in 2012 requested that the American Planning Association's Community Planning Assistance Team (CPAT) help it think about how best to add economic development to its portfolio (APA 2011). Although not a traditional management review by any means, CPAT had to include a brief strategic review of certain management practices in order to make its recommendations. Similar strategic reviews may well be more common, and certainly more affordable, for many departments than comprehensive management reviews.

Perhaps the most politically sensitive aspect of management reviews is whether planning staff—from the director on down—view management reviews as threatening. Departments that want to learn and grow should be requesting and embracing management reviews to help them learn new skills. But a comprehensive review process should also consider questions of leadership and staff competence, so there are legitimate reasons that staff and planning managers can

find reviews threatening. Developing buy-in about the approaches and goals of management reviews and the review teams can make the process far more effective.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

A clear mission and an optimized department organizational structure should enhance a department's ability to excel at providing customer service. Providing excellent customer service is one of the most important functions of a taxpayer-funded public agency. Customer service, however, is perhaps the area where planning offices are most ripe for improvement. Certainly it is one of the first areas where outside audits (see Dane County 2005) and internal user surveys and focus groups across communities consistently identify opportunities for improvement.

All departments should use some kind of instrument to identify opportunities for customer service improvements. Commonly used instruments include the following:

- Counter or web surveys of all visitors
- Random-sample follow-up surveys of customers going through the entitlement process
- Monitoring of Facebook, Twitter, and other social media postings, especially on planning office social media accounts
- Outside audits and management reviews (see "Agency Management Reviews and Accreditation," p. 15)
- 360-degree reviews of all who encounter planning services
- Focus groups
- Staff audits of a department's own process, described by Nathan West in "Being an Applicant in Your Own Regulatory World" (p. 56) (a good analogy is *Undercover Boss*, a TV series produced in several countries where executives take entry-level jobs to see how their businesses really operate in the trenches)

Good reasons might limit a customer-service orientation. There are obviously inherent differences between private-sector goods and services, where "the customer is always right" and the primary goal is to serve the customers, and governments, where what customers who show up at the permit counter want will sometimes be in conflict with what the community wants and what serves the public good. Because customer revenue often pays only a certain percentage of department costs, resources available for customer service may be limited or dedicated to other functions.

That said, planning managers should ensure that their operations always provide customers with fast, accurate, consistent, and courteous service, with much of the service available at all times using automated services, especially through the Internet. Customer service cuts across all aspects of planning office operations—whether it is technology, entitlements, office structure, or office layout and location. The customer may not always be right, but customer service is one of the primary lenses through which a planning office operation and its planning managers are judged.

OFFICE SPACE

Office space layouts can help or hinder all aspects of planning operations. Across disciplines, there has been a trend toward open office layouts for years and a majority of US offices now have office layouts without walls. Open offices are appealing because of their lower cost and higher workspace density, greater layout flexibility, and perceived better communication. True open offices, with low-height or no cubicle dividers and fewer visual and sound barriers, can maximize conversation, information flow, and collaboration. Open offices are especially valued in organizations that put a premium on collaboration, including newspaper newsrooms, which used this approach for close to a century; Michael Bloomberg's bullpen when he was mayor of New York City; and Facebook, which has joined the open-office bandwagon. Offices that promote formal and informal mixing beyond just a shared water cooler can promote communication and a stronger sense of camaraderie. The office that chats together finds blaming harder.

Yet there is also strong pushback against open-office layouts. The lack of privacy, the volume of noise, and the distractions impede some kinds of conversations and interrupt workers trying to concentrate. For many people and many different kinds of tasks, what is gained in communication may not offset what is lost in productivity.

Interestingly, Bloomberg installed his bullpen, which included his own desk, using lessons he learned on Wall Street and using a model that has been much emulated. Most of the candidates to succeed Bloomberg, including Mayor Bill de Blasio, criticized the bullpen as being too noisy, distracting, and potentially isolated (Barbaro 2013). When he became mayor, de Blasio decided it was too expensive to remove the bullpen, although he located his own private office away from the bullpen and its noise and distractions (Karni 2014).

As always, one should be careful about theory over practice, as the author of this report once experienced. In one

university classroom and faculty office building, people from disciplines were spread out throughout the building with the goal of better collaboration, instead of being grouped together as is commonly done. In the end, however, this building had more closed office doors than any other similar building. It did, however, have faculty and staff lunchrooms with free daily newspapers, coffee, and tea. Those lunchrooms were where the social mixing, and ideally the collaborative chats, took place.

Different office configurations serve different purposes. Open offices may create more interactions, but they may be very short side conversations, as opposed to those in two- or three-person workgroup-enclosed clusters where real collaboration happens. High-cubicle offices are almost universally disliked, but private offices may not be more productive and are certainly more costly. The question for any planning manager is what kind of office is best for the specific kind of collaboration going on, and how flexible the overall office is in supporting different kinds of projects over time. Much of the research has concluded that well-designed small clusters, small bullpens, or small pods may be the most balanced, effective, and productive approach (Becker and Sims 2001). The right mix matters.

CONSULTANTS

Local planning managers hire planning, engineering, and other consultants at various times, whether it is to bring in expertise and perspectives not on staff, supplement staff at peak times, provide temporary staff replacements for leaves and vacancies, replace staff, or provide credibility. When well managed and executed, contracts with consultants can be powerful partnerships. When poorly done, the results can be disastrous—squandering resources, generating bad feelings, and wasting what can be fleeting opportunities.

Working with Planning Consultants (Kelly 2013) goes into much greater detail on this subject. The following are a few basic rules for planning managers:

- **Comply with local and state procurement requirements, which vary dramatically across the country.** Planning managers should not, however, let procurement requirements drive a bad process. In every state there are ways to comply with the regulations without blaming those regulations for a bad process. Consistently, the biggest challenges are procurement regulations that require a choice made on price alone—and not quality—which can lead to penny-wise but pound-foolish decisions. In some jurisdictions, union and civil service restrictions may limit the ability to hire some consultants.
- **Do not play with consultants.** When planning managers know who they want to use, they should not do a full request for proposals (RFP) just to meet procurement requirements.
- **Use electronic processes for posting and accepting proposals.** This is easier for consultants to use, for internal and external review teams sharing information, and for departments making proposals available to the public.
- **Understand the consultant's costs.** Many requirements that are common in RFPs (e.g., customized proposals, onsite interviews, unnecessary expertise or experience) add greatly to the cost for a consultant and reduce the number of competitive proposals. Each of these items is critical for some projects and should not be dropped lightly, but each item should be thought about carefully and not just listed because it was included in the last RFP.
- **Identify the best way to use consultants hired to supplement or replace staff.** Consultants usually have a much higher hourly rate than staff, but that rate includes their overhead (e.g., payroll, sick leave, vacation time, retirement, training, internal support teams, and unemployment compensation), and overhead can add 50 percent (or significantly more) to the cost of actual salaries. More importantly, use of consultants provides a very easy way to staff up or staff down, ideally with the proper credentials and skillset. On the other hand, consultants may not provide the long-term vision, commitment, or team- and relationship-building that staff can provide.

PLANNING MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Effective planning managers never finish creating systems and processes. Rather, the process must use a continuous improvement model, with ongoing evolution and 360-degree feedback and evaluations to make sure that a management system fulfills changing missions, opportunities, and constraints. All this must be done as efficiently as possible and while serving all users, staff, external customers, internal customers, and the community. This chapter's review of management basics, the next chapter on planning office organization, and all other aspects of management and operations are as important to planning managers and to successful planning as are the substantive and more visible aspects of planning.

CHAPTER 3

PLANNING OFFICE ORGANIZATION

Planning offices, at least large ones with multiple divisions, are ideally organized to fulfill their stated missions and to be efficient. Planning managers can organize planning offices in any number of ways. A 2009 article for *PM* magazine, an online publication of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), offered local government managers some advice about reorganizing a public agency during a period of drastic budget cuts. The article noted that managers may want to wait and see if financial conditions return to normal before making changes to the agency's organizational structure—but, as noted in the article and as has turned out to be true, reduced budgets are the new normal (Ibarra 2009).

ORGANIZATIONAL MODELS

According to David Morley, who manages the APA's Planning Advisory Service, the most common question planning managers have about department organization is which functions should be grouped together within a department (David Morley, APA senior research associate, pers. comm.). One of the most common is a horizontal integration grouped by time frame with some variation on a theme:

- Management (e.g., human resources, board staffing, information technology)
- Current planning (e.g., permitting, environmental assessments, project management)
- Advance or long-range planning (e.g., strategic plans and master/comprehensive/general plans)

Other planning organizational themes, often combined with the above, include the following (Higgins, Speers, and Summerell 2006):

- Planning specialties and sub-disciplines and vertical integration by skill set and subject area (e.g., transportation, land use, housing, economic development, community development, comprehensive planning, waterfront and environmental planning)
- Functional approaches (e.g., planning, regulations, information systems, investment, policy)
- Legal status of the agency—legislative (e.g., planning, code writing, planning implementation), quasi-judicial (e.g., regulatory and entitlement processes), and enforcement (e.g., permit administration)

For some planning managers, office organization is the result of careful thought. For others it is the result of historical or legacy factors that never changed: "To be honest, I am not sure why the staff for the Zoning Board of Appeals is stationed in the Building Department. It has been that way since I have been here" (Philip Dromey, deputy director of planning, City of Springfield, MA, pers. comm.). Almost any organizational structure can work when there are willing and cooperative players who want to make it work and who have both strong political support and a culture of collaboration. As the ICMA article notes, "A well-designed organization ensures that the form or infrastructure of the organization matches its purpose and strategy, meets the challenges posed by business realities, and significantly increases the likelihood that the collective efforts of people will be successful" (Ibarra 2009).

Smaller communities are more likely to have a consolidated model in which planning, building, housing (including grants administration), and economic development are together in a single department. Large cities and counties typically house those functions in separate departments or in divisions within a larger department. A system with direct reports to a mayor or a city/county manager may suggest a single consolidated planning office to reduce the number of direct supervisors required. On the other hand, a system with direct reports to an assistant city/county manager might involve smaller dispersed functions because the manager presumably has the time to coordinate smaller departments.

A very strong argument certainly exists to have current and long-range planning integrated in some formal way. Zucker (2007) recommends keeping current planning and long-range planning in the same department to ensure collaboration and integration of different functions. The goals and policies expressed in comprehensive and general plans and subarea plans are implemented by current planning functions, including site plan and development review, zoning, and form-based codes. As discussed in Chapter 2, planning department leadership must focus on creating and embracing the vision of the department's work, coordinate all functions so that departments collaborate, and work toward a shared mission. That point of view corresponds with Zucker's recommendation that current and long-range planning functions be kept in the same department. An older study of Seattle's failure in its efforts to separate long-range planning from current planning supports and illustrates this same point (Dalton 1985). Removing planning from implementation makes planning less effective and threatens its political legitimacy. This does not mean that some separation is not sometimes desirable—for example when a mayor embraces long-range planning and wants to elevate its status in the mayor's office. It can, however, raise concerns about how local politics will influence issues, especially when it is time for that mayor to leave office.

Each community has a story that influences how planning functions are organized and managed. Issues that influence the planning context—such as the community's focus on sustainability, participatory planning, or economic development—are discussed later in this report, but obviously dozens of other local issues influence community context. Local politics influence how planning functions are organized and, to some extent, how planning is managed.

In planning management, as in planning, context is everything. The different contexts of inner city, urban, suburban, exurban, and rural communities; fast-growing and shrinking communities; and wealthy and working-class communities all lead to different management needs—to say nothing of different values and perspectives. However, more similarities than differences likely exist within different communities, and an understanding of context simply reinforces the options. The same issues can be raised about the integration of economic development, sustainability, development services, housing, and planning. There are endless variations on what might be considered the optimal organizational structure, as illustrated in the case studies throughout this chapter and in the examples in Appendix A of organizational charts from a small city (Del Mar, California), a medium-sized city (Cary, North Carolina), and a large city (San Francisco).

Organizational structures tend to evolve, or not, when the legacy organizational structures remain longer than makes sense. In "A Tale of Three Cities" (p. 25), Jeff Levine discusses organizational differences in three Northeast cities where he has worked. "Mergers and Acquisitions" (p. 27) by Jonathan Tucker looks at the challenges to and outcomes of reorganizing and consolidating various local government departments in Amherst, Massachusetts. In some communities, affordable housing and grants administration is integrated into planning offices, in others it is a free-standing function, and in still others affordable housing programs are managed by a quasi-governmental or nongovernmental agency. In all these different contexts, the relationship of local government to external affordable housing agencies can be very different. Robert Ansley examines these differences and the ways in which planning departments and housing agencies must coordinate their work in "The Relationship to Affordable Housing Agencies" (p. 28).

Communities also grapple with whether planning and economic development functions should be in a consolidated department. Having separate departments is a common model, allowing each department to be a strong advocate for its perspective. The risk of separating any of the integral functions from the planning office is the potential to create silos, which over time reinforce a functional separation and often a tension between agencies that share some but not all goals. In "Balancing Planning and Economic Development" (p. 30), Nathan West, AICP, discusses how to find that middle ground.

SUSTAINABILITY AND THE PLANNING OFFICE

Sustainability is one of the newer organizing principles in local planning. It involves finding integrative approaches to addressing the "three Es": environment, economy, and social equity. In *Sustaining Places: Best Practices for Comprehensive Plans*, Godschalk and Rouse (2015) make the case that the comprehensive plan is a perfect outlet for planners to apply a "systems thinking" approach that uses a framework of (1) principles (livable built environment, harmony with nature, resilient economy, interwoven equity, healthy community, responsible regionalism), (2) processes (authentic participation, accountable implementation), and (3) attributes (consistent content, coordinated characteristics). These factors together will help planners identify opportunities for cross-

integration between sustainability and traditional comprehensive plan elements, including land use, transportation, housing, economic development, and the environment.

When the planning department takes ownership of a city's sustainability initiative, the planning manager is tasked with identifying available resources to manage the initiative and to guide staff through discussions about sustainability and how it will be made a focus in the department. To address these emerging priorities, effective planning managers should be at the forefront of sustainability efforts in their communities. In "Sustainability in Practice: From Aspirational to Operational" (p. 32), Joel Mills looks at sustainability initiatives across the country and the lessons learned from two decades of sustainability work. Mark Hamin, in "Sustainability as a Planning Construct" (p. 34), provides an overview of the evolution of contemporary sustainability.

For all the growth in interest in sustainability as a construct for planning or even as a core principle for local government, many of the basic principles of sustainability, and certainly specific sustainability measures, still have relatively low adoption rates. Interestingly, a focus on sustainability does not seem to be strongly correlated with race, class, or wealth. A community's commitment to just one broader sustainability issue—such as energy conservation, green jobs, or climate change mitigation—is the best indicator of whether the community will be committed to sustainability more broadly (Svara, Watt, and Jang 2013). Regardless of how city government is structured, strong community networks and citizen support are critical to making community sustainability happen (Daley, Sharp, and Bae 2013). In other words, strong leadership and the incorporation of sustainability into planning may be critical, but nothing is as important as community networks and citizen support.

Organizing for Sustainability

As sustainability becomes a dominant paradigm for planning, planning managers and communities are grappling with their organizational structures. There are no universal guidelines about where sustainability functions should be housed in local governments, what a sustainability function is, which professionals should take the lead in sustainability, or even what the relationship between sustainability and planning should be. Different approaches lead to the restructuring of some planning and sustainability functions. What remains to be seen is whether that leads to the creation of sustainability offices; planning efforts that integrate the environment, economy, and equity core principles; and balanced efforts that ensure all stakeholders have equal seats at the table.

Local government sustainability functions are typically located in one of four (all good) organizational structures:

1. **Sustainability in an integrated planning department, often with major or minor restructuring or rebranding:** This model allows the greatest integration into planning and the involvement in all city sustainability functions. It may range from adding sustainability duties to an existing planning office structure or, in what appears to be a more common approach, adding a sustainability division within a planning office. This approach is used by the Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability in Portland, Oregon; the Baltimore Office of Sustainability; the Community Development Department of the City of Cambridge in Massachusetts; the Community & Economic Development Office of Burlington, Vermont; and the Planning and Code Administration department in Gaithersburg, Maryland. In "Sustainability within Planning" (p. 36), Dyan Elizabeth Backe describes in more detail the sustainability planning efforts of Gaithersburg.
2. **Sustainability integrated into a chief legislative or executive office:** This model typically has the narrowest definition of sustainability—usually climate mitigation and adaption—but potentially great buy-in by the chief executive. Dane County, Wisconsin, is an example of a local government using this approach, and Lisa MacKinnon explains her role as the county's sustainability coordinator/audit analyst in "Sustainability under the Chief Elected Office" (p. 37).
3. **Sustainability as a standalone department:** This approach is used in the City of Boston's Environment, Energy, and Open Space Cabinet as well as in Richmond, Virginia. Alicia Zatcoff describes Richmond's sustainability and energy management office in "Sustainability as a Freestanding Department" (p. 39). This model allows for a focus on sustainability, but it does not automatically lead to full integration of all sustainability issues.
4. **Some combination of integration and separate departments:** This approach is used in Albany, New York, where the Mayor's Office of Energy & Sustainability reports to the mayor, but it is physically located and shares staff with the Department of Development and Planning. A hybrid is also used in Northampton, Massachusetts, with a Planning and Sustainability Department and a separate energy and sustainability officer

in the Central Services Department as David Elvin discusses in "Climate Adaptation and Mitigation" (p. 40). This model allows for a strong independent focus on energy or any other freestanding issue and also provides a way for other sustainability functions to be integrated into planning.

The reality is that all four models can work exceptionally well when planning managers ensure that there is good communication and collaboration; all four can also fail spectacularly without such communication and collaboration. What is most important for communities is that they carefully examine which organizational structures, within each community's context, will allow the best integration, strongest collaboration, sharpest focus, and most effective use of limited resources. When the sustainability focus is climate mitigation and adaptation, the various models can be equally effective. For a sustainability focus based on a broader definition of sustainability (environment, social equity, and economy), it is usually most effective to house all of the responsibilities under one roof. However, the other models can work if excellent communication is present.

There are probably almost unlimited variations on how planning offices are organized. The key to effective organization is that it matches the department's mission and strategy. For planning managers, the most important theme is ensuring that any organizational structure maximizes communication and collaboration at all levels and scales:

- Within local government, communication and collaboration between diverse departments, executives, and legislative bodies require both formal organizational structures and informal communication networks and practices.
- For local government planning functions, regardless of where they are located within a local government, communication and collaboration require attention to physical layout, communications strategies, and deployment of consultants.
- In the community, communication and collaboration require attention to customer service, physical layout, and a virtual presence.

Often, the most important item is simply perspective. Planning managers must strive for continuous improvement, not assuming that what worked yesterday makes sense today. They must be willing to consider new ways of doing business and seek new and outside ideas and approaches for growth and development.

TALE OF THREE CITIES

Jeff Levine, Director of Planning and Urban Development, City of Portland, Maine

To planning managers and planners who have worked in more than one municipal planning office, it should come as no surprise that the type of government a place has affects how its planning gets done. While many different types of municipalities—cities with strong mayors, counties with supervisors, the town meeting of traditional New England towns—can plan for sustainable and equitable futures, the path to that good planning is different in each case. I have had the good fortune to work as a planning manager in several different municipal environments. As someone who is interested in the nuts and bolts of government, I have found it fascinating to see how decisions are made based on what a city charter says.

In the City of Somerville, Massachusetts, I worked for a traditional strong mayor who held the reins of control very tightly. While the community had an effective group of citizens who promoted good planning, and state legislators who did the same, at the end of the day it was essential to convince the mayor's advisors that good planning made good politics. It made better politics, in fact, than accommodating short-term developments that might preclude better things from happening over time.

I spent a lot of my time as an internal mediator, taking good planning ideas from staff and the public and turning them into political gold. I was not always successful, but that was the formula. As a result of the work of many planners and politicians, the city is now redeveloping the 145-acre Assembly Square district into a mixed use, transit-oriented development building around a new rapid transit station—rather than the big box mall that initially seemed politically more expedient.

The strong-mayor system of government has some advantages for the urban planner. For one, you know where the buck stops. It is easy to get clear guidance on direction and, if you are respected within the organization, your ideas can be leveraged significantly when you can get the mayor to support them.

As the director of the Planning and Community Development Department for the Town of Brookline, Massachusetts, I learned how a highly decentralized system did, and did not, lead to decisions. The town has an elected town meeting, which gathers twice a year as the legislative body of the town, as well as a strong group of residents serving as the advisory committee to the town meeting. Rather than a city manager or mayor, the town's executive authority lies in the hands of a five-member board of selectmen, whose members do not always agree with each other. Decision making and planning is highly decentralized.

Add to that the fact that Brookline, with 60,000 residents living in high-density neighborhoods, is more complicated than many cities—and the stage was set for an interesting contrast to Somerville. Decision making in a decentralized environment is all about personal relationships and connecting to the key stakeholders in various areas. You then have to rely on those stakeholders reaching out to their connections in order to move anything along.

I had my share of setbacks in Brookline as well, but I was able to get a new comprehensive plan completed, bring bicycle-sharing to the town, and work with local developers to produce over 60 units of permanently affordable housing. The decentralized model of governance also has some advantages. The planner is somewhat free to market best practices and sound planning concepts to a wide variety of community members—and then democracy takes over. If you can sell enough residents on your ideas, they will carry the day at the town meeting.

Currently, in Portland, Maine, I am learning more than just a different set of state laws and traditions. I am also learning how a system with a strong city manager and a city council works. Portland is a slight variation on this common model in that it also has a directly elected mayor who leads the city council—but the concept is the same.

In this model, and in a community where planning issues are important to residents, doing good planning is somewhat of a hybrid of the models discussed above. While keeping the support of the city manager, mayor, and councilors is important, taking the lead on good planning is also important. The system is just centralized enough to empower the planning director to do so, and it is just decentralized enough to require someone to take that lead.

This system of government also has its advantages. It provides some of the best of both worlds: a strong central system that can provide you with key support but also the freedom to work with many different residents on planning issues. It is somewhat similar to the strong-mayor system. However,

it provides more protection from the day-to-day political forces at play in a community.

Of course, the overall political climate of a place is as important as the governmental form. Two different cities, each with a strong-mayor system, can have vastly different levels of planning capacity. A visionary mayor elected by a community that believes in planning can work with an effective planning manager and staff planners to make great things happen. A less visionary leader can drive away good planners, or at least keep them from being effective. However, knowing how the strings of power are pulled in different places is essential to maximizing your effectiveness as a planner, whether as a staff planner or as a consultant. Political junkies can rejoice!

MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS

Jonathan Tucker, Planning Director, Town of Amherst, Massachusetts

Amherst, Massachusetts, has a very involved citizenry; the town has more than 50 standing boards and committees. Day-to-day governance is conducted by a town manager, an elected five-member select board, and town staff — and all those committees. Budgets and changes in local zoning and regulations are undertaken by a 240-member representative town meeting, which meets twice a year. It has heavily participatory local governance and reflects a community that wants to accomplish a great deal—sometimes more than it is able to accomplish—while changing as little as possible. It requires a higher-than-normal investment in, and by, professional staff to support and help guide citizen efforts.

For decades, Amherst had located its planning, conservation, and inspections departments in different parts of its 1889 brick Town Hall. As has been the case in so many communities, this separation had encouraged these departments to function in insular and compartmented ways, even when efforts were made to reach out beyond the respective "silos." During a 1997 renovation of the historic Town Hall, the town brought the planning and conservation departments together to share a large second floor space. A decade later, in 2007, proximity and ongoing coordination led to the merging of those departments into the Conservation and Planning Department. The Inspections Services Department, including the building commissioner/zoning enforcement officer, continued to occupy an office in the basement, two floors and a world away.

In 2007 the select board hired a new town manager and assigned him the tasks of spurring economic development and significantly increasing the efficiency of town services. One of the outcomes was the development of new permit-tracking software to allow all permitting departments to communicate more effectively on development projects. Within a couple of years, the town manager, working with town staff, moved the Inspection Services Department and Community Development into newly renovated Planning and Conservation Department office space. He then merged the four departments into a new Office of Conservation and Development, which also includes sustainability. The merger required a great deal of staff time and effort, and it required a refinement of the permit-tracking software.

This process has resulted in a significant consolidation of departments and resources. The department now provides a more coordinated and efficient place for citizens, business owners, and potential permit applicants to access information and meet with staff members. While the change has involved ongoing growing pains and numerous adjustments, simple proximity and regular meetings among different functional groupings of staff have enabled closer coordination of approaches to address development review, town projects, and pressing community issues. One example of an outcome has been the town's ability to pursue grants. Absorbing the grant writing and administration capacity has enabled the office to significantly improve the ability to locate and obtain a wide range of grants; this likely has paid for the costs of the consolidation many times over.

Among the growing pains has been the need to regularly re-evaluate the role of different professional and administrative staff, especially in relation to the permit-review process. Town permitting boards that had developed their own subcultures and informal policies and practices over the decades have also had to adjust, sometimes slowly and uncomfortably, to an increasing formalizing of the permit process. Other town departments involved in the development process have had similar adjustments to make to what had been in the past a series of smaller actions or requests from individual departments but was now a single, unified approach. As with all change, some discomfort will result.

One initial effort included attempts to cross-train administrative staff members so that they could undertake multiple tasks as needed across departmental boundaries. That particular effort was emphasized and accelerated during a period of severe budget constraints, serving as a response to necessity as well as an attempt to improve the flexibility and adaptability of the department. It has since become apparent that some blend of flexibility and compartmentalization of administrative tasks creates the best efficiencies, so the pendulum is swinging back as part of an evolving process.

The upshot is that the changes have worked. Putting these departments together and allowing them to work cooperatively has produced marked improvements in the Town of Amherst's ability to carry out its responsibilities. The process has required patience, good will, and endurance—all qualities essential to working in local governance—and these needs will continue to exist. The changes, however, have resulted in improved coordination that has benefited both public and private interests and helped local planners and other professionals to better fulfill their responsibilities.

THE RELATIONSHIP TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING AGENCIES

Robert Ansley, FAICP, President, Orlando Neighborhood Improvement Corporation, Orlando, Florida

Planning for housing has long been an integral part of city planning's function, but planning managers have different approaches to addressing various aspects of housing planning. The future land-use plan provides for projected housing needs within a framework of location and general housing-density classifications. Development codes specify form, type, and density details and generally relate housing development to availability of services. Other aspects include such items as housing quality standards, group home regulations, and streamlined permitting. All of this creates a framework for the private-sector delivery of housing within a local government's goals and vision.

Many local governments have housing divisions and housing planners, either as part of a planning office or in a separate department. These departments and staff are often involved in assessing needs; directing resources, especially the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnership Program, and US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Supportive Housing Program funds and local bond funds; working with community redevelopment agencies on housing projects; and coordinating with public housing agencies/authorities, local community development corporations, and other nonprofit and for-profit housing developers. In addition, some states—such as Florida—and some federal grant programs require local government signoff either of the specific project or generally through the comprehensive plan in order to receive housing funding. Generally, however, local planning agencies are not otherwise involved in the direct provision of housing.

Since the 1930s, separate public agencies have been created to actually stimulate housing production—primarily of affordable housing but also housing in redevelopment areas. The agencies are separate from planning departments in part because local governments normally do not have sufficient authority to create and administer the financial tools that are used to fund affordable housing development. Today states, many counties, and even some cities have housing finance agencies (HFAs) that issue tax-exempt bonds, allocate low-income housing tax credits, and may also invest tax-increment funds for the development of affordable housing. Some of these agencies also administer federal housing funds, such as the HOME Investment Partnership program and state housing trust funds. State agencies cover cities and counties statewide, while a local HFA serves a county and its cities. Sometimes HFAs serve several contiguous counties in a more regional role, thus allowing housing producers in small counties access to these financing tools. Most often, the funding is awarded through a competitive application process.

It is important for planning directors and managers to have good relationships and frequent communication with housing agencies and other housing partners to ensure that the housing production promoted by such agencies fits the local government's plans and goals and also to ensure that the locality receives its fair share of housing funding. Left to their own devices, housing agencies can become shadow land-use planners. Their funding requirements typically prescribe or give preference to such details as:

- Housing type (single or multifamily; ownership or rental)
- Unit type (the mix of bedrooms)
- Construction type (frame versus masonry)
- Density (attached or detached; garden or midrise)
- Location (infill or greenfield)
- Geographic distribution (small county versus large county; small city versus large city)
- Highest leverage of public funds (i.e., fewest public dollars per unit)

Procedures for funding via bonds or tax credits usually dictate that a funded project be consistent with a local government's local land-use and related plans. Further, the use of HUD funds at the local level is governed by a local consolidated plan, and state housing trust funds similarly mandate a local housing plan to guide their use. (In medium and large urban areas, the consolidated plan is prepared by the CDBG entitlement. States prepare the plan for smaller communities. Consolidated plans are not required within Indian tribal reservations.)

Nonetheless, housing agencies need to be made aware of the housing priorities of the jurisdictions they serve; otherwise, they will set their preferences according to the market and other criteria that may or may not align with those of a city or county in their service area. For example, a city may have affordable infill housing as a priority, whereas a local HFA may have highest unit production as a top goal. The HFA's policies would reward lowest cost (land and building)

to the extent that the more expensive infill housing would not be competitive in the application for funding. The funding would flow to projects located in suburban or even exurban sites that may or may not be in the city in question. As far as the agency is concerned, if a project meets someone's housing priorities and plans, who that someone is does not matter.

Therefore, planning departments and housing agencies must closely coordinate their preparation of housing plans, policies, and procedures so as to achieve the best support for the affordable housing in the jurisdiction. Similarly, where a government's plans clash with the plans and policies of a housing agency, particularly at the state level, the money will likely go elsewhere and opportunities will be lost. The language of the HFA is one of high finance and is outside the comfort zone of most planners, so it is usually avoided altogether. All too often planning directors fail to make the connection between the planning function and the housing agency and thus lose valuable resources that could have benefitted their jurisdictions.

BALANCING PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Nathan West, AICP, Director of Community and Economic Development, City of Port Angeles, Washington

A balanced community development approach is important to think about during the transition toward greater sustainability. The success of an organization's structure within a small municipality is critical for sustainable and balanced development. Traditionally, small municipalities have had a planning director responsible for land-use and permitting issues, while economic development has been left to the mayor or city manager or a separate economic development director. Simply stated there are two approaches: one that has economic development as a separate functional responsibility and one that combines responsibilities under one director position. Both approaches have their benefits and pitfalls, but the key for all municipalities is to find the approach that achieves balance.

The traditional planning director approach excels at achieving the best planned outcome for the community. It may, however, lack recognition of the needs of local businesses and developers. Planning directors are expected to focus on implementing the comprehensive plan, zoning code, and building code. They sometimes do this with limited consideration of the financial implications for businesses and the economic growth of the community—even though most planning directors think a great deal about these issues and weigh them as part of the decision making process. The traditional planning director or staff planner role, however, does not include the responsibility of advocating for business and development. The advocate's role is left up to the economic development director, city manager, mayor, or even city council. Direct outcomes of a planning director approach can include internal disagreement resulting in the overruling of the planning director's decision, or public disagreement between planning directors and economic development directors. Balance is achievable, but one individual is not accountable for such balance, except at the mayor or city manager level.

Many municipalities are moving to an approach where one director oversees both economic development and land use, and often sustainability functions as well. This model forces the director and the department to proactively balance decisions and recommendations to ensure consideration is given to businesses, developers, and overall code implementation. A cohesive approach to planning and economic development can strategically enable the success of development within the context of the regulatory environment. Balance is ingrained in staff reviews, reports, and overall recommendations. Often this type of oversight can result in incentives-based approaches that drive new development opportunities, which in turn can ensure desirable outcomes in planning and the implementation of local codes and plans. Only when both planning managers and line staff are committed to the entire process can plans come alive.

The combined framework is not without its own difficulties. One individual bears the pressure to ensure adequate and appropriate balance. For a business advocate, the important context of design standards and code can become a second issue of priority. If balanced correctly, however, advocacy and stewardship of the public realm can be aligned, resulting in a progressively sustainable community.

Both approaches have merits and both can be rewarding, as long as the decision makers of local governments have prioritized the importance of balancing economic success with a quality built environment. In today's economy, regardless of the framework, it is critical to maintain an open-minded approach that recognizes the need to pave the way for economic success. To achieve this, both approaches require flexibility and new ways to create local opportunities.

An International Perspective

After spending seven years as a planner in the Caribbean and nine years a planner in Port Angeles, Washington, a small US city, I have noticed striking differences and essential commonalities in the approaches and roles involved in balancing planning and economic development. The Caribbean approach was to encourage economic development but to do it by managing growth and not necessarily taking a long-term planning or environmental perspective. In the Caribbean, a constant interest exists in investment from visiting developers and real estate professionals. Even in slower economic times, Caribbean destinations continue to receive a moderate flow of development applications.

Fast-paced development results in immediate implementation and on-the-ground results in code-related changes. Growth is constant and competitive. In these environments, developers expect to provide amenities and contributions for community facility needs. To make planning even more interesting, many island environmental regulations are in a state of infancy. For planners, this type of environment is a great opportunity to

develop and implement working plans and new policies and to learn about their effectiveness within a reasonably short timeframe.

My experience in the United States was one of more integrated planning and economic development but in a very different context. In contrast to the Caribbean, many small US urban centers, outside of the fastest growing metropolitan regions, experience slow-paced urban growth, and decades can pass before the results of a new policy are actually seen in the form of community change. These communities are challenged to find ways to interest investors. They must be creative in setting their communities apart from larger municipalities that may appear to be easier choices for average developers. Offering incentives is the best approach to stimulate such investment. Façade improvement programs can also be a good tool for municipalities to offer direct financing to improve the public realm and encourage investment. Infrastructure contributions and tax incentives combined with limited permit requirements and fees improve the chances of successful investments.

In smaller urban areas, extra effort may be necessary to identify and measure the results of policy-related changes. A slower pace means the visual results can take years to appear, but this pace also allows for careful and thoughtful change in policy without the demands of a high-pressure permitting environment. One way to determine the effectiveness of new policies is to have designers do scenario tests of policies and codes. These tests or code trials benefit from a regulatory environment that is often already mature and that provides a stable foundation upon which new policy can build.

While these two planning environments highlight many differences, similarities do exist. Good policy makes a difference, and any development results in immediate impacts to the community. Major developments get attention and can be game changers for both types of communities. Planners must recognize the regular pace of planning in their communities and take actions that reflect expected rates of change. Whether a small urban center or a Caribbean community, the best planning happens when policy enables opportunities to create vibrant and attractive communities.

SUSTAINABILITY IN PRACTICE: FROM ASPIRATIONAL TO OPERATIONAL

Joel Mills, Director, Center for Communities by Design, American Institute of Architects

In the decades since the Brundtland Commission's seminal work on sustainable development, the ways in which communities approach sustainability has undergone wholesale change. Much of the international work on sustainability has been the subject of debate and political paralysis at the national level in the US, and it has been overshadowed the politics of climate change. Substantial change, however, has taken place at the local level.

While much of the local experience with sustainability over the last two decades can be characterized as aspirational goal setting and targets, the concept has evolved in its meaning for localities. During the last decade, over 1,000 mayors signed the US Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, marking a commitment to "strive to meet or beat the Kyoto Protocol targets in their own communities, through actions ranging from anti-sprawl land-use policies to urban forest restoration projects to public information campaigns" (US Conference of Mayors 2008).

This pledge was fueled by the urgency of climate change and the need to develop detailed responses. Participation in the agreement represented a mainstream approach and, it was widely adopted as an aspiration for local governments. Over 1,000 communities across 84 countries also became members of ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability in an attempt to access a peer network and resources to assist with local efforts (ICLEI 2016). Many municipalities also created official sustainability offices, in planning or elsewhere, to lead local efforts to reach commitment targets.

Beyond Green: The New Sustainability

The challenges associated with early sustainability experiences have led to an adapted approach which stresses a more practical operational strategy to lead systems reform efforts and to define a framework for holistic community success. As a result, communities are using sustainability for wholesale realignment of efforts stressing interconnections and integrated responses. The City of Santa Monica in California developed a *Sustainable City Plan* founded on 11 guiding principles, with the primary guiding principle being that "the concept of sustainability guides city policy" (Santa Monica 2014, 6). However, the principles together embrace concepts of holistic thinking, publicly driven implementation, and the importance of cross-sector partnerships. They also apply scalable approaches, recognizing the that the city is part of a broader regional, national, and global context with the plan tied to specific, measurable indicators to monitor success (Santa Monica 2014).

In Corpus Christi, Texas, planners designed the first *Integrated Community Sustainability Plan* in 2009 with an interdisciplinary and data-driven public process. This process accommodated the need for "consideration of community-wide issues as well as site-specific opportunities for key locations around the city" (Corpus Christi 2009, 2). The plan includes a specific focus on implementation, specifically scalable implementation incorporating both no-cost community-based activities and major capital improvements. It integrates planning, code reform, and policy change. The plan addresses a holistic community approach, covering essential public services as well as quality-of-life issues and culture. It embodies a collective strategy for community success (Corpus Christi 2009).

These kinds of local efforts mirror attempts at the regional, state, and national levels to succeed in scalable integration of effort. At the national level, in 2009 the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), US Department of Transportation, and US Environmental Protection Agency formed the Partnership for Sustainable Communities (www.sustainablecommunities.gov) to coordinate efforts on housing, transportation, environmental, and related infrastructure investments in communities. The partnership's work on federal funding programs, policies, and legislative proposals is based on six core principles of livability: (1) provide more transportation choices; (2) promote equitable, affordable housing; (3) enhance economic competiveness; (4) support existing communities; (5) coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment, and (6) value communities and neighborhoods (Partnership for Sustainable Communities 2015).

At the state level, over a dozen states have ongoing initiatives, and a number of models have emerged. In New Jersey, officials created the Sustainable Jersey program (www.sustainablejersey.com). This is a voluntary municipal certification and technical assistance program that has certified 116 localities throughout the state. Minnesota GreenStep Cities (http://greenstep.pca.state.mn.us) is a voluntary program that assists cities in reaching their sustainability goals.

At the regional level, HUD has catalyzed a host of new efforts through its Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grants program (http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/economic_resilience/sustainable_communities_regional_planning_grants). The program supports regional and multijurisdictional planning efforts that generate jobs and regional economic development. The program focuses on long-term development and reinvestment, issues that affect regions, the use of data to set and measure goals, and the engagement of stakeholders and the community in decision making efforts. The program uses the six livability principles of the Partnership for Sustainable Communities as a guide.

Several key lessons learned from the first two decades of experience have emerged to help shape a new approach to sustainability:

- **The need for effective measurement:** Localities have struggled with the development of effective measurements and indicators to track progress toward their goals, and some best-practice communities have begun to develop their own specific sets of indicators and benchmarks to measure progress in more tangible ways. The STAR Communities (Sustainability Tools for Assessing & Rating Communities) rating system has filled some of this need.
- **The need for more than standalone sustainability offices:** From a governance perspective, singular sustainability offices as a response to sustainability needs have proven largely ineffective. Those communities with coordinated, cross-agency and cross-sector approaches have realized more success in making progress toward their goals.
- **The need to address countervailing trends toward decentralization and aggregation:** A rethinking toward effective, scalable projects has emerged from the need to form regional responses that aggregate and align actions at a broader scale, while also developing responses appropriate to the diversity of prevailing local conditions and with the necessary detail at the neighborhood scale.
- **The impact of the global economic crisis:** The global economic crisis has put enormous pressure on governments for the need for effective organization to remain economically competitive and to adapt to new environmental, social, and economic challenges in an integrated manner.

There are also growing efforts to form peer-to-peer learning and exchange networks and to integrate initiatives from the bottom up. In 2009 the Urban Sustainability Directors Network (www.usdn.org) was formed to bring together sustainability professionals from across the United States and Canada. This network provides opportunities to discuss cross-cutting issues in sustainability, share best practices, and work together on common issues. In 2013 Resilient Communities for America (www.resilientamerica.org) was launched with over 60 local elected officials committed to a campaign to develop and integrate local initiatives. Together these new approaches are redefining sustainability as a practical operational strategy that can drive implementation efforts at multiple scales and levels of government.

SUSTAINABILITY AS A PLANNING CONSTRUCT

Mark Hamin, Senior Lecturer and Director, Master of Regional Planning Program, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

What has been, is now, and will be the relationship between the concept of sustainability and the professional practice of urban and regional planning? How could and should the planning field become more sustainable? But also, how should the process of sustainable development become more planned? As a result of growing concerns about peak, nonrenewable resources, freshwater scarcity, loss of habitat, species extinction, climate change, and similar issues, sustainability has become in the past decade one of the major frameworks guiding many fields of academic and professional practice. While the focus has been primarily at the global level and oriented toward large-scale natural systems, increasing local attention to urban ecological, economic, and social systems has brought city and community planning more squarely into the sustainability discussion.

Origins of the Sustainability Concept

The significant shift in scale, scope, and rate of urban-industrial growth during the nineteenth century, resulting from new forms of mechanization and energy, posed increasingly acute problems with air and water quality as well as environmental health and safety (Costanza and Graumlich 2007). These negative impacts were regarded not only as threats to human well-being but also challenges to economic prosperity. A significant body of scholarship by urban historians—including Joel Tarr, Martin Melosi, and Christine Meisner Rosen—has documented the rapid growth of nineteenth-century cities and the various efforts to promote, finance, plan, design, build, and manage technological systems to address environmental issues in relation to economic development. This period saw a more comprehensive view of the practical relationships between land and resource use, air and water quality, economic productivity and distribution, and overall the quality of life in cities.

The field of city (and later, regional) planning was influenced not only by the expansion of scientific and technical research on urban environmental quality but also by the preceding municipal institutional and infrastructural reform movements of the nineteenth century. It emerged through early twentieth-century coalitions representing the intersection of professional urban design, civil engineering, municipal law and regulation, public health, and social reform initiatives (Peterson 2003; Shutkin 2001). However, the concept of sustainability was not yet explicitly articulated within the planning profession; urban and metropolitan issues were at first generally addressed from the legal and regulatory standpoint of specific impacts, harms, and nuisances rather than from a wider-scale, longer-term perspective.

There were, however, some theoretical exceptions to this trend—best represented by the examples of Ebenezer Howard's Garden City as well as the emerging "biotechnic" regionalism described by Patrick Geddes and Lewis Mumford, which achieved some limited practical application in the interwar period. Nevertheless, in planning over the course of the twentieth century, a three-fold shift occurred: (1) from a case-by-case exercise of the municipal police power to a more comprehensive long-range planning strategy based on the public use doctrine, (2) from a reactive to proactive orientation that anticipated rather than merely responded to long-term trends, and (3) from a limited goal of negative prohibition of harm and risk to a greater goal of positive promotion of overall quality of life and well-being.

From the advent of the industrial and urban revolutions of the nineteenth century through the early twentieth century, concerns about negative environmental, economic, and social consequences were often tempered by general pro-growth optimism based on the belief that technological innovation, rational organization, and scientific management could effectively address and resolve such problems. It was not until the aftermath of economic depression, total world war, and end of formal empire mid-century that such optimism about modernization and rational planning for growth came under more extensive critical scrutiny. By middle of the twentieth century, Aldo Leopold had developed a conservation and preservation framework that recognized land and resources in terms of their ecological carrying capacity as well as their significance to cultural ways of life, an approach that was scientific but also ethical.

Following World War II, concerns about population growth and resource depletion began to emerge as a counterpoint to the prevalent views of boundless technological innovation and urban-industrial growth. Authors such as Kenneth Boulding, Garrett Hardin, and Paul Erlich expressed alarm about the imminent threats posed by the "tragedy of the commons" or a population explosion and called for dramatic efforts to control rates of growth and consumption. Equally impassioned but perhaps less harsh in their proposed remedies, Ian McHarg, Rachel Carson, Barry Com-

moner, E. F. Schumacher, and others made compelling indictments of environmental contamination and its lasting effects on quality of life in the 1960s.

By the 1970s, views on potential long-term crises achieved more widespread and sustained institutional expression: the seminal work *Limits to Growth* (Meadows et al. 1972) was published and was among the first to explicitly invoke the term *sustainable development*. In the 1980s, the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development (1987), known as the Brundtland Commission, produced a report, *Our Common Future*, which articulated and thereby accessibly popularized key definitions and core criteria regarding global sustainability and its mutually interdependent ecological, economic, and social dimensions (Hempel 1999; Mitcham 1995). Issues of intergenerational equity and intercommunal fairness received a greater degree of attention. Thereafter, a series of United Nations and other international forums throughout the 1990s and 2000s further elaborated, refined, and updated these multilateral aims, especially around issues of governance, social difference, cultural diversity, equity and justice, and participation. These various formulations are relevant to urban planning insofar as they have identified globalized urbanization as one of the key dimensions of global sustainability challenges, most significantly in terms of long-term demographic shifts into megacity regions, along with the resource and infrastructure problems and the structural socioeconomic imbalances that have emerged as a result (O'Meara 1999; Pugh 1996).

Recent and Current Practices for Measuring and Monitoring Urban Sustainability

The formulation of criteria to define and evaluate the characteristics of sustainable development has been a significant achievement in recent decades. More recently, beginning in the 1990s and continuing to the present, a number of researchers have further attempted to produce frameworks to more adequately articulate theory relative to practice—in other words, promoting implementation of specific actions and the comparative assessment of their effectiveness. For example, Maclaren (1996) and others have developed the method of identifying sustainability indicators that are intended to measure a community's progress toward achieving particular long-term, distributive, multi-stakeholder goals. The ecological footprint analysis and assessment calculator created by Wackernagel (1994) and Rees (1992) is another example.

A number of authors have provided comprehensive overviews and critiques of such techniques that measure and account for specific sustainability characteristics (see Alberti 1996; Brugmann 1997; Feiden and Hamin 2011; Lamberton 2005). Others have attempted to produce general overviews of the ways in which these various concepts, definitions, metrics, and techniques may inform and improve sustainability policy, especially at the local community, municipal, and metro-regional scales (Mazmanian and Kraft 2009; Roseland 2012; Wheeler and Beatley 2009).

Organizations such as ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability have promoted sustainability goals and targets based on the work of international agencies. In the US context, such sustainability strategies and metrics have begun to be implemented over the past two decades through participation in STAR Communities; ICLEI; and state-level smart growth, green building, and sustainable communities programs and through drafting of various types of local plans to address multiple facets of sustainability (climate action, open space and conservation, and community and preservation plans). A number of cities and metro regions—including the New York metropolitan area and metropolitan Boston—have begun to develop long-term climate adaptation plans as well as comprehensive regional sustainability plans.

Sustainability and Local Government

Planning managers in local government are reflecting on what sustainability means and how those practices can strengthen local government and planning services. Just as understanding planning history has enabled planning offices to be more effective, understanding the evolution of sustainability is critical in adapting our communities and organizations to the new challenges. As a practical matter, planning managers that are slow to adapt will lose resources to other departments.

The evolution of the sustainability concept relative to city and regional planning has been a long transition from a primarily scientific understanding and inquiry toward practical response to institutional as well as infrastructural systems. In addition, this has been a move from more limited-scope, reactive, remediative approaches to more wide-ranging, long-term, proactive, regenerative approaches—based less on a strictly top-down, expert-oriented framework and more on a participatory, multi-stakeholder one. Planning practice is especially complementary to sustainable development strategy because both are robustly interdisciplinary, strongly future-oriented, fully committed to collaborative process, and concerned with balancing the often contentious values of efficiency, equity, and aesthetics.

SUSTAINABILITY WITHIN PLANNING

Dyan Elizabeth Backe, AICP, Environmental Planner, City of Gaithersburg, Maryland

Gaithersburg, Maryland, is an urbanized, diverse community with a rural farm town history. Located just 13 miles from Washington, DC, Gaithersburg is home to the renowned mixed use, new urbanism community, the Kentlands. Gaithersburg's model of government includes a nonvoting mayor, five elected city council members, a city manager, and nine departments. This city of just over 60,000 residents enjoys an uncommon debt-free status, the result of conservative fiscal planning and significant economic development.

Gaithersburg is a Sustainable Maryland certified community (http://sustainablemaryland.com). Since 2004, the city's sustainability focus has been within the Environmental Services division in the Planning and Code Administration department. The division has three staff members addressing environmental and sustainability issues, and they are engaged in air quality, watershed planning, and water quality activities—especially those related to Chesapeake Bay restoration, green infrastructure development, and an incentive program for low-impact development on private properties. The staff has not yet developed the capacity to address the social equity aspects of sustainability or transportation issues.

Gaithersburg's sustainability efforts within the Planning and Code Administration means that initiatives are not seen as being under the auspices of one department or division. The small staff fits in well in the larger department and maximizes the operational efficiencies of the existing framework. In addition, sustainability initiatives are tied in with planning and land-use activities as well as other environmental efforts and initiatives. This model also means that initiatives can move forward quickly with supportive leadership.

Addressing sustainability issues within a small local government has also resulted in various benefits for city residents. Gaithersburg residents take on volunteer leadership roles in the city and participate in city governance. The city in turn strives to be responsive and to address residents' requests and concerns in a timely manner. The city also values input from citizen committees, and highly educated and experienced residents supplement staff resources. This is especially beneficial for a city with lean staffing.

Still, challenges exist in addressing sustainability issues within a small local government like Gaithersburg. Staff and support resources and capabilities are generally limited. Some facets of sustainability planning in a smaller city are not under the direct control of the local government— such as water, wastewater, and waste facilities—and this can lead to disjointed responses. In addition, only one staff person may be assigned to a certain function. Sustainability efforts may be neglected if sustainability is not a priority for that person or if customer service needs divert available staff resources.

SUSTAINABILITY UNDER THE CHIEF ELECTED OFFICE

Lisa MacKinnon, Sustainability Coordinator/Audit Analyst, Dane County, Wisconsin

Dane County, Wisconsin, is a large county of 1,238 square miles and 488,000 people. The city of Madison is at the geographic center of the county, and it makes up about half of the county population. Moving out from Madison, the county is first suburban and then becomes rural, with 61 cities, towns, and villages—the majority of them rural communities.

The county board of supervisors created a sustainability coordinator/audit analyst position in 2012. The position is located in the office of the county board, the county's legislative body. The office supports the supervisors with day-to-day management, budget management, policy analysis, sustainability coordination, legislative management, and research services. The following are the responsibilities of the sustainability coordinator/audit analyst:

- Facilitate development of a sustainability framework for county government
- Work with departments to integrate sustainability into departmental operations and long-term planning
- Solicit input from county employees on initiatives to advance sustainability objectives and improve efficiency
- Identify and assist with the implementation of resource conservation initiatives
- Coordinate yearly contracted program and management audit and evaluation activities selected by the county board in order to identify potential cost savings and program efficiencies

The imperative for sustainability transcends jurisdictional borders, departmental functions, and politics of all kinds. It requires local governments to bring "all hands on deck" to do the work effectively both in the present and for future generations. Although the position is not a political or appointed one, I was concerned initially about the work being politicized since it is in the office of the county's legislative body—rather than in some other function of county government. The benefit of this structure, however, is regular contact with elected supervisors and the opportunity to provide resources and input on sustainability issues, proposed capital projects, and operational and administrative items included in the budget.

My goal is to ensure that the position serves as a bridge from this office to all other departments and functions of county government in order to engage as many people as possible and also to take advantage of the broad range of experience and knowledge that exists among our staff. To do this, I convened a cross-departmental sustainability work group made up of Dane County department heads, managers, and other staff representing 14 county departments. This group meets monthly and has been working collaboratively to advance the county's sustainability efforts. So far, we have updated the county's 2008 inventory of sustainability-related initiatives and created a sustainability-impacts analysis based on countywide operations. Currently we are working on a draft sustainability plan for county operations guided by the sustainability principles the county adopted in 2012.

Finally, the audit analyst responsibility provides exposure to a wide variety of operational and budget information across county programs. While most of the audits are performed by contractors and address very specific issues identified by the county board, my coordination of these reviews and audits allows me to identify opportunities for integrating further sustainability and efficiency improvements into what we do. The following are several strengths of this approach:

- **Versatility:** The location of this position provides the opportunity to address sustainability in the policy, operations, and budget realms of county government.
- **Connection:** The position has created an additional bridge between the policy and operational aspects of the county by allowing me to serve as a staff member and as a resource to county board supervisors and county personnel across departments.
- **Collaboration:** One of the benefits to the department staff of the cross-departmental sustainability work group has been that it provides a regular opportunity to meet and share ideas and resources about how to improve operations and management.

This approach, however, also has weaknesses, including what can be called "the silo effect." No matter the location of the sustainability coordination function, the possibility will always exist that the position is viewed as aligned only with the functions or personnel of that particular office. This challenge is one we come across in all the work we do.

The bottom line is that having a dedicated, funded sustainability function—whether it is one point person or a multistaff office—will accelerate a local government's progress and effectiveness in comprehensively addressing and achieving sustainability goals. Benefits and challenges will exist no matter how a sustainability position is structured or where it is located in local government. The key is to start with strategies that foster an environment of collaboration and resource sharing that will advance and support all of the local government's efforts to become more sustainable and resilient.

SUSTAINABILITY AS A FREESTANDING DEPARTMENT

Alicia Zatcoff, Sustainability Manager, City of Richmond, Virgina

Richmond, Virginia, is 60 square miles filled with historic sites and landmarks, nationally acclaimed art galleries, cultural attractions, and shopping destinations. Its 204,000 residents enthusiastically support the local food scene, outdoor markets, and craft beer venues. Richmond's crown jewel is the James River, which runs right through the middle of downtown and has some of the nation's best urban whitewater. *Outside* magazine named Richmond one of the "Best River Towns in America" in 2012. The river, nearby parks, and green spaces create a mecca for outdoor enthusiasts and serve as a catalyst for economic development along the riverfront.

In 2010, under the leadership of Mayor Dwight C. Jones, the city created a sustainability and energy management program. The sustainability part of the program focuses on making the community more livable, more competitive, and more resilient. The energy management program works to improve the economic and environmental performance of city government operations.

Since 2010 the city has saved over $1.9 million as a result of its energy efficiency and sustainability efforts. These activities include replacing the city's diesel garbage truck fleet with compressed natural gas vehicles; upgrading lighting and equipment in city facilities, including libraries and fire stations; and converting signalized intersections to LED lights.

Most recently, the city worked with residents to develop a community-based sustainability plan called *RVAgreen*. The plan lays out triple-bottom-line goals across five focus areas: economic development, energy, environment, open space and land use, and transportation (Richmond 2012).

Richmond is organized as a strong-mayor form of government. The administration is led by a chief administrative officer. Four deputy chief administrative officers oversee all city departments and agencies under one of four areas: (1) finance and administration, (2) operations, (3) economic and community development, and (4) human services. The sustainability office is a standalone unit within city government operations. The sustainability manager leads the office and reports to the deputy chief administrative officer for operations.

The sustainability office was created as a separate unit because the cross-functional nature of its work with other city departments necessitated that it be an independent office. As an independent unit, the office is able to function with a higher degree of flexibility than it might have had it been located within a larger department, and this flexibility allows it to adapt more quickly. The office is still relatively new, with a staff of only three people. Such a small independent office can face challenges when it comes to resources and budget issues.

CLIMATE ADAPTION AND MITIGATION

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Local government planning departments are often on the front line of climate change mitigation and adaptation (Bulkeley 2010). While climate change is a global problem, planning for climate change in the United States is still a largely voluntary activity with little guidance from federal and state agencies (Millard-Ball 2012)—although that is beginning to change in California. As a result, local organizational approaches vary among municipalities and agencies.

Many larger cities manage climate adaptation and mitigation functions in their planning offices (e.g., Portland, Oregon) while some have created new sustainability offices staffed by planners and others who work on greenhouse gas mitigation and adaptation projects in coordination with other departments. Independent offices can be very effective in those cities where sustainability efforts are defined by climate change mitigation rather than a full focus on economy, environment, and social equity.

In Philadelphia, the Mayor's Office of Sustainability implements the city's sustainability plan, *Greenworks Philadelphia* (Philadelphia 2014). The office works closely with the city planning commission to integrate greenhouse gas mitigation and climate adaptation planning strategies into the city's comprehensive plan, Phildelphia2035 (Philadelphia 2011), and to create a comprehensive framework for climate adaptation. The framework identifies extreme heat, flooding, and sea level rise as posing the greatest threats to the city. Ongoing actions include the following (Alex Dews, policy and program manager, City of Philadelphia, pers. comm.):

- Review existing measures to reduce risks
- Develop climate adaptation strategies in the planning, design, operation, and maintenance activities of relevant city departments
- Improve information sharing, partnership building, and public education and outreach
- Engage stakeholders
- Coordinate a city climate adaptation working group consisting of representatives from operations (streets, water, and emergency management), finance, parks and recreation, the planning commission, the mayor's office, and other relevant departments

In Minneapolis, the primary responsibility for planning and tracking climate-related activities resides with the sustainability office, Minneapolis Sustainability. The office advances sustainability policy initiatives, pursues and manages partnerships on environmental initiatives, and coordinates closely with those in other departments, including planning and public works. Jason Wittenberg, planning manager of the city's community planning and economic development department, says planners in land use and transportation view their work through a "sustainability lens." Sustainability, planning, and public works, among other departments, have ownership of the city's climate action plan. Interdepartmental cooperation helps assure that the plan's strategies are "owned" and implemented by appropriate staff. Community planning and economic development is the lead department for comprehensive planning, zoning code updates, and development review processes, while public works handles parking standards and bicycle and transit planning (J. Wittenberg, pers. comm.).

Developing appropriate levels of expertise and engagement in climate change mitigation and adaptation among all city employees remains a major challenge for local planning. The City of Madison, Wisconsin, adopted a framework to embed climate awareness and mitigation practices into municipal planning and services, providing "a model and a common language that facilitates cooperation in working toward the goal of sustainability" (Madison 2015). The city's facilities and sustainability manager in the engineering department oversees the initiative, helping to "weave a number of diverse planning strands together, better aligning the actions of different city departments and agencies while still allowing them to work independently" (MacKay 2008, 2).

In Northampton, Massachusetts, energy and climate mitigation planning centers on the Energy & Sustainability Commission, a cross-disciplinary body with members drawn from various departments, including building, public works, central services, planning and sustainability; the city council; and residents. Other sustainability functions—such as land use, open space, and sustainable transportation planning—are centered in the planning and sustainability department. Chris Mason, the energy and sustainability officer, says this management structure works for Northampton because of broad community support fostered during the development of the *Sustainable Northampton Comprehensive Plan* (Northampton 2008), adding, "Residents have demanded that their city govern-

ment take on the issue of sustainability, and it works because the city government gives credit where it is due: to the residents and citizens who are pushing for it and making sustainability the social norm" (C. Mason, pers. comm.).

Climate change planning in Fort Collins, Colorado, is part of the social sustainability department; this department brings environmental, economic, and social sustainability functions under one umbrella, including what many communities have in a community development department. The city formed the department to "increase coordination, accountability, and collaboration with the Fort Collins community, build and strengthen partnerships, and [promote] continued overall improvement of the social health of the community in coordination with environmental and economic health," according to the director Joe Frank. Six staff members from the advance planning department were redeployed to the new department (J. Frank, pers. comm.)

Local planning for climate change in small towns looks very different from those in cities. A town may have only one planner, a part-time consultant who assists the planning board, or citizen volunteers. Organizational restructuring may not be feasible, but other approaches can be effective. Volunteer citizen committees, typically sustainability or energy committees, can be the center of climate change activity in small communities. Successful committees generally start by producing a climate action or sustainability plan, as they do in larger cities. These plans need not be long or complex. Regional planning agencies may be able to provide a template or basic outline, baseline information on municipal greenhouse gas emissions to begin mitigation planning, and details about infrastructure vulnerabilities that could be priorities for adaption measures (National Association of Regional Councils 2012).

Especially in communities where there is no staff planner, a local committee can help inform and focus the work of other boards, especially the planning commission, board of health, and local schools. A citizen committee can also write procurement requests for energy consultants or contractors and supervise their work. In smaller communities, the involvement of public works staff, especially the director, is essential for the success of climate change planning. A motivated public works director can quickly become the town's champion of sustainability.

In a somewhat different approach from the climate change planning approaches at the municipal level, many regional planning agencies are deciding to integrate climate action considerations into their existing planning processes and staff responsibilities. One example is the Atlanta Regional Planning Commission; it has not singled out climate adaption planning as a specific activity, but it has integrated elements of such planning into its long-range transportation planning (National Association of Regional Councils 2012). Another strategy receiving increased consideration is the updating of transportation improvement project criteria by planners at metropolitan planning organizations to give greater weight to a project's likelihood of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and better surviving extreme weather. A notable example is occurring at the Massachusetts Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District, which is introducing adaptation-related criteria based on years of experience in assessing roadway drainage performance through its Geographic Roadway Runoff Inventory Programs (SRPEDD 2016).

The Hartford Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) took the approach of bringing a transportation planner specializing in bike and pedestrian programs into the community development section. This enhanced the agency's focus on integrating alternative transportation into community planning and strengthening the land-use connection to transportation, mainly through transit-oriented development (Mary Ellen Kowalewski, director of policy development and planning, CRCOG, pers. comm.).

As the urgency of climate change increases, many local government planners will weigh their options: to create a separate free-standing department or to attempt to better integrate climate-change planning into the practices and job descriptions of existing local planning units. The examples presented above suggest the answer is that both approaches may be preferred—and necessary. The organizational structure that works in each community may vary, but what is critical is that the approach in a given community creates the greatest multi-department commitment.

Local planners are now beginning to routinely address climate change in comprehensive plans or with separate sustainability plans. Planners, however, have been addressing climate change for a relatively short time (e.g., since the US Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement of 2005). As a result, the restructuring of departments and job duties to implement climate-related aspects of these plans has only started in some communities, and the management of local climate change planning is still a work in progress. Federal legislation and guidance on most climate change planning issues remain absent—in contrast to the volumes of well-established guidance for air and

water quality, transportation, civil rights, housing, and other areas of federal planning participation.

Local governments already handle many planning tasks. Adding climate change, a problem with many unknowns and a sometimes invisible nature, on top of existing demands can present a significantly larger set of challenges. Also, the interdisciplinary nature of mitigation and adaption responses means that lines of authority can blur within organizations as well as with other levels of government, and "such constraints to action may explain why the apparent interest in adaptation and adaptation planning hasn't necessarily translated into the implementation of actions to reduce vulnerability" (Measham et. al. 2011, 891).

Community engagement is essential for climate change planning and for putting plans into action. Working groups composed of city staff, businesses, utilities, and residents can be effective in achieving trust and transparency in what are going to be long working relationships. The planner need not be an expert in climate change; perhaps the planner's most important role is to effectively facilitate the work of such cross-disciplinary groups. These multidisciplinary groups may come to feel they are a team, an approach recommended by ICLEI–Local Governments for Sustainability in which the varying levels of knowledge and expertise are assets that encourage the group itself to be sustainable. Common to most local planning for climate change is the effort to raise awareness among local governments, residents, and businesses about the impacts of climate change and the actions that they can take that will make a difference. This dual approach is essential as the scope of the climate change challenge continues to expand.

CHAPTER 4

THE PERMIT PROCESS AND THE PERMIT COUNTER

The permit process shapes what kind of community is developed, provides planning visibility, and helps determine the level of user satisfaction. But planners all know that working at the permit counter is not a glamorous job. Planning managers need to make sure that they reinforce and honor that work as one of the most important functions of local planning offices. This chapter explores trends and factors that make the permit counter work.

With unlimited resources, staffing ideally would consist of senior-level staff that understand the context, represent the process inside and out, can give consistent help to the community, and can make consistent decisions. As a practical matter, front-counter work is usually assigned to junior staffers who are less expensive, have more time to spend with the public, and do not have the seniority to request other assignments. It is critical that planning managers set up procedures, training, and oversight so that those junior-level staffers are providing quality customer-friendly support while ensuring consistent treatment of new projects.

There are legal aspects of the permit process that must require coordination among planning staff and the city attorney. Common legal issues arise that require (1) ensuring decisions avoid inverse condemnation or regulatory takings; (2) training and overseeing staff to ensure procedural due process, the fair process for decision making, which includes public records, sunshine laws, and open meetings; (3) ensuring substantive due process, the right to basic fairness in outcomes and not overreaching; and (4) educating boards and staff to understand that permit-granting boards are quasi-judicial and must follow limits on ex parte contacts.

A strong permitting process requires attention to how the entire process is structured. Ammons, Davidson, and Ewalt (2008) identify five characteristics of the best permit processes: (1) high-quality services, (2) a focus on the customer, (3) transparency, (4) high-functioning technology, and (5) extraordinary relationships with information technology staff.

For many planning managers, a model permit process includes these important elements:

1. **Information:** All of the information necessary for determining what kind of permit is needed and applying for that permit should be available on the web and from competent, well-trained front-counter staff.
2. **Single point of contact:** A single staffer should be available to manage and coordinate the entire process. That staff person does not need to know everything about all applicable permits but should be the go-to person to find out information and convene key staff. As discussed earlier, permit staff need to have the expertise to understand the context and provide solid dependable advice. The single point of contact should also help identify weak links in the review chain.
3. **Ongoing collaborative review:** From the pre-application meeting forward, all reviewing departments should meet—in person when possible—to consider the permit and ensure that the applicant fully understands the issues. Such focused collaboration can help the department avoid situations where two permits have conflicting conditions or where unforeseen issues arise that can be identified and resolved before delays are incurred. Ideally, coordination should not only be for permits within local government but for other external permit processes (e.g., city, county, state, and federal permits) as well. This is a highlight of most strong permit systems (Ammons, Davidson, and Ewalt 2008). Once applications are complete, the different reviewing agencies should continue to meet (in-person or electronically) to coordinate collaborations and reduce review times.
4. **Completeness review:** Applications should not be accepted into the system or should be put on indefinite hold until the applications are fully complete and ready

for primetime and action. Include an audit process as a double check on this and all reviews. (See also "Checklists," p. 47.)

5. **Permit application and tracking software:** Applications should be available, completed, and submitted online. The software suite should allow applicants and the public to understand exactly how an application is moving through the review process and expedite and track collaborative review by government reviewers.
6. **Consolidated and collaborative permitting:** If possible, required permits from a single local government should be available from a single consolidated application. The collaborative review process in which all permitting agencies come together to review a single project is a comparable option to the one-stop-shop approach. The latter is encouraged in some communities and incentivized in some jurisdictions (e.g., Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 43D). In "One-Stop Permit Shopping" (p. 55), Peter Lowitt presents a case study of a streamlined permit process from Massachusetts.
7. **Fast-track options:** Exceptional applications that provide easy review, projects that meet specifically identified local targets (e.g., jobs and affordable housing), and very simple applications (e.g., small subdivisions where preliminary and final plat review can be accomplished in a single hearing) should be fast tracked. This should include full public transparency about the criteria for fast tracking and how these projects were chosen.
8. **Continuous communications:** Regardless of the permit tracking technology, staff should coordinate continuous communication with the applicant to ensure no surprises in the process and create the best information package available for public vetting. Nathan West describes his own difficult experiences and frustrations navigating through the permit process in "Being an Applicant in Your Own Regulatory World" (p. 56).
9. **Assignment of approvals to the easiest level possible:** The balance between which approvals can happen quickly and as-of-right or with some substantive review by staff and those that go to community or elected boards (e.g., zoning, planning, or city council) should be reviewed from time to time. The goal should be to simplify the process without compromising the substantive review and community engagement needed for certain projects. Easier and more predictable processes obviously help the regulated community, but they also ease staff burdens and allow for a strategic focus on more complicated projects.
10. **Mediation option:** For projects with distinct impacts on residential neighborhoods, the process should support or incentivize mediation—by the local government if it is a qualified honest broker or otherwise by an outside mediator—to see if developers and neighborhoods can reach consensuses that communities can support and that can be included in development or proffer agreements.
11. **Development or proffer agreements:** Staff can negotiate voluntary agreements with developers about what public benefits a project will include—as a binding agreement for staff-issued permits and as an option to be voted up or down for board-, commission-, and council-issued permits. Such agreements avoid the unknowns, uncertainties, missed opportunities, and potential litigation that staff- or board-imposed permits sometimes create. (See "Development Agreements," p. 50.)
12. **Staff reports:** Staff should write written reports on applications, options, and recommendations. These reports should be written by the appropriate permit managers, approved by the appropriate supervisors, distributed to the approval boards, and made available to the public. (See "Staff Reports," p. 49.)
13. **Consolidated public hearings:** When multiple public boards are required to review an application, the review process ideally should be considered in a consolidated public hearing to cover, at a minimum, any overlap between board jurisdictions. If consolidated public hearings are not practical, an alternative approach is holding all the public hearings before different boards on the same project on the same night—to ease the burden both for applicants and the interested public. As a long-term goal, consolidating boards or adjusting jurisdictions to minimize overlapping reviews is worth examining when statutes allow.
14. **Internal feedback and continuous improvement:** Ammons, Davidson, and Ewalt (2008) find that the best permit processes included key steps to ensure that the internal review process is continuously improved. The elements of these processes include providing adequate staff training and cross training; setting and adjusting, as needed, service targets; ensuring that every link in the internal review process is held accountable to timelines and accuracy standards; supplying strong information technology support for all software and technology; and using time and motion studies of the permit review process to ensure it is as efficient as possible. In addition, the permit process should survey and use focus groups

to encourage users and stakeholders to provide feedback on the process in a safe environment.

15. **Disclosure of mitigation formulas:** Impact fees, exactions, and mitigation requirements should be fully disclosed to inform the process and avoid the appearance of backroom deals.

Ammons, Davidson, and Ewalt (2008), writing before the Great Recession, also recommend enterprise funding for permit staff. This allows developer application fees to be committed to staff review and processing costs and ensures sufficient resources. However, many planning departments that relied on this model had to slash huge numbers of staff members when the recession hit. This created a boom-and-bust cycle that continues to make consistent staffing difficult, even after the economy rebounded. Communities and planning managers need to consider the advantages and disadvantages of their funding models. Some hybrid models are available—such as ensuring a core staff without enterprise funds but funding support and outside consultants using more volatile development application fees. (See Kelly 2013 for information about working with consultants.)

CHECKLISTS

Consistency and reproducibility are especially important for development reviews. Checklists are one way to ensure this happens. A great deal of research has looked at how simple checklists can result in dramatically improved and more consistent performance. Commercial aircraft, for example, have become so complex that they can be virtually un-flyable without checklists. Peter Pronovost of Johns Hopkins Medical Center developed a simple checklist for central line catheters, which saved $175 million and 1,500 lives in the first 18 months of use in Michigan hospitals alone (Gawande 2011). It is not brain surgery, people like to think. But "washing their hands with soap," the first item on the Pronovost checklist, is not a step always done in the real world. Very bright people still forget or ignore key steps.

If checklists keep planes in the air and patients alive, why not expect planning managers to set up a system that uses them for the building blocks of development review to make sure that everything is complete? Checklists provide consistency and help planners avoid forgetting simple steps. They also provide two other critical benefits for overwhelmed planning offices. First, the more checklists can be used, the more steps in planning reviews can be delegated to junior professional staff and support staff. Second, and even more promising, many things that can be codified in checklists can now or eventually be moved online and made part of an interactive process with an applicant. Table 4.1 is an example of a partial submittal checklist (p. 48). Checklists need to be customized to match local regulations and approaches.

Checklists can be used to ensure that the proper collaboration takes place, all the relevant parties with information are consulted, and all perspectives are actually voiced and heard (Gawande 2011). Ensuring that all voices are heard sometimes requires a commitment to a collaborative culture and divergent views that does not automatically flow in all communities. Whyte (1952) defined "groupthink" as not simply the conformity that comes from any kind of group but the deliberate efforts to craft a group to create conformity. Unfortunately, most planning managers can provide all too many stories of the war room of a mayor, manager, or executive where the emphasis is on concurrence, unanimity, and exclusion of dissent or even concerns. The use of checklists in planning processes can help counter this phenomenon and foster a collaborative one.

EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS

The first step in evaluating any application is to ensure that it is complete. The requirements vary from state to state as to when an application is judged complete and has a right to be heard before a permit-granting authority. If the correct documents and forms are completely filled out (the paperwork side of the application), an applicant may have the right to be heard before a permit authority whether or not the application is weak.

One of the benefits that planning mangers have discovered when they use online application processes—with checklists incorporated into the permit applications—is that the applications cannot be submitted until at least the basic steps are complete: attachments included, fees paid, and questions filled out. Obviously, this same approach is done in most planning offices manually if the process is not automated. Until an application is judged complete, planners will find that understanding the context of an application and undertaking a substantive review will be more difficult. However, pre-application conferences and ongoing pre-application dialogues between applicants and planning reviewers both help an applicant understand the

TABLE 4.1. SAMPLE REVIEW ENTITLEMENT CHECKLIST

Submittal Checklists

The first level of review can be done by para-professionals or entry-level staff and includes items such as the following:

☐	Filing fee (fee for correct amount)
☐	Completed application (with all required information provided) • Assessors or cadastral mapping property identification number • Zoning district • Certified abutters list • Description of how project meets approval criteria • Report about whether the plans have been shared with abutters
☐	Locus plan
☐	Site plan • Required scale • North arrow • Legend • Title block in required format • Certified abutters list • Information on abutting property ownership and road names • Stamp by the appropriate professional (e.g., land surveyor and engineer) • Zoning district boundaries • Structures and proposed structures
☐	Applicant-provided zoning code analysis in required format (e.g., required minimum or maximum setbacks/build-to lines and actual provided; required parking and actual provided)
☐	Electronic copies of all submittals in proper format (e.g., PDF and DWG files; certified abutters list)

The next level of review is usually done by the permit manager/entitlement planner assigned to the project and includes a more detailed analysis of items such as the following:

☐	Compliance with dimensional and density requirements (review applicant-provided checklist)
☐	Traffic (vehicle, pedestrian, bicycle, transit) impact analysis
☐	Lighting analysis
☐	Stormwater analysis
☐	Utility analysis (water, sewer, stormwater, electric, phone, cable, fiber)
☐	Impact fee analysis
☐	Landscaping analysis
☐	Compliance with master/general/comprehensive plan
☐	Adequacy of performance guarantees

Permit Condition Tracking

Tracking permit conditions are typically done with a permit tracking system or may be done with a simple list of key permit conditions. All conditions from the approval process can be added to the following basic conditions:

☐	Structures (e.g., buildings and parking) built as shown on plans
☐	Uses as approved or allowed by zoning
☐	Hours of operation as approved
☐	Impact fees or other mitigation paid as approved
☐	Required public realm improvements provided
☐	Environmental performance standards met (e.g., lighting levels and noise)
☐	Landscaping provided and remains healthy
☐	Financial performance guarantees provided

Source: Wayne Feiden

expectations and help planners understand the context of an application.

Many planning managers have created processes that in essence make covenants with applicants ensuring that procedurally and substantively complete applications jump to the top of the line and move through the permit process rapidly. On the other hand, applications that are not substantively and qualitatively complete are processed as slowly as allowed by statutory time limits. When poor applications slow down staff, board, and community resources, the process is unfair to applicants who are ready. The best way to ensure high-quality applications is if permit-granting authorities adopt such covenants and make it clear to the regulated communities that they will reward strong applications and not approve weak applications until they are ready.

Whatever the process, essential fairness is important. This requires, among other things, that no final decisions are made until all parties—the applicants and stakeholders at public hearings and workshops—have been heard and can present information, interpretations, and comments. Documentation of any hearing, the administrative record, and the information used to render any decision are also essential to ensure that the process is free from bias and to protect local governments if decisions are questioned either on appeal or in the political arena. Certain documentation is required to be retained in accordance with state public records law, but many jurisdictions go much further and commit to making all such information easily available to the public, usually online and in real time.

STAFF REPORTS

Written and oral staff reports are a critical aspect of current planning, development permitting programs, and development-related plan and zoning amendments. Most importantly, planning managers require staff reports to provide the public and decision makers with consistent and informative reviews, regardless of the staff planners who actually write the reports. Reducing litigation risks and providing consistency in staffing and responses are also extremely important.

Before staff reports are written to evaluate projects, the projects should be judged to determine if they are ready for primetime, based on clear guidelines created by the appropriate planning managers. First, staff should meet with applicants prior to their applications to make sure that the applicants understand what is expected and what is needed for projects to succeed. Staff should not be predicting outcomes or handicapping independent boards, but the processes should be clear enough that staff can provide clear guidance

to applicants. Second, staff should not fully evaluate applications until they are complete, to avoid delays and boards acting on incomplete information. Finally, review checklists should be provided both to applicants and to staff to make the process more comprehensible and consistent (Center for Building Better Communities 2009).

Staff reports serve two equally important functions. They need to inform the reader and be understandable, and they need to provide the legal basis for decisions. The actual written staff reports for the permit process should be carefully researched, written, edited, reviewed, and approved before they ever see the light of day, using the same standards that apply to all staff reports. Ideally, especially with vetting and review processes, staff reports would be assigned to any qualified staff within the department and the outcomes and recommendations would be virtually the same. Equally important, each staff report should be written as if the project will be appealed. While staff reports need to be complete, clear organization and brevity are critical if reports are to be accessible to readers and to effectively influence the process (Center for Building Better Communities 2009).

Planning managers adopt staff report formats based on local preferences, the roles of the permit process, and state and local legislation. The need to be complete suggests longer staff reports, but the need to be accessible to decision making boards and the public argues for shorter reports. Meck and Morris (2004) suggest some standard components of a staff report. This list is very broad and includes elements that would not be applicable to all reports or all application types:

1. Cover sheet (includes application type, such as rezoning, subdivision, or lot split)
2. Project description, including, if necessary, a legal description (required for a rezoning)
3. Factual information about the site and surrounding area, including:
    - the current zoning districts of the properties involved
    - description of the site, based on a site visit and survey by the planning staff
    - surrounding land use
    - recent land-use actions affecting the area, including rezonings, conditional uses, and variances
    - existing and proposed public facilities serving the site, including sizes of water and sewer lines and classification and condition of roads
    - onsite tree inventory
    - identification of other services, such as public transit
    - traffic counts, if relevant
    - floodplain or wetlands information, if relevant
4. Staff analysis, including:
    - presentation of decision-making criteria from plans or development codes with comment on how the project meets or does not meet criteria (for rezonings, variances, and conditional uses)
    - specialized impact analyses, if necessary
    - evaluation of consistency of proposed action with all applicable plans, ordinances, and regulations (section would include statements of comprehensive plan map designations, written policies, and excerpts of relevant sections of ordinances and regulation)
5. Staff recommendations, including conditions, as appropriate
6. Comments from other agencies
7. Maps displaying subject property
8. Photographs of the property, including aerials, as appropriate
9. Information submitted by applicant (as attachments)
10. Written comments from citizens (as attachments)
11. Description of information yet to be submitted

In a recent study of staff reports, Johnson and Lyles (2016) evaluated a national sample of reports based on criteria related to background information, analysis, recommendations, and organization and graphics. They identify additional ways planners can improve the overall quality of reports, including using bulleted lists and sidebars to summarize information, providing checklists outlining the impacts of an application on public facilities, supporting recommendations, and publicizing the date of future public hearings.

DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENTS

Staff reports may also include draft development or proffer agreements for approval by boards. It is increasingly common for developers and regulators to work out these agreements. The details vary from state to state and municipality to municipality, but the agreements should be mutually beneficial or at least agreeable to both parties. They should have less of the unknowns and lower risk of litigation than if regulators simply issue permits with "reasonable conditions," which may or may not be reasonable to the applicants.

Typically, applicants offer, or proffer, mitigation and conditions that they would find acceptable as part of an approval or rezoning process. In most proffer or development agree-

ments, discussion and negotiation occur so that the proffers or terms are mutually agreed upon. The same basic rules apply to a development or proffer agreement as to a permit condition issued by a regulatory entity or regulatory board:

- The agreement must be consistent with state and municipal law.
- The agreement must be voluntary for both parties and related to the proposed project, regulatory (quasi-judicial) or comprehensive plan revision, or rezoning (legislative) request.
- A nexus must exist between mitigation and the project being proposed. In light of *Koontz v. St. Johns River Water Management District* (No. 11-1447 (Fla S. Ct. 2013)), at least until the next US Supreme Court decision clarifies issues, the essential nexus and rough proportionality must be determined before any final agreement, making it difficult for the parties to negotiate an agreement acceptable to all parties in lieu of a detailed assessment of impacts.

ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Disputes are probably more common in the permit process than any other aspect of planning. A developer may sue a municipality if a project is denied, arguing that the decision was arbitrary or that there is no other economically viable use for the subject property. Cities are also sued on the basis of specific requirements like affordable housing set asides or sign regulations that are perceived to be too onerous. Sometimes disputes arise from third parties, in cases where there may have been inadequate community engagement, community planning, and community visioning to build consensus about what a community wants to be. Sometimes they are due to NIMBY (not in my backyard) and BANANA (build absolutely nothing anywhere near anything) attitudes in many communities. Sometimes they result from the huge effect on property values and quality of life that some development projects may cause. Sometimes, people simply do not understand what is going on until a specific project is proposed near them. In any case, rare is the local government planner who does not have war stories about a difficult permitting process, irrational people who oddly enough were formerly rational people, extended litigation that clearly does not make sense, or a political campaign that was launched by the outcome of one or more development projects.

In the permit process, alternative dispute resolutions are an option for planning managers to consider. They can cool down affected parties to allow successful dialogues and agreement on mutually beneficial resolutions of issues. They are an alternative to the traditional permit process—that is sometimes winner take all—and to litigation. Of course, the process does not always work, but it is often worth trying.

Alternative dispute resolutions may take many forms; they usually involve some variation on mediation, arbitration, and negotiation. Mediation options may be specifically incentivized in the entitlement process (as described in the discussion about the model permit process, p. 45), or they may be voluntary or court ordered. Arbitration can be both a voluntary process—often to avoid the long expensive court process—or, increasingly in contracts, required. Negotiation may be part of a formal mediation process or separate, and it may be facilitated or nonfacilitated. For the last several decades, courts have become actively involved in alternative dispute resolution—typically some variation on mediation—both to divert cases from an overburdened court system and to improve satisfaction with the outcomes. Arbitration has grown dramatically in contract disputes, where the signatories to a contract agree to settle any future disputes that might arise through binding arbitration. Local governments sometimes include this required arbitration clause in their development agreements, conservation easements, and contracts to reduce the risk of future litigation.

The concept of principled negotiation is well established in the literature (see Fisher, Ury, and Patton 2011), and planners use it heavily. This approach is used most often in the permitting processes in communities using development agreements and proffer agreements before entering formal board approval processes. The primary rules for principled negotiation are equally important for any mediation process. First, separate the relationships from the problem, although both are important in the process. Second, focus on interests—what is really important to planners and not positions or a fixed idea of how to achieve those interests. Third, search for mutual gain for all parties and reject fixed-sum approaches where one party's win means another party's loss. Finally, active listening—really listening and demonstrating that listening—is critical for respect, understanding, and openness.

PERFORMANCE GUARANTEES

A critical part of any permitting system is ensuring that projects will be built as proposed and approved. Performance guarantees are the legal and financial mechanisms to ensure

TABLE 4.2. TYPES OF PERFORMANCE GUARANTEES

Type of Guarantee	Function to Ensure Work Is Completed as Approved
Nonfinancial performance guarantee	Future work prohibited (e.g., future approvals, permits, certificates of occupancy, release of property liens can be withheld)
Third-party responsibility	Responsibility to complete a project transferred to a third party (e.g., homeowners' association or special assessment district)
Financial performance guarantee (or subdivision improvement guarantee)	Mechanism created to fund improvements if a developer defaults (e.g., surety bonds, letters of credit, and escrows)

Source: Wayne Feiden

that improvements offered as part of the permit process are provided and that construction projects are properly completed, generally without the need to resort to criminal or civil sanctions. Performance guarantees are the heart and soul of most government efforts that avoid after-the-fact criminal and civil sanctions, and they are generally much faster, less expensive, less complicated, and less adversarial than sanctions. (See Feiden and Burby 2002 for much greater detail on this subject; see also Feiden, Burby, and Kaiser 1989.) Table 4.2 lists the three types of performance guarantees, which are further discussed in the following sections.

Of all available performance guarantees, the most common and easiest to enforce are nonfinancial performance guarantees. Subsequent approvals are withheld until the appropriate infrastructure and early phases of a project are complete. Nonfinancial performance guarantees can include the following activities:

- Building officials withhold certificates of occupancy (COs), the final approval necessary for a building to be occupied, when a project is not properly completed. This provides a strong incentive for the developer to address the problems. Withholding COs is the most commonly used mechanism to guarantee performance.
- Planning staff or the appropriate regulatory board approves larger projects, including many subdivisions, in phases with sequential approvals not issued until the first phase is successfully complete.
- The local government holds liens or covenants not to sell a property, granted as a condition of the project, until a project is complete.
- The local government withholds any other permit on the property until the project is complete.

Withholding of permits, approvals, and releases are extremely effective at motivating recalcitrant developers to comply with the regulatory requirements. Withholding a CO or other approvals, however, is not effective for many projects. For example, if a developer defaults or fails and no future owner is available to take over the project, withholding a permit does not create funding or motivation to complete a project. In a subdivision or many-phased project, the master developer may be building the roads and infrastructure and selling lots, units, or buildings to innocent purchasers by the time the developer or master developer defaults. Likewise, some infrastructure projects are not easily broken into distinct phases (e.g., building a new school or sewage treatment plant component).

In some projects, with public approval, the guarantee of performance may be partially addressed by transferring the financial responsibility for some improvements to a mutually acceptable third party (e.g., a landowner association). Special assessment districts, authorized in most states and used by such entities as Florida's community development districts and even some homeowners' associations, may provide the funding mechanism for aspects of projects, allowing those improvements to be directly paid for by those who benefit from the improvements. This mechanism, however, is usually limited to only a portion of the required improvements. In addition, if a project totally fails or if subsequent owners are not aware of the level of their liability, the special assessment district or homeowners' association may have inadequate or

no capacity to fund the project, leading to failed and partially completed infrastructure. This is especially a problem during a recession when property values are dropping, exactly the situation that is often happening when developers fail.

Because of the limits of other methods of guaranteeing the completion of a project, most subdivision projects and many other projects are required to post some kind of financial performance guarantee to fund the completion of a project—or at least the public and critical infrastructure aspects of a project—if a developer defaults. The following are the most common types of financial guarantees:

- **Irrevocable standby letters of credit:** Banks and other financial institutions issue guarantees to fund the completion of projects. Banks issue letters of credit in return for developer-paid fees and developer-provided collateral. Because a letter of credit is guaranteed by a bank, communities only need to research the bank's financial rating; they do not need to research the finances of developers. The bank's liability is capped by amount of the letter of credit. Letters of credit do have expiration dates, at which point they become worthless. These are the most commonly used financial performance guarantee for local-government-permitted projects.
- **Performance or surety bonds:** Performance bonds are provided by a surety (the issuer of the bonds) to fund the completion of the project if the developer defaults. Sureties are paid by developer-paid fees along with developer-provided collateral. Sureties can be as secure as banks, but communities may need to do more research on their financial stability. In addition, at least for local governments calling bonds, sureties have a reputation for needing to be sued in order for the community to collect. A surety's liability is capped by amount of the bond, unless it decides to finish the work itself instead of paying off the principal. This is the second most commonly used financial performance guarantee for local-government-permitted projects and, because of state statutes, the most common guarantee for public construction projects.
- **Escrows:** Escrows are deposits of cash or other acceptable real property, typically negotiable securities, with the local government or mutually agreeable escrow agent. Because the cash is posted, in theory these provide the best security to local governments, assuming that the escrow agreements are iron clad. However, because they require developers to fund projects twice (once to build a project and once to secure the escrow), escrows are generally only viable for small projects, such as the final landscaping or some narrowly defined phase of a project.
- **Improvement or third-party credit agreements:** These are agreements with the financial institutions funding projects that they will only release intermediate payments to fund infrastructure for a project when the local government agrees that aspect of the project has been properly completed. This agreement can ensure that each component of a project has been properly funded, but it does little to protect against cost overrides or failures of infrastructure before a project is complete.
- **Liens:** These are secured interest in properties being developed that prohibit them from being sold until local governments approve the infrastructure.

Most financial performance guarantees can be extremely effective, but the devil is always in the details—especially in the original agreement. It is incumbent upon planning managers, working with their attorneys, to create systems where those details are worked out. One of the biggest problems local governments encounter is that by the time projects fail and they call the performance guarantees, the amount of funds available is often insufficient to finish the projects. Expiring guarantees can pose risks.

The dollar amount of a performance guarantee must be sufficient to complete the work, in the opinion of the government's own engineers or consultants—even if a local government has to take over the project and pay prevailing wages or livable wages higher than required for private-sector projects and even if inflation has driven up the price of project completion. Since communities usually allow reductions in the amount of guarantees as projects proceed, any reductions should always ensure that enough money is left to fund the worst-case scenarios. Time clocks should be carefully monitored to ensure that performance guarantees are renewed or called before they expire, at which time they become worthless.

Finally, the standards to call performance guarantees should only require certifications by the local governments that the developers failed to complete the necessary improvements on time and to the approved standards. The guarantees should require proper documentation—for example, a certified letter from the local government certifying that they find the developer in default—and not proof, such as inspectors' reports of the condition of the project and bid quotes to document the cost of completing the project. This does not prevent guarantors from suing if the

projects are not in default, but they ease the burden of communities trying to collect the funds.

PERMITS AND THE PLANNING OFFICE

Review and approval of development permits is a critical part of implementing plans and serving communities, and it is often the most visible part of a local planning function. Planning managers want to provide resources and creativity so that permits are effective, relate to community and plan goals and objectives, and win community respect. Tools are always critical: the combination of technology, process, and most importantly customer service resources. The best tools, however, are worthless unless planning managers strive to make sure that all staff members are dedicated to customer service, continuously improve systems, and examine every step of all processes to ensure that they are necessary and as efficient as possible. Concise, well-organized, and well-presented staff reports on permit applications are one of the best ways for that process to serve applicants and communities. Performance guarantees are important to ensure that what ends up getting built is an accurate reflection of what was granted approval in the permitting process.

ONE-STOP PERMIT SHOPPING

Peter Lowitt, FAICP, Director/Land Use Administrator, Devens Enterprise Commission, Devens, Massachusetts

The Devens Enterprise Commission (DEC) is the regulatory entity in charge of permitting the redevelopment of a 4,400-acre former military base located in Massachusetts, approximately 35 miles outside of Boston. Under Chapter 498 of the Massachusetts Acts of 1993, the DEC is empowered to act as a local planning board, conservation commission, board of health, zoning board of appeals, historic district commission, and, in certain instances, a board of selectmen. The DEC has a staff of two certified planners and an administrative assistant, along with contracts for building inspectional services and development peer review services. Devens has attracted well over $1 billion in private-sector investment to the state and created over 3,500 new jobs and over 4.5 million square feet of development.

By combining planning, conservation, health, historic, and variance issues under the authority of one entity, the DEC has been able to expedite the review and permitting of development projects to under 75 days—in a state where the norm is much longer. This consolidated expedited review process, known as the "unified permitting system," not only demonstrates how the quality and efficiency of government can be improved, it also provides applicants with more certainty and less risk in project planning, both of which save them money and give them an incentive to bring their jobs and profits to the state. The DEC serves as the model for the streamlined permitting legislation outlined in Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 43D (https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleVII/Chapter43D), which provides financial and marketing incentives for communities that adopt expedited permitting.

All development within the Devens regional enterprise zone is as-of-right (no special permits or special exceptions) development. Development must be consistent with the Devens reuse or master plan of development, the Devens bylaws, and the DEC's rules and regulations; use variances are not allowed. The DEC has authorized staff to administratively review and approve smaller development proposals that qualify as lower impact level-one permits within 21 days of complete application submission to the commission. The average time of development permitting is 56 days for level-two unified permits—those that require public hearings with the requisite legal notice requirements.

BEING AN APPLICANT IN YOUR OWN REGULATORY WORLD

Nathan West, AICP, Director of Community and Economic Development, City of Port Angeles, Washington

I recently had a real-world opportunity to think about the balance between planning from a planning perspective and planning from an economic development perspective. I had stepped outside my own regulatory position as a combined economic development and planning director to be an applicant for a very significant city project. Effectively I became a project proponent in my own permitting world, and this proved to be an eye-opening experience for me.

The starting point was to ensure that ethical responsibilities were met. As an applicant, I was subject to the same high standard of development expected of private-sector developers. Since I was overseeing the design of the capital project, it was not appropriate for me to also review and process the related permitting applications. Three of my critical permitting roles needed to be reassigned: shoreline administrator, state environmental policy act-responsible official, and building official. After discussion with municipal attorneys, I decided the best approach was for the city's legal department to hire qualified external individuals to take on these roles. I was now just an applicant with a project to which I was fully devoted.

The result was a clearer picture of what really matters to an applicant. I was quickly reminded that predictability is the first and most important factor for an applicant. Second is the assurance that regulators meet the timing needs of the project. Third are the cost implications of regulatory decisions. Fourth is the importance of professionalism. In my case, it is important to recognize that I not only was taking the project through the local permitting processes; I also was taking it through the state and federal permitting processes. A total of 13 permits were required that involved over nine different agencies and organizations.

Early on, reviewers speculated on interpretations of code, jurisdictional issues, and project-related requirements. The only certainty I was given that the project could succeed was through mostly unwritten statements and verbal assurances. I watched as speculative assurances disappeared and turned into additional requirements and new permitting steps. No matter how many emails I sent or clarifications I requested, I could not obtain the predictability I needed to move forward.

Similarly, I struggled to receive commitments on permit timing. Most reviewers provided time-related estimates about when permits would be issued. Many were accurate and that made the experience painless; however, when a time frame was provided and not met, the ripple effect on the project and other permits was disastrous. Delays resulted in design changes, cost implications, and direct negative impacts to the community.

More drastic changes came from unanticipated regulatory decisions. Just one arbitrary condition of approval changes the outcome of a project and can make it a no-go scenario. In my situation, some of the conditions were arbitrary, with no relation to code, precedent, or finding of fact to substantiate them. One of the worst feelings I had as an applicant was a result of being treated unprofessionally. Unresponsiveness made moving forward impossible, and in certain instances I even experienced retaliatory action for my persistence in obtaining answers.

From this experience as an applicant, I learned the following lessons:

- **Ensure the permitting process is predictable.** Get the information needed from the applicant up front in order to provide the applicant with as much certainty as possible.
- **Provide applicants with a realistic estimate on the time it will take to process the application.** Share with them the details about what could delay the schedule so that they can proactively avoid those circumstances.
- **Think about the direct implications of recommended conditions of approval.** Consider the real, on-the-ground benefit of such conditions and the cost implications for the developer. Ensure those conditions are tied to findings of fact and based on code. Recognize the overlapping nature of additional required permits, and ensure consistency with other agencies.
- **Be professional and responsive.** Promptly return phone calls and be honest and straightforward with applicants about the issues faced in processing applications.
- **Think about new ways to audit the planning department with outside eyes.** This can include actions such as reading the website, calling the office, and thinking about how the department is presented to all the citizens and stakeholders.

My experience, though unpleasant, was invaluable. Planners are constantly moving between the private and public sectors but stepping out mid-job provided perspective and insight about

my own permitting experience and the larger permitting world that applicants must navigate. Applicants must be persistent to be successful, and that persistence should be respected. I encourage planning mangers not to hesitate if an opportunity arises to be an applicant or to otherwise audit their own departments. It is a highly valuable learning experience that will permanently benefit their outlook on the permitting process.

CHAPTER 5

PLANNING IN A POLITICAL AND PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Planning, especially in local government in the United States, is a political exercise—not partisan, but political nonetheless. Planners are charged with managing change, which requires great sensitivity to the communities they serve, the political context, and the need to accomplish things at the end of the day. This chapter will explore how the political and professional environments that planning managers find themselves in shape planning management.

One of the best trends occurring today is a growing commitment within governments to create clear departmental visions and missions. Planning offices are mission driven. Ideally those missions are focused on implementing community master, comprehensive, or general plans. The job of planning managers is to ensure that their work remains mission driven.

Planners believe in the idea of aspirational visions to move their communities forward. In spite of this focus on community visions and collaborative visioning, many planners do not equally value vision and mission statements in the management of their own offices. For Axson (2010, 83), the purpose of a mission statement is to guide the general path of an organization without delving into the specifics: "A mission statement clarifies why an organization exists. It helps set direction and prevents confusion. Mission statements do not concern themselves with the details of how the mission will be accomplished; that is the task of the broader planning process."

But if people who work in a planning department do not know the department's mission, then planning managers will have a hard time assessing how well they are accomplishing what they are supposed to be doing. Planning department mission statements focus on a number of objectives, from everyday business transactions (e.g., City of Santa Clara, California, and Broome County, New York) to educational and public outreach roles (e.g., City of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma) to aspirational and sustainability-related themes (e.g., City of Keene, New Hampshire. (See Appendix B for examples of mission statements from planning departments across the country.)

Zucker (2007, 14) says that "nothing is harder or more important for a planning department than setting its vision, purpose, and mission. To do so requires hard mental work, time, trial and error, and even failure." Mission statements are critical for both stable departments and growing ones, but they are especially important during periods of reorganization and shrinking resources, when staff members need to understand why their positions exist and to identify mission-critical tasks. A review of the 100 largest US cities found that the vast majority of large cities have department mission or vision statements on their websites. A random review of smaller communities, however, found that many do not have such mission statements, or they do not share them on their websites if they do have them (Evan Aird, GIS analyst, MassGIS, pers. comm.).

There may be almost as many different perspectives about mission statements as there are jurisdictions. In Puerto Rico, for example, with strong centralized state control, planners often have an especially strong public policy and microeconomic focus. This is not the same focus on land-use planning that dominates many public planning offices elsewhere in the United States. In another example, a study of attitudes of planners found that American planners favored citizen participation significantly more than Dutch or Spanish planners (Kaufman and Escuin 2000). The study also noted smaller differences among the three groups of planners in their attitudes toward planners' technical and political roles.

Planning perspectives and constructs stem from different cultural systems, histories, and legal systems. Those cultural differences can be nearly as large between different communities and planning subfields within the United States as they are between different countries. In the United States, more than in many other countries, the prevailing model is one where planners are involved in all aspects of implementa-

tion. This model requires that most American planners understand the politics necessary to make projects work.

In some places, planners are viewed as neutral experts with no role in the messy business of making projects work in political environments. This is especially true for planners involved in highly technical subfields (e.g., positions focused on approvals of state environmental policy acts and, traditionally, transportation planning—although this has recently changed dramatically) and those struggling to survive in areas where planning is highly politically charged. Planning perspectives also evolve over time. For example, in Hungary after the country became democratic, planning evolved from a highly technical field removed from politics to a field where planners began exploring the role and benefits of citizen participation and the function of planning in democratic governance. Today, American cities and metropolitan areas are extremely diverse, in terms of demographics and politics. Growing diversity and changing demographics have changed the work of planning offices, who is doing the work, and how those offices are structured, especially as this relates to community engagement. (See Chapter 6, "Community Engagement.")

Most planners recognize the need to understand and respect the diversity of the communities that they serve. Most also understand the pluralism of local governments and the need to work with underserved and underrepresented populations. In addition, planners need to be aware of the social and political context in which they work. For example, in vast areas of the country with Native American and Alaskan Native communities, planning managers must ensure that staff members have a full understanding of sovereign "domestic dependent nations" within the United States. To simply manage planning functions requires knowledge of the different legal and cultural contexts this creates. Even in communities without sovereign areas, understanding these issues is part of understanding diversity in America. In "Native American Tribal Planning" (p. 63), Nicholas Zaferatos provides an overview of jurisdictional issues that can arise in tribal planning.

PLANNERS AND THEIR SKILL SETS: WHAT MAKES A GOOD LOCAL GOVERNMENT PLANNER?

Among the most important responsibilities of planning managers are the decisions to hire, promote, train, and empower staff. Planning managers, planning educators, and, of course, entry-level planners and any planners looking for work need to identify the right skill sets, specializations, knowledge bases, and approaches to fill specific professional roles within planning offices. Some of this is driven by local conditions and needs. For example, a large urban area with significant transit infrastructure needs a transportation planner with a different skill set than does a low-density, rural community.

While some skill sets and perspectives are important for all planners—as reflected in ethics education from the American Planning Association and the American Institute of Certified Planners and planning education approved by the Planning Accreditation Board—much of what planning managers are looking for will vary dramatically from job to job and agency to agency. Effective planning managers identify which skill sets are needed for specific positions, while ensuring that people they are hiring or training can grow into other positions and address changing needs, and while avoiding the trap of hiring people just like themselves. One skill set in particular most planning managers want for themselves and their staff is the ability to manage risk. A risk-management perspective helps to identify which resources are needed to reduce long-term risk and agency exposure. Dory Reeves explores the various other skills—personal, intellectual, professional, and general—that planning managers should seek in their staff in "What Makes Good Planners" (p. 64).

RISK-MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVE

Risk management, in the local government context, is used to identify potential events that may affect the government and to protect and minimize risks to the government's property, services, and employees. Planning and governments are often faulted for not being willing to address risks. This is especially a problem with long-term risks—from such things as climate change—because of the lack of short-term political payback and political and community support in light of enormous uncertainties. If the prevalent planning paradigm is to quantify and forecast the future, it does not leave enough room for a wide range of outcomes and the uncertainty of future risks (Berke and Lyles 2013). However, effective risk management, according to the Government Financial Officers Association, ensures the continuity of government operations (GFOA 2009).

Establishing a resilient community is impossible without acknowledging that resilience involves risk management along with acceptance of and planning for uncertainty. Obviously, this is true for climate change, a significant issue for many communities focused on risk and resiliency. But it is also equally true for a whole host of issues, such as predictions

about future economic engines and opportunities. The focus of resiliency and risk management has traditionally been natural hazards and disasters, perhaps more recently intensified by climate change, but it should be equally important in almost any aspect of planning.

Local governments need to consider and plan for "loss exposure," which is defined as "any possibility of loss from an accidental or a business risk, or more specifically the possibility of financial loss that an entity faces as a result of a particular peril striking a particular thing of value" (Furst 2005, 14). This loss exposure can be grouped into five categories:

1. **Casualty risk:** accidents involving property, personnel, and income
2. **Liquidity risk:** insufficient cash to cover operations
3. **Market risk:** inability to provide expected services
4. **Political risk:** litigation brought by private entities in response to government actions
5. **Technological risk:** problems associated with keeping pace with technological change both in hardware and software

For local governments, the primary threats are litigation risk and political risk. Political risk can include a number of types of risk: public and political leadership views on planning, the community's view on planning and engagement in the planning process, budgetary consequences of actions or inactions, and the inability to fulfill planning missions.

Since almost any public decision entails some risk, risk management is or should be a critical part of a planning manager's efforts. It is also one of the most legitimate rationales for avoiding budget cuts ("pay me now or pay me later") so it is an especially attractive focus in difficult fiscal times. There are never enough resources to do everything, and resources often must be prioritized to reduce future financial, litigation, and political risks. Sometimes these assessments are obvious to planning managers working with local government attorneys, legal departments, and risk officers. More often, the assessments are more subtle, with resources allocated to squeaky wheels and for reduction of a variety of risks.

Risk management is most often a major focus in the regulatory permit process, since that is the biggest source of planning-related litigation in most communities. The Institute for Local Government recommends that risks be managed by regularly reviewing regulations to ensure they are up to date and consistent with basic authority; providing strong staffing to ensure that decisions are defensible decisions; developing clear written procedures for hearings to guarantee fairness and predictability, basing decisions strictly on the facts; and providing adequate training for all board members and all staff (Higgins, Speers, and Summerell 2006).

Some communities are moving away from highly discretionary permits simply to reduce litigation in the regulatory process. Form-based codes and other regulatory approaches move more of the decision-making process about what the community will look like to the planning process and away from the entitlement process. They benefit both the public and the regulated community in providing more certainty in the process. But, from a risk-management perspective, one of the greatest benefits may be reducing the risk of appeals and endless litigation.

Unfortunately, in most communities, not enough resources are provided to issue decisions, findings, and minutes in a way that will protect communities from legal appeals. As a result, part of risk management involves planning managers creating processes to minimize risk in every decision and assessing which decisions are most likely to be appealed or otherwise challenged. The decisions that face the least risk of appeal simply get fewer resources—because something has to give. This does not mean taking shortcuts per se in these areas, but it does mean that records may be thinner and resources less available. Ideally managers are then assessing the risk well so that the thinner records in some areas do not create problems later. One appeal of a decision with an inadequate record can use up a great deal of resources.

Risk management is also critically important in legislative actions, like comprehensive planning, and project implementation efforts, such as eminent domain proceedings. In this context, risk management is often about reducing external risks, be they political risks or permit appeals and other litigation. Although the litigation risk in legislative actions is less than in quasi-judicial actions, litigation can easily arise as a result of claims of lack of government transparency, records not being public, a failure to consult required stakeholders, and state and local procedural requirements and procedural due-process violations.

As a perspective, risk management applies to any risk and not just litigation (e.g., staff cuts may lead to more loss of discretionary grants or increased legal costs than what they save in staff costs). Although the term *risk management* is not always used, it helps inform planning and budgeting processes. Whether weighing political risk or the risk of getting it all wrong, any decision-making process should be heavily focused on risks. What happens if projections—about growth, traffic volumes, the success of projects, employment projections, public revenues, future storm events, and future sea

levels, for example—do not come true? Equally important, of course, is the risk of doing nothing, the take-no-action alternative, which often has far greater negative consequences.

Planners are and should be entrepreneurial risk takers, and they should not settle for the status quo. As with any business, planners face huge degrees of uncertainty in everything they do, in management and in planning, and everything involves risks. Planning managers should embrace and, to the extent possible, quantify risk in identifying options and strategies. In community planning, the risks are to communities as a whole, and ultimately communities must decide what risks they want to share. Planning managers, however, usually decide the appropriate levels of risk by themselves or with their own managers within their planning offices. For example, the decision to hire the safe candidate who may never evolve or the not-quite-ready-for-primetime candidate with more promise for growth is really a decision about managing the appropriate level of risk.

In the private sector, Axson (2010, 197) notes that "increasingly success is being defined by those organizations that can anticipate and react best to changes in the marketplace," with two forces spurring these changes. The first force is unpredictable and singular events whose impacts are fast and far reaching. The second is the increased speed of internal and external trends becoming material. Anticipation always involves risk, whether in the marketplace or in public planning practice.

THE NEGOTIATION OF POLITICS AND RISK

Local government planning agency managers cannot be effective if they try to build their departments simply as technocratic agencies divorced from politics. Most planners strive to stay out of partisan and elected politics, with varying degrees of success. However, to be effective, they need to acknowledge that local governments are political environments. Serving the public interest means being aware of all the steps needed to get plans implemented, some of which are political.

Surviving and thriving in a political world requires that planning managers ensure planning functions have a transparent vision and mission and that they understand and evaluate all kinds of risks. This certainly does not mean that planner managers should be involved in elective politics or should let extraneous issues affect their professionalism. This does, however, mean that planners need to be fully committed to fulfilling the community interest and never hide behind their credentials, expertise, or independence.

NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBAL PLANNING

Nicholas Zaferatos, AICP, Associate Professor, Huxley College of the Environment, Western Washington University

Planning can be described a process that guides communities' future development. For local governments, the authority to plan is well established through state enabling laws. For Native American reservation communities, however, a tribe's jurisdictional authority is often not as clearly evident. The challenges in administering tribal planning vary greatly, and they depend on the context of a particular tribal situation. In contrast to local government planning under state laws, a tribe's planning authority is established under its own constitutional enabling legislation and self-governance authority. However, that authority is often subject to legal challenges by nontribal governments.

Tribal control over reservation lands and natural resources is fundamental to the fulfillment of tribal sovereignty and the attainment of tribal community development objectives. The overlapping and often subjugating presence of nontribal interests continues to thwart tribal social, political, and economic advancement. Successful tribal community development is integrally linked to devising planning methods that can both identify and reconcile conflict posed by nontribal interests.

There are 566 federally recognized tribal governments in the United States, each of which is distinct in terms of its culture, traditions, community priorities, and political and administrative capacities to operate planning systems (Figure 5.1). Tribal planning structures are specific to each tribe and seek to guide reservation development in ways that are effective within each particular, and often complex, jurisdictional state of affairs. In large part, the complexities facing Native American reservation planning are due to the inconsistencies of past federal Indian policies, which have caused continuing jurisdictional uncertainty with state and local governments and overlapping and conflicting jurisdictions. Therefore, effective tribal planning must first begin with clarification of a tribe's underlying authority to control its reservation territory.

Figure 5.1. Planning in a Native American nation (Wayne Feiden)

The degree of jurisdictional certainty that tribes possess in administering their internal affairs is a central factor in how tribes go about formulating and administering their planning programs. For example, some tribes have adopted state-compatible tribal planning structures under their own constitutional authorities in order to minimize policy inconsistencies with their surrounding regions. Other tribes have adopted more isolated approaches by emphasizing traditional values and decision-making processes apart from regional policy frameworks. The distinction in approaches has much to do with the political relationships between tribes and nontribal governments.

WHAT MAKES GOOD PLANNERS

Dory Reeves, Professor, School of Architecture and Planning, University of Auckland

Planning is future oriented to create sustainable and better places to live. Planning is also a discipline and a profession. As a profession, planners work in various sectors and in different types of organizations and subdisciplines. Planning managers clearly want all their planning staff to have some generic skills; some planners will also need more specific knowledge, understanding, and skills dependent on their particular context.

I have interviewed senior managers and early career planners face to face and through online questionnaires to identify what makes good and effective planners. This information can help planning managers as they work to hire, supervise, coach, promote, and train their staff. The findings confirm the importance of having well-developed generic skills and the ability to learn from both work situations and general life experiences (see Gardner 1983; Goleman 1995).

Planning managers should ensure that their planners have significant skills in five areas (Reeves 2015): (1) personal skills, (2) interpersonal skills, (3) intellectual skills, (4) profession-specific skills and knowledge, and (5) generic skills and knowledge.

Personal Skills

This area of skills helps professionals navigate work and social environments. Goleman (1995), noted for popularizing emotional intelligence, highlighted five main constructs, each of which can be applied to the work of planners:

1. **Self-awareness:** For planners, this might mean having a well-developed sense of cultural competence to judge how and when to interact with people (Reeves 2011).
2. **Self-regulation:** For planners, this would mean ensuring and maintaining positive outlooks.
3. **Social skills:** Managing relationships is important for planners who are working with communities as well as with clients, customers, or applicants seeking advice on planning applications and policies.
4. **Empathy:** The ability of planners to empathize in situations where decisions may go against the wishes of communities with whom they have been working helps to keep long-term relationships intact.
5. **Motivation:** Being driven to achieve is important for planners since much work is very long term, and planners need to appreciate the bigger picture.

Planners should also acknowledge when they do not know something. The failure to recognize a lack of understanding not only reduces the actions planners can take; it frustrates managers and clients, possibly resulting in poor decisions and damaged working relationships. This undermines the confidence and assertiveness needed to ensure issues are articulated and out in the open. Planners at all levels need to be able to learn from their own errors and listen to constructive feedback. Managers need to seek 360-degree feedback, and less experienced planners need to recognize the experience of managers and team leaders.

Interpersonal Skills

Interpersonal skills—including the capacity to understand the intentions, motivations, and desires of other people and interact with other people—are another type of social intelligence (Gardner 1983). A key aspect for planners is the ability to interact positively with the public, citizens, and communities by acknowledging the expertise of these groups. These skills are increasingly important for planners as participatory planning approaches become more widespread.

Related to interpersonal skills is the ability to empathize and work with people from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures. In the United States and Canada, for example, skills and knowledge are needed when working with Native American communities and organizations. In these cultures, personal visits are important as well as an understanding of information and formal structures (Norstog 2012). Culturally specific interpersonal and management skills help planners develop the ability to adapt to differing and changing circumstances.

Intellectual Skills

Intellectual skills for planners include the ability to find and synthesize information and use that knowledge appropriately. They should be open minded to the different ways of achieving goals and understand when they have discretion and when they do not. Government agencies, for example, are bound by legislation that may appear limiting.

Regardless of the sector in which a planner works, the ability to keep an eye on the big picture and look at core issues from a number of different perspectives is essential. This means keeping abreast of political, economic, social, and technological developments. For planners, the big picture might involve reviewing developments in the national and global economies, understanding the impacts of national and international conven-

tions and agreements, and thinking about new ways to engage with other cities across the country and around the world.

Profession-Specific Skills and Knowledge

Profession-specific skills involve understanding and applying the tools of planning in different contexts and to a range of projects and issues. Planners need to consider how the work they do reflects on and affects their own organizations. In addition to planning-specific skills, the work of planners is enhanced by knowledge of related topics, such as social equity. Planners also need to understand the political context in which they work; the ability to balance the technical and political aspects of planning solutions is important. Professional institutes and networking strategies can help planners stay abreast of current issues, debates, and developments.

Generic Skills and Knowledge

More generic skills and knowledge are those that do not neatly fit into the preceding categories but are still very important. They include the ability to communicate and perform key work functions using technology; to make effective presentations to clients, officials, and community members; and to organize work time. This also means more than talking and presenting. Along with written, verbal, and presentation skills, planners need flexibility, focused listening skills, and the ability to ask questions.

Looking Ahead

Planning managers should look for planners who have a range of personal, interpersonal, and intellectual skills as well as a combination of skills and knowledge that are planning-specific and more generic. Effective planners use both their technical and social skills. Persistence, creativity, and commitment are also important qualities for planners to possess. The demand and need for planners with these developed skills and who can work effectively with communities will continue.

CHAPTER 6

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Planning managers need to ensure that their staff, policies, and procedures support community engagement. This engagement in turn influences the management of planning offices. Community engagement is at the core of the planning profession, particularly for public-sector planners. It is enshrined in planning ethics—for example, public participation is part of the *AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct* of the American Institute of Certified Planners (in a section entitled "Our Overall Responsibility to the Public") (AICP 2009) and the American Planning Association's *Ethical Principles in Planning*, which states that "the planning process must continuously pursue and faithfully serve the public interest" (APA 1992).

Planners should, consistent with those ethics, engage all community members and stakeholders, with a special emphasis on social justice. It is the planner's job to guarantee that low-income, minority, and historically underrepresented communities are engaged in the planning process. Depending on the perspective, the actual process of citizen engagement is either an opportunity for collective empowerment and collaboration or the bane of the existence of local planners—or, for most planners, probably some of each. The public process can be both the most rewarding part of planners' work, when communities develop the consensus and culture to make that happen, and the most frustrating part, when the planning process is dominated by ad hominem attacks, NIMBY battles, exclusionary perspectives, and the need to re-litigate every past issue.

Planning managers and planners want the engagement process to be productive, and they want to serve their communities and inform decision making. Excitement, enthusiasm, collaboration, inclusion, productivity, and trust-building—and, of course, food and fun—make the process work. (Some planners claim that food is a necessary precondition for any successful meeting.) The overall process is very familiar to most planning managers: coordinating outreach using every kind of media and social media outlet, understanding the needs and opportunities of different populations and stakeholders, and facilitating the public process.

Because citizen engagement is so important to the management of local planning, it should be thought of as one of the core constructs of any local government planning office. However, there is no "right" way to organize a planning office around such a construct. Some planning managers want to make sure that every staff member is good at community engagement and that this aspect of planning is part of everyone's work. Other planning managers assign especially skilled staff members to serve as community engagement experts and to help the rest of the staff with their projects. Ultimately, the organizational structure may be less important than the overall orientation of local government planning managers and their staff.

Understanding the critical need for community engagement is not new to planners. For example, a 1950 proposal for reorganizing planning functions in New York City notes that "the private citizen, as an individual or in small groups, has been practically excluded from the planning process. It has become too complex. The interests in most cases are highly specialized and highly organized. This is not intentional, but results from the magnitude of the problems" (Reuter 1950, 11). In most communities, things ideally have improved since 1950 but perhaps not as much as most planner managers wish. Nonetheless, planning offices and planning functions are not always optimized to serve and engage the community.

Developing the capacity to use modern public participation techniques—and either incorporating these processes into the formal governance framework or allowing them to influence formal proceedings—is a critical task for local government planning managers in the next decade. The millennial generation's values are increasingly helping to reshape and redefine society in the twenty-first century. Collaboration, innovation, and community will take on added importance in how organizations and governments orient

themselves. Public participation should play a vital role in redefining governance for local jurisdictions across the country, as civic capacity and cross-sector collaborations become more robust. The presence of a strong civic sector and new technologies that are fully leveraging a community's resources to realize public aspirations provide significant opportunities to reshape "business as usual" and create a modern standard operating procedure for public work. By fully engaging the public as partners in defining and achieving community aspirations, local government can redefine its role in community-building and empower residents to redefine a modern, active citizenship as well.

Community engagement, first and foremost, requires the commitment to craft a planning process that reaches the community and engages citizens on their terms. Relatively few planners still expect the public to come to planners on planners' terms. Planning managers need to structure their offices to ensure that forums, workshops, media, and all aspects of the process are truly engaging and attractive to the community. To do this, managers need to make sure that staff members at all levels are committed to these goals and that the allocations of staff time match the need.

The following case studies explore a range of approaches and priorities to guide planning managers in community engagement endeavors. Joel Mills, in "Planning as a Democratic Practice" (p. 69), explores various strategies to engage communities effectively. In "Engagement Brings Change" (p. 78), Harris Steinberg describes the extremely effective community engagement effort around Philadelphia's waterfront. David Kittredge looks at a constituency underrepresented in the political process in "Community Engagement of Rural Landowners" (p. 81). Finally, Mark Hinshaw, a planner and a journalist, explains in "Secrets from a Planner-Journalist" (p. 82) how planning managers can maximize their use of media outlets.

PLANNING AS A DEMOCRATIC PRACTICE

Joel Mills, Director, Center for Communities by Design, American Institute of Architects

Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody.
—Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*

For the past half century, the planning profession has been at the forefront of local democratic practice. In contemporary democratic life, more citizens participate in the public work of planning than any other component of local decision making besides voting. In a survey of public officials in more than 300 localities, the National League of Cities found that 60 percent of respondents claim that their municipalities use public engagement processes "often" and another 21 percent report that public engagement processes are used "sometimes." In addition, 28 percent of respondents state that their municipalities have formal public engagement plans. Most importantly, respondents indicated that their communities would "likely" or "very likely" design deliberative public engagement processes for three top issues: zoning and land use (82 percent), downtown development (78 percent), and neighborhood planning (76 percent) (Barnes and Mann 2009).

Changes in Public Engagement and Participation

During the last decade, a genuine civic movement around planning has taken hold in the United States, bringing many planning managers and their communities to new heights of community engagement. Six key trends have led this development at the local level.

The Rise of the Citizen Planner

The lines between professional planners and citizen planners have always been blurred. Some of the most influential thinkers in the field, such as Jane Jacobs, were not professional planners. While the genesis of citizen-led planning began the 1960s, it has experienced rapid acceleration with the democratization of cities in the last 25 years, and this trend is likely to continue.

A 2012 survey found that a majority of Americans, 51 percent, express a desire to participate in future community planning efforts (APA 2012). Public participation in the planning process has been most evident during the last 15 years in larger urban jurisdictions where major planning processes can include thousands of participants. In the late 1990s, for example, the Envision Utah regional planning process involved more than 20,000 participants. Such levels of participation are commonplace today in large municipalities, as the following examples show:

- The Stand campaign—an initiative to gather feedback from Chattanooga, Tennessee, area residents about the future of the city—collected more than 18,500 survey responses in 2008 during what was reportedly the "world's largest survey-based community visioning project" (McClane 2009).
- In 2010, an action agenda emerged in Prince George's County, Maryland, based on the input of thousands of residents and stakeholders in a process called Envision Prince George's (Prince George's County Social Innovation Fund 2015).
- The City of New York adopted the *Vision 2020: New York City Comprehensive Waterfront Plan*, which outlines development for more than 500 miles of waterfront and involved thousands of residents from every borough of the city (New York 2011). The plan was awarded with the Waterfront Center's Excellence on the Waterfront Award as well as the American Planning Association's Daniel Burnham Award.
- In Texas, the City of El Paso unanimously adopted a new comprehensive plan following a process that included contributions from more than 30,000 participants (El Paso 2012).
- *Imagine Austin*, the first comprehensive plan for Austin, Texas, in decades, incorporated more than 18,500 submissions from the community (Austin 2012).

Shrinking Public Budgets

The national economic climate and ongoing fiscal crises at the state and local levels have constrained municipal budgets and forced local governments to seek partners in the private and nonprofit sectors. As a result, many local governments, particularly through their planning departments, are encouraging greater levels of democratic practice and cross-sector collaboration as a critical component of making public initiatives feasible.

Local Devolution and the Growth of Neighborhood Councils

Most major cities now have a system of neighborhood councils or advisory commissions of citizens who interact with local government representatives on a host of issues, particularly those

related to neighborhood planning and development. The National League of Cities (2004) reports that cities and communities across the country have started neighborhood council systems and democratic governance projects. Some of these systems, such as in Washington, DC, tied the creation of neighborhood councils to local planning processes, all integrated into citywide summits. Others, such as Seattle's system, provided neighborhood grants that catalyzed exponential private investment through resident-driven projects.

Extension of Democratic Planning beyond Government

The emergence and growth of nonprofit, civic intermediaries has had a profound impact on local democratic practice, expanding beyond the limits of traditional government processes and the public sector and involving new participants in democratic planning. These semi-public entities and nongovernmental neighborhood organizations are increasing community capacity, and, in the process, they are helping to redefine the public sector. Groups such as Envision Utah, Chattanooga Stand in Tennessee, and the Urban Charrette in Tampa, Florida, are playing critical roles in convening the public.

The Data Revolution

In localities across the country, the role of data and information has transformed approaches to planning. Today, using GIS technology and a range of mobile applications, citizens can participate directly in both data collection and the dialogues that drive decision-making processes.

Direct Grassroots Action

Increasingly, citizens are reclaiming their communities through direct action at the local and neighborhood levels, such as crowdsourcing and tactical urbanism initiatives. These actions have ranged from temporary, guerilla interventions that are outside of the boundaries of the law to government-sponsored and supported efforts, and they have encouraged a great deal of civic activity in communities. Planning managers and their communities are responding to the growing civic movement to reclaim cities by creating new support systems to build capacity and leverage the collective energy of citizens. The following examples illustrate these actions in cities across the country.

The City Planning Commission in Philadelphia created a Citizens Planning Institute in association with its new comprehensive planning and zoning efforts. The institute, supported by local foundations, provides a series of courses and workshops about planning to the community, and by 2011 it had certified almost 100 "citizen planners" from dozens of neighborhoods across the city. The city also launched websites and Facebook pages in association with Philadelphia2035 comprehensive planning activities. In addition, it partnered with Code for America to launch Textizen, a digital public engagement strategy that used posters around the city asking residents to respond by text message to questions like "what would make Central City more kid-friendly?" and "how do you mainly use city recreation sites?"

The Office of Planning of Washington, DC, launched the Citizen Planner initiative, which solicited input from a cross-section of residents through focus groups on neighborhood and quality-of-life issues. The city also started the Temporary Urbanism initiative to support civic initiatives that activate vacant spaces, foster creative entrepreneurs, and promote neighborhood pride. Through creative placemaking activities, this initiative seeks to encourage community building and community engagement.

Chattanooga Stand, a civic organization in Chattanooga, Tennessee, started CityShare, a public series of web-based and in-person presentations, forums, and small-group discussions that address a variety of community and urban design issues. The organization has also funded seed projects to bring emerging leaders together and facilitate innovative demonstration projects.

Smaller communities are also having success with grassroots efforts. In 2009 officials in Newport, Vermont, a city of 5,000, hosted a community-wide planning process with the American Institute of Architects that involved hundreds of residents. Since that time, the city has implemented the region's first participatory form-based code and foreign trade zone, formed a number of key partnerships and initiatives, and supported residents with various tactical urbanism projects ranging from urban gardens to "chair-bombing," where homemade seating is put out in public spaces. The cumulative impact of the city's work has led to more than $200 million in new investment and 2,000 new jobs.

Lessons of Civic Engagement

Planning managers can learn several key lessons from these efforts as they relate to democratic practice and healthy communities. First, contemporary planning is an act of democracy in a pluralistic society. Citizens not only want to be informed about planning decisions, they want to be involved in influencing the decisions about their communities. The failure to fully and meaningfully involve the public in planning processes can have significant consequences. Planners must be public ambassadors to the community and serve as a bridge linking citizens and public processes.

Second, while planning processes require government support, planning is inherently a community activity. Effective planning practices should be inclusive and broaden understandings of the public sector. Good planning should facilitate novel and robust public-private partnerships, cross-sector collaborations, and broad civic engagement, and it should leverage all the assets and resources of communities.

Third, planning that invests in and encourages the civic sector has direct, tangible benefits. Good planning processes help build social capital and community identities and foster civic engagement and volunteerism. One study found that states and communities with higher levels of civic engagement are more resilient in economic downturns (National Conference on Citizenship 2011). Planning managers are finding value in focusing on civic infrastructure and in the capacity of the civic sector to act as a partner in both the planning and implementation processes. These developments offer tremendous opportunities for planning to contribute to the democratic process.

Starting in the 1990s, planning managers have profoundly changed the orientation of local government planning and the crucial need to engage the public. Studies in recent years have confirmed that effective public processes are much more widely used than in the past, with clear public demand for involvement in decision making. The empirical evidence for the benefits derived from an engaged community has also become clearer. The Knight Foundation's Soul of the Community project looked at 26 communities and found a positive correlation between residents' sense of attachment to their communities and the economic growth in those areas. Communities that practice effective public participation are well-positioned to leverage the talents and resources of citizens to achieve successful outcomes (Knight Foundation 2010).

An Era of Change

Public work continues to undergo much change—driven by community experience, changing public expectations, and progressive planning managers. Some communities, however, still lag behind the leaders in engaging the public. Planning managers need to update existing civic infrastructure for the twenty-first century, modernize governance frameworks, and improve standard practice to match public expectations. The media and politicians often report that the public is apathetic, overwhelmingly divided on important issues, and distrustful of government. Much of this thinking, however, has been the result of insufficient public participation and does not reflect much of the work of progressive planners and communities. Research has shown that Americans have a strong desire to participate in community planning efforts, regardless of their political affiliation or their locations in urban, suburban, or rural areas. (APA 2012).

Age demographics are having profound impacts on the public's view of participation. Today, millennials represent one-third of the American workforce, and unlike preceding generations, they place increased importance on collaboration over hierarchy. As a tech-savvy generation, they also value innovation. A study by the Pew Research Center found that 44 percent of respondents ages 18 to 24 engage in online civic communications (e.g., signing a petition, contacting a government official) and 67 percent are politically active on social networking sites (the highest percentage of all age groups) (Smith 2013). As millennials come to dominate the workforce, twenty-first-century governance will increasingly be fashioned to respond to their values by utilizing more effective collaboration, innovation, and engagement. While most jurisdictions today practice some form of public participation, wide disparities in the quality of existing practice continue to characterize much of the field. Much of contemporary public participation still falls short of its potential, as it is limited to the use of outdated tools and the misuse of modern technologies. Qualitative differences in public participation often exist not only between jurisdictions, but between local government agencies in a municipality and across systems within a single jurisdiction, leading to unmet public expectations and civic frustration.

Contemporary Experience with Public Participation

Almost five decades ago, Arnstein (1969) presented a typology of public participation, what she termed a *ladder of citizen participation*, spanning a range from nonparticipation to tokenism to citizen power. These various levels of participation highlighted the extent to which perceived participation is actually not legitimate. Many public participation tools and strategies have evolved, and the International Association for Public Participation's (2007) spectrum of public participation is an updated categorization of public participation goals and activities. It identifies five key types of public participation, with varying degrees of direct participation by the public:

- **Inform:** To provide the public with balanced and objective information to understand problems, alternatives, and solutions.
- **Consult:** To obtain public feedback about analyses, alternatives, and decisions.

- **Involve:** To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.
- **Collaborate:** To partner with the public in each aspect of decisions, including the development of alternatives and the identification of preferred solutions.
- **Empower:** To place final decision making in the hands of the public.

In 2014 the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) conducted a survey of its membership using the spectrum. It asked participants to rate the importance of varying levels of public participation to determine the types and goals of public participation efforts (Figure 6.1) (Vogel, Moulder, and Huggins 2014). Most respondents (88 percent), said that "inform," the least direct public participation approach, is "important" or "highly important" while only 19 percent indicated that "empower" is "important" or "highly important."

The responses to questions about the quality of civic discourse also provide important insight. Almost 40 percent of respondents said the civic discourse in their community was "very polarized and strident, often rude" or "somewhat polarized and strident, occasionally rude." These responses indicate that conventional public participation methods are proving increasingly insufficient given public needs and citizens' level of sophistication.

Public Engagement Tools and Strategies

Planning managers have taken conventional public participation techniques, used for decades, and transformed them into new sophisticated, effective, and inclusive approaches. This evolution is especially clear in strategic and comprehensive planning processes, where these new approaches have effectively transformed citizen engagement and embraced a pluralistic democracy. Public hearings and meetings, however, are still standard operating procedure in the permit review and approval process. This is one of the reasons for the popularity of form-based code and other pre-permitting efforts that encourage public engagement and consensus building before contentious dichotomous win/lose battles.

Virtually all requests for proposals for a consultant to undertake a comprehensive plan or zoning revision now require the consultant to include a plan for community engagement. Planning managers can leverage the growing expertise in the private sector on new ways to not only increase the number of people who participate in the process but to also make it fun and engaging for them to do so. In 2016, a robust community engagement plan would include the development of a project website, interactive tools, 3D visualizations and renderings, a marketing campaign, and surveys. Consultants also routinely use Facebook and Twitter accounts to attract the public's attention and to create an iterative process where residents have many opportunities to provide feedback over the course of a project. Visual preference surveys are a common visualization tool found on project websites. For example, interactive tools can be used to invite residents to submit photos of community features they would like to see more of and things they want less of or want improved. Consultants can also create apps for smartphones that make the feedback loop easy and open ended for public participants.

A website created exclusively for a comprehensive plan update or major code revision can serve as a repository for all project documents. Drafts of plan elements and code sections can

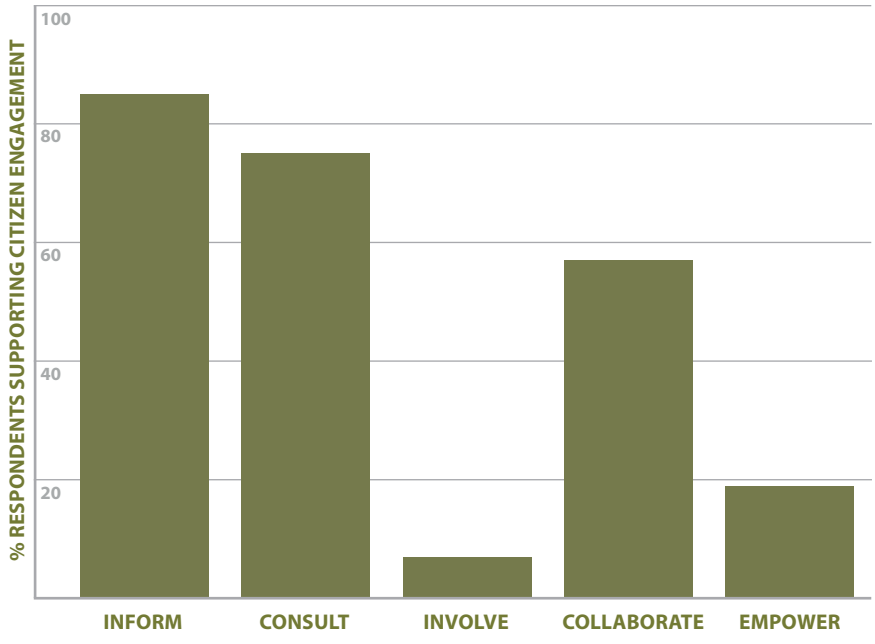

Figure 6.1. Importance of different levels of citizen engagement (Adapted from Vogel, Moulder, and Huggins 2014)

be posted after initial rounds of more formal review and comment. Conceptual maps of the project area can be posted with background explaining the issues that are under discussion. Also, a project calendar, updates, and links to media stories can also be posted on the site. Planning managers can work with the consultants to decide who is responsible for maintaining the content on the sites and at which points or regular intervals it will be updated. Such sites are typically hosted on the consultant's server but certain documents and other items would need to be prepared and made ready for posting by department staff.

Public Opinion Polls and Surveys

Surveys and polls are a more indirect form of public participation, and they should be used judiciously. Their overuse can create artificial divisions—especially polls with discrete choices that oversimplify and misinterpret complex issues, engage citizens without providing context and information, and ask citizens to choose sides. Fortunately, more and more communities are using public opinion polls effectively, with three models to guide these efforts:

1. **Surveys on narrow issues where understanding community interest is important:** For example, surveys can be very effective in gauging interest in or the effectiveness of government programs, such as potential interest in a car-share program or a municipal identification card program.
2. **Surveys to test-market specific approaches:** Surveys, for example, can be used to test ideas developed in community workshops or to target populations that may not have been well represented in such workshops.
3. **The use of alternative polling models for meaningful participation:** One example of an alternative polling method is Deliberative Polling®—an approach that involves bringing together a group of people who have been polled, exposing them to a wealth of information and engaging them in dialogue, and then repolling them to see how their opinions have changed. The change in opinion is representative of this additional information and, as James Fishkin of the Center for Deliberative Democracy at Stanford University points out, the effects can be substantial: "If people think their voice actually matters, they'll do the hard work, really study their briefing books, ask the experts smart questions, and then make tough decisions. When they hear the experts disagreeing, they're forced to think for themselves. About 70 percent change their minds in the process" (Klein 2010).

The Internet has made public surveys and polling an infinitely quicker and less expensive way for planning managers to gauge public opinion on either a broad range of issues or a single topic. Rancho Cordova, California, for example, used an online public engagement tool to pose a question: "Should the City of Rancho Cordova change its regulations to allow residents to raise chickens at their homes?" The rate of participation in the survey (560 individual visits to the site, 66 comments, and 147 persons subscribed to receive follow-up information) was much higher and involved more civic participation than the city's typical public hearings. City personnel moderated the online comment forum to ensure that the discourse was polite. Each person was only allowed to comment one time to prevent a single person or group from dominating the discussion. After the comment period closed, staff analyzed the feedback and used these perspectives, opinions, and ideas to draft an ordinance (Vogel, Moulder, and Huggins 2014).

Public Hearings and Meetings

Public hearings are required by state zoning and subdivision statutes to gain citizen input in the decision-making process, especially during the permitting process. Rigid rules, whether archaic protocols or efforts to protect permit applicants' rights, often do not permit dialogue or interaction. As a result, participants are often allowed only a short time at the microphone, speaking sequentially and with little or no discussion or follow-up. Citizens may be dismayed by the inefficiency and lack of effectiveness of public hearing formats, and so they opt out. Therefore, participants at public hearings all too often represent narrow interests on opposing sides of an issue that reflect extreme community viewpoints. This leads to discussion that is defined by conflicting views rather than common ground. The format encourages grandstanding, conflict, and "winner-loser" outcomes. The ICMA survey confirms these concerns: only 12 percent of respondents indicated that there is a "high level of participation in their local government's engagement efforts," and among communities with fewer than 10,000 residents, a majority reported "low participation" levels (Vogel, Moulder, and Huggins 2014).

There are vast differences among communities in the quality of public meetings and community processes. Many jurisdictions approach these meetings with a goal to gain public buy-in rather than to engage residents in authentic participation. This is often the case in the permitting process, where there is less room for flexibility and creativity. As a result, meetings of-

Figure 6.2. "Before I Die . . ." wall installation by Candy Chang in Washington, DC (Photo by Elvert Barnes, CC BY-SA 2.0, http://tinyurl.com/h7jsfxn)

ten incorporate lengthy presentations from city staff followed by periods of unstructured open comment to collect public input on ideas that are already formulated. Other common shortcomings include poorly articulated meeting goals, generic meeting design that is not sufficiently interactive or efficient and does not succeed in producing effective outcomes, a lack of quality public information to make informed choices, and the need for trained facilitators to structure and lead the dialogue.

Most planning managers prefer to use public workshops whenever possible for comprehensive and strategic planning. In contrast to standard public hearings, most planners find that public workshops—without the public hearing constraints—are the most rewarding, interactive, and community-building parts of the strategic and comprehensive planning process. There are dozens of extremely effective workshop models. The commonality is a commitment to engage all stakeholders in the community and build meaningful participation while not allowing any one stakeholder group to dominate the process and subvert broad community consensus-driven goals.

Chalkboards (Candy Chang Walls)

A Candy Chang wall (also referred to as an "idea chalkboard") is an example of a very low-tech participatory public art tool that can be used to collect thoughts and substantive input from the public on a range of matters. It was first employed by Candy Chang, a New Orleans-based artist with an urban planning background, who covered the exterior of an abandoned house in New Orleans with chalkboard paint and posted the words "Before I Die. . . " with spaces for people to fill in responses (Figure 6.2). There are now thousands of examples of such walls around the world. Chang's website offers guidance and suggestions to individuals and communities that want to use the method. In the summer of 2014, Glencoe, Illinois, a northern Chicago suburb of 9,000 people, posted chalkboards with the prompt "Downtown Glencoe would be better if. . ." as a way to get public input on the village's new downtown plan, Downtown Tuneup. Planning staff photographed the chalkboards each day to document the input. Eventually the ideas written on the chalkboard were tabulated and the findings were posted on the village web page dedicated to the planning project.

Media and Community Engagement

A good media strategy is one of the most cost-effective methods a planning department can use to get the word out to the community and to set the stage for informed community engagement. Which media outlets to use depends on the local context and setting. Some communities, fewer and fewer each year, have their own local newspaper—increasingly available online only—while some have almost no newspaper coverage. Most local governments have a presence on Facebook and Twitter and many rely heavily on those outlets to reach the media and the public.

The media environment is changing so rapidly that any suggestions about the future are very speculative. Traditional print media remains strong in some communities and is all but completely gone in other communities. Virtually every media source has a strong online presence, and in many settings, especially in print media, the online presence has either already eclipsed the traditional media or is expected to do so soon. This effects not only the obvious, how information is distributed, but also more fundamentally what information is collected. Stories that might have played well in a daily newspaper, for example,

are not always those the same as those that play well in a continuous web cycle, leading to both opportunities and challenges.

The tried and true method of cultivating good honest relationships with the media holds firm in any media platform, whether it is print or broadcast journalism or social media. Planning managers can meet the media's needs by being truthful and accessible, always returning media phone calls as quickly as possible. When speaking to the media, it is important for planners to tell the story that the department wants heard in crisp, effective sound bites.

Some larger communities have media policies that limit the ability of departments to directly respond to reporters; instead, media calls are directed to an official spokesperson. Ideally, planning managers and their designees should be authorized to engage the media directly. That said, managers must ensure that staff is trained to stay on message and communicate effectively. In "Secrets from a Planner-Journalist" (p. 82), Mark Hinshaw discusses ways planners can most effectively use media.

Beyond Public Hearings

While mandates for traditional public hearings create a baseline for public process, communities can go beyond that process to engage the community. In *Making Public Participation Legal,* the Working Group on Legal Frameworks for Public Participation (2013) presents various tools that planning managers can use to encourage public participation, including a model municipal public participation ordinance, a model state public participation act, and a host of policy options and resources for local government. The guidebook notes that because citizens today are more educated and informed and have access to much more information than in the past, old meeting formats can be frustrating to citizens. They are more skilled and educated than their predecessors, have access to endless quantities of information through their smartphones, and are used to having a wide array of choices open to them. Older meeting formats make meetings seem like a waste of time as there is little for them to learn and little they can contribute. The consequences, however, go far beyond miserable meetings. As the relationship deteriorates between the people and their public institutions, the legitimacy and financial sustainability of governments continue to decline. The common result is that residents opt out of participating.

Even well-performing jurisdictions are not immune to these issues. Members of the public may think that they are not being heard, while decision makers think that the public is being heard. But hearing the loudest voices is not the same as agreeing with those voices, especially at the expense of consideration of all community members. The City of Oakland, California, for example, has received over two dozen awards in recent years for achievements in sustainability, walkability, and livability, and it was one of the first jurisdictions to adopt the model municipal public participation ordinance. However, Oakland's process surrounding the Latham Square pilot plaza in 2013 illustrates the challenge. In an account from *Streetsblog*, the city held a second community meeting after public pressure and then shut down the meeting early despite a standing-room-only crowd (McCamy 2013). The article concluded that "for city officials, the proposal to widen sidewalks but permanently reinstate two-way car traffic at Latham Square appears to be a done deal," citing a previous "invitation-only meeting" the city held with key stakeholders. The city's planning director reportedly announced at the meeting that they were "not going to satisfy everybody," a self-fulfilling prophecy given the manner in which the public participation process was designed and implemented. While

Figure 6.3. Seattle PARK(ing) Day, 2014 (Photo by Trevor Dykstra, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0 ,http://tinyurl.com/gu879at)

Figure 6.4. Day of the Dead on Granary Row, Salt Lake City, 2003 (Photo by Rudy van Bree, All Rights Reserved, http://tinyurl.com/zuzmmeh)

Oakland's Latham Square may be emblematic of some key public participation challenges facing jurisdictions today, it is only one of many examples. In fact, some of the most high profile cases in recent years, even when employing modern techniques, have been more notable for the lessons learned than their successes.

Scaling Up Citizen Engagement through Small Projects

In this era of declining public resources, it has become fashionable for planning managers and their communities to think of incremental strategies for citywide change. Grand catalyst projects are no longer the norm. In this environment, effective public participation can become an important tool for local government. During the 1990s, Seattle became a hotbed of civic activity through its Department of Neighborhoods. The Neighborhood Matching Fund has contributed $49 million to more than 4,000 projects throughout the city and produced $72 million of community match funds (Seattle 2016). The city also participates in an annual PARK(ing) Day, an event on the third Friday in September in cities around the world (Rebar Group 2012) (Figure 6.3, p. 75).

This community-led approach to small-scale, catalytic projects has expanded over the past 15 years and emerged in a process called tactical urbanism. Many projects are citizen-led and represent tangible, visual signs of civic pride while transforming the physical urban character. Examples vary across the country, including streetscape transformations, community gardens, and popup retail. In Salt Lake City, a nonprofit organization recently converted shipping containers into micro-retail spaces and placed them on a little-traveled street to create Granary Row (Figure 6.4). The project included food trucks, a performance stage, and a community garden, and transformed a vacant area. Local governments are now responding to this movement with supportive policy and programs. For example, the Los Angeles Department of Transportation offers kits and resources to assist business and civic organizations in creating "parklets" to enhance sidewalks and streets. In Dallas, the Go Oak Cliff community group sponsored a Better Block project using volunteers and cheap and donated materials. The City of Dallas then moved to make the improvements permanent (Lydon et al. 2011).

According to the Corporation for National and Community Service (2016), approximately 64.5 million Americans gave 7.9 billion hours of volunteer time worth $175 billion in 2012, providing an enormous opportunity for localities to leverage citizen engagement into tangible projects. This opportunity is not limited to the United States. In Christchurch, New Zealand, residents banded together following a devastating 6.3 magnitude earthquake in 2011, and they are transforming the urban landscape with projects such as the Pallet Pavilion, the Cardboard Cathedral, the world's first "post-disaster mini-golf course" in parking lots across the city, along with dozens of other community-driven projects. The ability to engage the public and collaborate on volunteer-driven, small-scale work has proven to be a significant tool to build momentum for longer-term investment.

Public Participation in Capital Investment: Crowdfunding

Community-driven participation in the funding of capital projects has emerged as an important local government tool to implement projects. While fundraising for community projects has a long history, the use of technology to organize potential projects and raise signifi-

cant capital through many small contributions, or crowdfunding, has emerged as a significant investment tool. In 2012 the *Crowdfunding Industry Report* found that close to $1.5 billion in capital had been leveraged through crowdfunding initiatives the preceding year (Masssolution 2013). This movement has been referred to as the "democratization of finance," with huge opportunities for local governments and civic partners as well as more equity for participants because "rather than rely on traditional sources to put up the funds, this approach allows individuals in the community to have a stake in the project" (Binkovitz 2014).

Kickstarter popularized crowdfunding in the US, but now shares the headlines—especially around charity fundraising—with such groups as GoFundMe, Indiegogo, Teespring, YouCaring, Causes, Crowdrise, GiveForward, Patreon, and FirstGiving. Communities, community-based foundations, and community development corporations have all joined with their own offerings. A report from the World Bank (2013), estimated 344 crowdfund investing platforms in the United States. Such approaches represent a new opportunity for local governments to conceive of projects and use public participation to help fund implementation. One example is Memphis Civic Solar, a project to install solar energy in 30 municipal buildings throughout Memphis, Tennessee, using no taxpayer monies. Other such projects are proliferating across the country.

Importance of the Civic Sector

The increasing use of public participation in local government over the past two decades has mirrored a renewed energy for public-interest work in the planning and design professions. Within the design profession, a new generation of public-minded professionals has emerged. According to a 2013 survey, 81 percent of architects reported that they were currently engaged in "public interest design" and 77 percent had worked pro bono or for a reduced fee (Feldman et al. 2013). Likewise, partners such as Code for America and hackathon.io have helped create local hackathons and encourage technology development to address civic needs and foster community participation.

The spirit of public service characterizes some of the most prominent public interest design organizations as well. Founded in 1991, Design Corps (2016) is focused on leveraging public service to create "positive change in traditionally underserved communities by using design, advocacy, and education to help them shape their environment and address their social, economic, and environmental challenges." Architecture for Humanity was founded in 1999 to bring together professionals who wanted to donate their time and expertise to communities that would not be able to afford their services. At its peak, the organization had 58 chapters in 16 countries and more than 13,100 professional volunteers. Although Architecture for Humanity has since gone bankrupt, unable to raise enough funds, the model and the energy it represented remain important.

Founded in 2002, Public Architecture connects resources and public interest needs. It has promoted a national campaign called 1+ (formerly 1%) to enlist every design professional for public service and pro bono projects. As of 2012, there were more than 1,600 organizations and design firms participating in the program. According to the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA), more than 70 percent of schools of architecture now have in-house design-build programs, most of which include a specific mission to provide services to communities in need. ACSA identifies 139 university-affiliated community design centers and programs across the country and another 48 that are either independent community design centers or programs within design firms. These organizations represent important mediating institutions that can convene the public and partner with local governments.

One prominent example of the critical role the civic sector has played is the contribution to the Detroit Works Long Term Planning Project, now called Detroit Future City. The Detroit Collaborative Design Center has played a crucial role in the success of the city's plan by reaching out to 163,000 residents in over 30,000 stakeholder meetings (University of Detroit Mercy 2013). This level of community engagement built into the planning process distinguishes this project from many other urban redevelopment plans.

A key characteristic of this project, in contrast to typical urban redevelopment plans of the past, is the unprecedented level of meaningful community engagement that was built into the process. The plan will certainly prove to be transformational in the evolution of Detroit around future land use, community prosperity, and the quality of life for the city's residents.

Dan Pitera, the center's executive director, captured the values that undergird successful public participation: "People are our greatest asset. And it's the people who will define the vision of the project. We didn't come in with an idea of what the end result would look like. The vision is being created by the Detroit community, through the process of engagement" (University of Detroit Mercy 2014).

ENGAGEMENT BRINGS CHANGE

Harris M. Steinberg, FAIA, Executive Director, Lindy Institute for Urban Innovation, Drexel University

Civic engagement is experiencing a bit of a renaissance these days. In politics, the Internet is credited with engaging a new generation of civic actors gathering in places near and far, such as Tahrir Square and Zuccotti Park. This new form of social and political organizing is upending established civic, communication, and societal hierarchies. The old guard is rapidly giving way to diffuse and horizontal systems of leadership and political organizing.

In urban planning, civic engagement is also finding a strengthened footing within the body politic. As information about communities is disseminated at lightning speed on blogs, listservs, Facebook, Twitter, and websites, citizens find themselves with a surfeit of knowledge about potential changes to their communities. At the same time, public officials are using technology to engage a host of new constituencies—from apps that encourage the reporting of potholes and abandoned vehicles to systems that enable citizens to participate in planning debates electronically and from afar.

Technology has clearly expanded the options for communication and participation. And yet how best might planners, public officials, and citizens harness the increased energy, transparency, immediacy, and engagement that the digital age has afforded them around planning and urban design? To what end and why should the public be engaged in terms of the shaping of the built environment? And how might planners begin to think about creating pathways for substantive dialogue about changes to neighborhoods, communities, towns, and cities?

A New Form of Engagement in Philadelphia

In Philadelphia, PennPraxis, the applied research arm of the School of Design at the University of Pennsylvania, has developed a successful series of partnerships between the public sector, the media, the philanthropic community, the academic community, and citizens. These partnerships have created a model for civic engagement that works for Philadelphia and might provide valuable lessons for other cities and municipalities. As a northeastern city, Philadelphia suffered from decades of decline, disinvestment, depopulation, and deindustrialization. The story is one that is all too sadly told about many of America's former industrial powerhouse cities. However, over the past decade, Philadelphia has seen its first uptick in population, gaining slightly more than 8,000 people in the 2010 census—the first rise in population since 1960. Much of that increase can be attributed to empty nesters returning to the city and millennials who have decided to call Philadelphia home.

Until recently, Philadelphia suffered the curse of prevailing wisdom that "any development was good development." Successive mayoral administrations in the 1990s and early 2000s struggled to right the city's finances, and in so doing they stripped any pretense of rational or thoughtful urban planning. Megaproject after megaproject was proposed for the Delaware River Waterfront, Center City, the port, and cultural districts. The market, politics, and development costs spared the city the worst of these grand schemes (for example, an enclosed entertainment complex with a 400-car parking garage right at the river's edge), but Philadelphia has the dubious honor of having one of the only waterfront Walmart stores.

In the heady days before the collapse of the international financial markets in 2008, Philadelphia was struggling to keep up with the onslaught of proposed development projects, particularly ones along the Delaware riverfront. Funny money before the crash combined with an archaic zoning code and a 10-year tax abatement on new construction—not to mention casino gambling that the Pennsylvania legislature approved in 2004—made for a particularly volatile civic stew. Without a mechanism to respond to development proposals in a comprehensive and transparent fashion (the city's last comprehensive plan was completed in 1960), civic groups became the frontline warriors fighting to control the pace and scale of development in Philadelphia's historic rowhouse neighborhoods. The tradition of council-centric prerogative gave district councilmembers undue influence over development in their council districts. This resulted in the city council making a host of questionable spot zoning changes to encumber building parcels with wildly unrealistic use and height allowances—all in the name of progress.

Against this chaotic civic backdrop, PennPraxis in 2006 was asked to lead a public planning process for the Central Delaware River, a 1,176-acre, six-and-a-half-mile stretch of riverfront along Philadelphia's eastern shore that straddles both historic working-class and up-and-coming gentrified neighborhoods. The development of the riverfront had languished for decades under what was at times a corrupt public development corporation

(two members of the corporation had gone to prison for extortion). Citizens were angry, frustrated, and suspicious of the government's ability to plan the waterfront without being held hostage to special interests. To make matters worse, Interstate 95, a six-lane highway built during the 1970s and 1980s, had decisively cut the neighboring communities off from the river.

PennPraxis deployed a public engagement and planning process that was more political campaign than planning, in order to address these issues and reach a plan for the waterfront that was citizen driven rather than through a development-by-political-relationship process. PennPraxis recognized the need to win the hearts and minds of Philadelphians and create a civic force field to deter special interests from shutting down the process. With the financial and institutional support of the William Penn Foundation, it partnered with the Penn Project for Civic Engagement to design and implement a 13-month public planning process that ultimately engaged more than 4,000 Philadelphians in a very vocal and at times contentious planning process. Two of the various drivers that fueled public participation at previously unheard-of levels were the prospect of the state granting two casino licenses and concern from the longshoreman community about the future of that livelihood.

In addition to traditional outreach and media partnerships, PennPraxis created its own alternative media site called PlanPhilly (http://planphilly.com). This online resource was an exercise in alternative journalism that began with the Philadelphia waterfront planning process and to this day continues to provide the city with unbiased professional journalism coverage on design and planning issues. The public engagement process itself included the following components:

- **Outreach and trust building:** Penn Praxis conducted extensive community outreach along with civic associations and key stakeholders. In addition, it held three public walks of the waterfront, bringing Philadelphians together to experience the existing conditions of the largely privatized riverfront. PennPraxis' stipulations for taking on the project were that the process be citizen driven, open, and transparent; the press be involved and help ensure transparency at every step; and the recommendations for an implemention strategy include accountability to the public.
- **Advisory group:** The mayor appointed a 43-member advisory group that included representatives of city and state government, local nonprofits, the business community, and civic associations. The monthly meetings of the advisory group were open to the public and were videotaped and posted on the PlanPhilly site.
- **Values sessions:** PennPraxis and the Penn Project for Civic Engagement designed and hosted four public meetings to elicit from Philadelphians what they valued about their waterfront. The goal of these forums was to lay the groundwork for eventually developing a set of values-based planning principles. More than 800 people attended these meetings.
- **Best practices sessions:** PennPraxis hosted a series of daylong public presentations and facilitated discussions about best planning practices in waterfront planning, design, transportation, and management.
- **Principles sessions:** PennPraxis and the Penn Project for Civic Engagement designed and hosted forums that asked citizens to blend values with best practices to inform a set of citizen-derived, values-based planning principles. These principles reflect the community's desire for public waterfront access.
- **Public charrette:** PennPraxis, along with Wallace Roberts & Todd and the Philadelphia City Planning Commission, hosted a three-day public charrette five months into the planning process. Until this time, the planning team had not produced any drawings, renderings, or other visuals. Critical to the success of the project was a design response that would reflect the public's values and input. The charrette was led by local, national, and international design and planning talent, and the results of the charrette were presented in real time. The public and media response was extremely positive.
- **Refine of the design:** The design team refined the design concepts that grew out of the planning process. These refinements included extending Philadelphia's walkable street grid over the interstate and across the project area and creating more than 300 acres of parks and trails along the waterfront to ensure a maximum 10-minute walk to park space for the 60,000 people living along the river. The design also links the planning area to Philadelphia's robust transit system and ensures that no single land use dominates riverfront development.
- **Return to the public:** The design team then consulted again with the public to test the ideas developed in the charrette and subsequently refine them. This step was critical to ensure that the public maintained faith in the citizen-driven nature of the process. The team integrated feedback from these forums into the design proposals.

- **Public presentation:** Although various interest groups (anti-casino activists, longshoremen, members of the development community) had threatened to upend the process at different stages, the public presentation drew more than 1,500 people to the Pennsylvania Convention Center and appealed to a wide cross-section of the community. The vision is now guiding riverfront development.

The final report, *A Civic Vision for the Central Delaware* (PennPraxis, WRT, and William Penn Foundation 2007), is the basis for development along the Central Delaware River. The process upended four decades of failed attempts to develop the waterfront. It led to the dissolution of the disgraced Penn's Landing Corporation and the creation of a transparent waterfront agency, the Delaware River Waterfront Corporation (DRWC), in 2009. The DRWC commissioned a master plan based on recommendations in final report, and the Philadelphia City Council adopted the plan in 2012. The DRWC is actively creating new public spaces, such as the Race Street Pier, and investigating the possibility of building a seven-acre park to cap the interstate. The Central Delaware Advocacy Group, a coalition that grew out of the planning process, remains engaged as a public watchdog to ensure that the public's vision is implemented.

Lessons Learned

The planning process for the Central Delaware River is an example of civic engagement that altered planning practice. It was successful for a number of reasons. The public and stakeholders perceived PennPraxis as a neutral party and honest broker without any skin in the game whose aim was to achieve excellence in urban design along the waterfront. The ability of the Penn Project for Civic Engagement to manage highly complex civic conversations enabled PennPraxis to focus on creating planning principles that reflected the desires and values of the community. The integrity of the William Penn Foundation ensured that the project was not only well resourced but that opinion leaders and public officials took it seriously. The media's continuous scrutiny of the project, together with the PlanPhilly online resources, ensured that special interests could not scuttle the process, and it safeguarded transparency of the planning process. Lastly, the robust participation of the public gave the project the civic legitimacy and momentum that has carried the process forward into implementation.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OF RURAL LANDOWNERS

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Public sector planners are largely committed to community engagement. In urban areas, owners of large developable parcels are well served in the planning process. In some rural, exurban, and suburban communities, however—especially those undergoing cultural change in traditional natural-resource-based economies—rural farmers and other resource-focused landowners sometimes feel disempowered and excluded from the planning process. In addition, these landowners may own significant portions of an area's undeveloped land but make up a small proportion of the community's population. Planning managers must understand the importance of structuring their departments' functions to engage these landowners, many of whom may not be prepared for the ways in which growth and development are dramatically changing their communities.

Even when rural landowners attend workshops or hearings, their voices might be lost in the larger conversations. A clear understanding of their distinct perspectives can contribute to the success of community planning efforts. While private landowners are citizens and taxpayers, they also form a special subset of the public because their land provides many community benefits. These benefits include ecosystem services, recreation opportunities, enhanced rural ambiance, an improved quality of life, and a buffer from development. In many rural areas, the primary interest of some owners of large tracts of land may be in ensuring that they retain the right to sell their land for future development. This can put them at odds with existing or emerging planning and land conservation goals that aim to direct development into or adjacent to already built-up areas, such as villages and small towns.

A key step in the planning process is to identify staff and community partners who have good relationships with these landowners and who can help with direct outreach. Snowmobile, rod, and gun clubs; nature groups; farmers' bureaus; and extension services are examples of organizations that often have especially strong connections to private landowners. Planners should attend meetings of these groups and engage participants. Presentations should be very brief, as the goal is not to educate but rather to understand their perspectives.

Another effective strategy is to have staff, especially senior staff, meet with key landowners individually to discuss the implications of planning and zoning issues on their land. With a map of the property on the table, staff can explain the implications of setbacks, frontage, minimum lot sizes, or cluster developments and how these potential changes will affect property taxes and property values.

One-on-one meetings might seem laborious or inefficient. However, this approach has a number of advantages. Planners are able to learn a great deal about landowner concerns in this conversational setting, particularly when some landowners might not speak up about their personal concerns in a public forum. And while staff might not be able to meet with all landowners individually, the conversations they do have will more likely than not reflect the views of other landowners in town. Again, listening has tremendous value and can help inform planning efforts that will appeal to this constituency. An ancillary benefit of this one-on-one approach is that it demonstrates genuine interest of planners, and the positive public perception of these efforts is powerful.

SECRETS FROM A PLANNER-JOURNALIST

Mark Hinshaw, FAICP, FAIA, Principal, Walker Macy

Over most of my professional career, I have pursued two professions: urban planning and journalism. I have worked in cities and towns of all sizes throughout the country and written for professional journals, big city newspapers, alternative weeklies, and now online magazines. As a planner, I have lost count of the number of planning colleagues who have bemoaned getting bad press about their projects. So many seem to be devastated that the media did not fairly recognize their good works. Well, I am here to offer some tips. While I cannot guarantee that these suggestions will prevent negative publicity, I can assure you they will reduce it.

First, do not wait for a project or proposal to become controversial. By the time it hits the headlines, it is far too late. All you will be doing is damage control, and you will find the situation uncomfortable at best and ugly at worst. Find out (if you do not know) who covers the city beat and go talk with that person—far ahead of any specific release or news.

Second, never use a press release to make the agency's first announcement of a proposed project. Press releases are generally ignored as simply fluff on the part of the issuing agency, or they give the public the impression that the project is a done deal before any public process has taken place.

Third, get to know the beat writers personally. Tell them in advance that something might be controversial. After all, you are alerting them to a potential story. Give them the names of people in the community they can talk with—and not just people on your side of the issue. Be forthcoming and helpful. Lay out the issues and the larger principles that are at stake.

Fourth, do not expect writers to get every detail of a story right. Inevitably, they will not get everything down to the last bit of obscure detail. Also, writers are given a maximum word count (or column inches), and so they have to summarize and reduce the subject matter.

Fifth, know that the writer does not write the headline. That is someone else's job, someone who wants to pull in the reader within seconds. Therefore, do not expect something like "Planning Department Proposes Reasonable Land Use Changes in Single Family Neighborhood." Instead, it is going to be "Neighbors Say No." You must grow thick skin.

Finally, learn to be a source. You can insist upon not being identified; one ethic of writers is to keep sources secret. But you should sometimes be willing to go on the record—and ideally with a pithy sound bite. A writer is never going to write, "We evaluated all the options and presented a careful analysis and a recommendation that reflects best professional practices." But the writer will use what you say if it is something like, "We're confident this is the best choice."

Working with the press is a great opportunity for planners. Far more people want to read the newspaper's coverage of a hearing or a project than the planner's staff report on the same topic. A worthwhile exercise is thinking about how a staff report can be reshaped so that it is complete but is also as clear, concise, and interesting as a newspaper story.

CHAPTER 7

METRICS AND DATA

Planning managers use data to inform management and planning decisions. Whether they are trying to justify their existence, gauge their efficiency, or figure out how to make things better, they measure. The amount of raw data, big-data analysis tools, geographic information systems (GIS), low-cost computing, relational and linked databases, and computer-literate planners create measurement opportunities unimaginable just a few years ago. This chapter focuses on metrics and data. Information technology trends will be discussed in the next chapter.

Planning offices use metrics and data in several ways:

- **Evaluate planning office management:** Planning managers want to understand the productivity of planners, the speed of the permit process, the satisfaction level of customers, the costs of doing plans in house versus through hired consultants, and many other aspects of office management.
- **Support the planning process:** Planners need to understand all aspects of communities and their needs as well as the effectiveness of potential policies to meet those needs and community visions.
- **Assess how well planners are doing:** Planners need to know if communities are meeting expected objectives and metrics, how they compare to their peers, and whether they are developing in measurable ways.
- **Conduct trend analyses:** Planners should consider how they mine data to do evaluations, from the micro level (e.g., do all permits include conditions that should be included in land-use regulations?) to the macro level (e.g., how are residents' desires and needs evolving?). In an era of big data, the opportunity to look at huge data sets—such as every permit ever issued or every transit trip taken—can help planners identify trends and potential solutions.

Metrics and assessments are most useful when they are performance or outcome oriented. The number of ordinances or plan changes proposed is not a measure of success (although too-frequent plan changes might be a metric for failure to plan well). Implementing the plans and visions of communities and achieving community goals should be the focus. Performance measurements, however, should not just be about the big picture. Planning managers still need to understand the productivity and customer service abilities of their staffs and create metrics to measure and assess those areas.

Data of all kind are designed to help inform rational decisions. Planners like to believe that information provides unlimited answers, whether the criteria are indicators, benchmarks, assessments, performance measures, or other metrics. In a rational planning model, once but no longer the holy grail of urban and regional planning, decisions and alternative assessments are driven by data. Under that model, "correct" management decisions are made based on assessments of data. This approach has obvious problems, most notably that the public is typically excluded from the decision-making process. Regardless, planners like the idea that facts make a difference in decision making.

With New York City's CompStat program, started in 1994 to drive police assignments based on crime data, and then CityStat in Baltimore, local government use of data became a must-have for many communities. Formalized data-driven performance models have quickly spread to communities all over the United States to identify how to best use resources and improve services. Behn (2008, 2) calls these performance measures "PerformanceStat" and describes the components that characterize these approaches, including "regular, frequent, periodic, integrated meetings . . . [and the use of] data to analyze the unit's past performance, to follow up on previous decisions and commitments to improve performance, to establish its next performance objectives, and to examine the effectiveness of its overall performance strat-

egies." He stresses that the process must be purpose driven with a rigorous methodology and clear responsibilities in order to be effective.

Planners have been using data information for decades—sometimes well and other times not so well—from the earlier days of the rational planning model to the development of GIS as a standard planning tool to the current use of data for more specialized evaluations, such health impact assessments. Planners know that data are critical to making good decisions. However, they are faced with the challenge of recognizing the importance of data even when the implications of the data are rejected or ignored by some elected officials and members of the public. An adaptation plan for climate change in a coastal community, for example, requires a level of buy-in about what data projections indicate will happen at various levels of sea-level rise. Planners still need to consider how data can help them tell compelling stories and point to important insights; what types of data tell the best stories; and the most effective presentations of data to planning staff, elected officials and decision makers, and citizens.

Planning managers, committed to informing the public, typically want to both provide both raw data, in the interest of full disclosure, and present understandable stories. While planners, policy analysts, and even some mayors crave raw data, most people want stories that resonate with them. One example is the difference between raw census data about aging, travel behavior, and mobility needs and the way a magazine tells that same story (see "Aging-Supportive Transportation Planning," p. 89). In "How Data Can Actually Inform and Influence People" (p. 90), Michele Wick examines ways in which planners can frame issues, particularly less tangible ones such as global warming, using data.

Regardless of how measurement systems are crafted, they exist to inform policy makers and the public, tell stories, and resonate. Planning managers need measurements and metrics for any local government planning office operation, small or large. Table 7.1 provides a summary of various measurement and performance tools for planning managers.

Table 7.2 (p. 88) shows types of data that planning managers can use both for planning agency management and for forecasting and policy analysis. The management data are necessary to measure staff productivity against established goals and the overall mission of the department and jurisdiction. Municipalities store and manage these types of data in several ways. Many use off-the-shelf customizable permit tracking software; this is widely available and has been used by local governments for several decades. Some municipalities, especially larger ones, have developed their own databases and permit-tracking systems from scratch, and over the years many have moved these systems to more robust and streamlined permit-tracking software. Municipalities subscribe to software services that provide technical support, maintenance, and routine software upgrades. They also subscribe to any of a number of code and ordinance hosting sites, such as Municode, American Legal Publishing, and Codebook. Staff and customers who want to access specific sections of the local code are directed from the municipal website to an external host. These providers also offer codification services—the detailed editing and cross referencing that is necessary to ensure that the final published version of an ordinance is as consistent and error-free as possible. Interim drafts of ordinances typically remain on the municipality's home page until they have been adopted by the local governing body.

Each year, planning managers should summarize the data they generated in an annual report. It should also be made easily available to local elected officials and commissioners who have an oversight role in the department's activities and mission. Ample guidance is available from peer communities and from organizations like APA and the International City/County Management Association for planning managers creating new departmental performance measures.

The second data group shown in Table 7.2 (p. 88) is used for forecasting and policy analysis. All of the data sources listed are typically stored in GIS systems as distinct data layers. The most common sources of planning data are the US census and the American Community Survey (an important ongoing survey also administered by the US Census Bureau). Critical data on transportation and travel is collected by federal agencies as well as regional metropolitan planning organizations, which usually also provide technical assistance to local governments for using the data to establish baselines of existing conditions and to set policies to accommodate future transportation needs of regions.

Metrics and data are critical for the management of planning offices and for creating positive futures. However, planning managers needing to carefully manage scarce resources must ensure that data are not being collected simply for the sake of collecting. This requires identification of needs, costs, and opportunities and development of the most cost-effective data collection systems available. An effective strategy includes assessments of existing data—often collected by others—and data analysis, and identification of the ways these can serve planning needs and instances when new data collection systems or analyses are needed. Chapter 8 examines the technology and related issues that planning managers need to understand to maximize the usefulness of these data.

TABLE 7.1. MEASUREMENT AND PERFORMANCE TOOLS

Tool	Attribute	Examples
Metrics	The term *metrics* can be used to cover any measurement system, or more narrow measurements, to determine performance.	For the broader use of metrics, all of the entries in the table below are examples. An example of the narrower measurement of performance-specific measurements of an objective is the percent of a new development with walkability to a transit stop or village or urban center.
Indicators	Indicators are limited and distilled data that tell a story without requiring review of all relevant data. They can be provided in any form that tells a story, such as through numbers or photographs. Indicators can be developed locally or using other outside indicators. They are most effective when they address core issues with local buy-in.	Indicators range from highly technical measures (e.g., per-capita vehicle miles traveled) to policy- and headline-focused ones for easy public consumption (e.g., wait time at a given intersection or photographs of the visible night sky to highlight light pollution). Another example is the Federal Emergency Management Agency's informal Waffle House Index, which determines the severity of a storm based on whether the Waffle House is doing normal business.
Media, think tank, and consultant ratings	These ratings are ubiquitous, with media and think-tank lists on the best and worst of almost any topic or category.	Examples of these ratings include best places to retire, best places to live, top regions for outdoor activities, and most sustainable cities.
Benchmarks	A benchmark is a target measurement used to gauge how a community is doing in relation to a predetermined intermediate or final target. They can be developed locally or be based on achievements of other successful communities. They are most effective when they reflect local consensus.	Examples of benchmarks include reaching the per-capita vehicle miles traveled level or recycling rate of another successful or peer community.
Rating systems	Rating systems are typically developed to identify a desired norm, judge how communities are meeting that norm, and compare communities. They are usually developed by outside organizations. They can be extremely effective but only if they are viewed locally as credible, appropriate for local issues, and representative of local values.	Examples of rating systems include the STAR Community Rating System (for local government sustainability efforts), LEED certification program, the former Massachusetts Commonwealth Capital Scorecard, the New Jersey Future Smart Growth Scorecard, and the Vermont Smart Growth Scorecard.
Environmental impact assessments, strategic environmental assessments, and health impact assessments	These comprehensive assessments focus on a project or policy and include a systematic project analysis, identification of effects, and consideration of alternatives and mitigation strategies.	Program or policy assessments are conducted under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), state, or local mini-NEPA assessments, as well as policy-level assessments.
Municipal bond ratings	These assessments are independent ratings of investment risk for local government bonds. They consider direct financial risks and indirect risks, such as environmental, social, and political risks.	Examples of these ratings include Standard & Poor's (S&P), Moody's, Fitch Ratings, and investment advisors such as Breckinridge Capital Advisors.
Ad hoc assessments	These assessments involve outside "expert" panels reviewing local issues.	These assessments are conducted by local government panels and through organizations such as the American Planning Association, the American Institute of Architects, the Urban Land Institute, and the New England Municipal Sustainability Network.
Municipal accreditation and management reviews	Accreditation programs and management reviews do not currently exists for municipal programs, but management reviews are common.	Accreditation programs exist for municipal arborists, law enforcement, fire departments, public works departments, and health departments. Some communities do self-studies and/or obtain consultant or peer reviews.

Source: Adapted from Feiden and Hamin 2011

TABLE 7.2. PLANNING AGENCY DATA SOURCES

Data Group	Use	Source
Planning Agency Management		
Staff productivity	• Department mission fulfillment • Department performance measures • Peer-to-peer department standards • Permit processing times • Personnel management	• Internal or external audits • Management using enterprise software or customizable vendor application
Customer service	• Department mission fulfillment • Permit processing times • Staff training • Community outreach	• Community satisfaction surveys • Focus groups • Informal feedback • Online public comment portal
Forecasting and Policy Analysis		
Demographics (e.g., employment, socioeconomic)	• Population growth forecasts • Employment growth forecasts	• US census • American Community Survey
Land-use inventory	• Build-out analysis • Identification of infill development opportunities	• Aerial photos • GIS • Field surveys
Housing inventory (e.g., needs assessments)	• Identification of growth trends • Establishment and measurement of housing goals • Tracking of affordability • Focus on specific populations (e.g., seniors and low-income families)	• US census • American Community Survey
Transportation and transit (e.g.,travel surveys, traffic data, modeling)	• Identification of travel trends • Air quality planning • Development of growth scenarios	• National Household Travel Survey • American Community Survey • Metropolitan planning organizations
Levels of service (e.g., for infrastructure needs, school capacity, libraries, parks)	• Establishment of performance standards • Capital improvement programming	Examples: • Performance Seattle (https://performance.seattle.gov) • City of Austin, Texas (www.austintexas.gov/department/auditor)
Public health	• Health impact assessment • Planning policy implementation • Identification of health disparities	• Centers for Disease Control • State department of public health • County health department

Source: Compiled by Marya Morris

AGING-SUPPORTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

The topic of mobility and aging populations is one that transportation and public health researchers have largely addressed using quantitative data in order to identify planning and policy issues and long-term trends. The following excerpt from *Planning* magazine provides a different perspective, one that reflects the day-to-day experiences and challenges of elderly travelers in ways not captured through conventional data-collection means.

We're outliving our ability to drive, according to a 2002 study in the American Journal of Public Health. The difference between life expectancy and driving expectancy is seven years for men and 10 years for women. But finding a way to fill that gap could make the difference between healthy aging and isolation. . . .

"Walking is probably the most dangerous thing I do in a day," Denver resident Mary Halpin says. At age 77, Halpin travels over sidewalks that are in bad shape, either uneven or full of cracks. And several don't have curb ramps, which she needs for her rolling walker to transition from sidewalk to street at crosswalks.

Making pedestrian routes walkable is vital if they are to be a mobility option for an aging population. Solutions can include increasing the time allowed to cross the street, installing better signage, and developing senior pedestrian zones. Walk audits can also bring residents and public officials together to evaluate a neighborhood's concerns and identify needed improvements. . . .

Getting seniors where they want to go only solves part of the problem. Many seniors feel a loss of independence when they're no longer able to drive, so it's important to offer transportation choices.

"I voluntarily gave up driving about 10 years ago, when I started having problems with my balance," Halpin says. "I made the decision for myself and for others. It wasn't fair for me to keep driving. But I absolutely hate asking people for a ride. I've always been strong and independent and so if I have to ask, it's as a last resort."

Halpin has several options and can usually plan her own transportation. She frequently travels on a fixed route bus equipped with a lift or ramp and drivers who are trained to help passengers on and off. She also uses Access-a-Ride, a door-to-door service for those who need more assistance.

She has other alternatives on hand, too. Denver's SeniorRide program gets groups to specific events—movies, concerts, art center exhibits, and tours of the city—and it is popular. "We serve a lot of people and when things go wrong, we hear about it," says Brian Matthews, special services manager for the Regional Transportation District. "But with the SeniorRide program, we almost never get a complaint. We're making it possible for people to get out of their homes and do [the things that] any of us would want to do."

(Excerpt from "Senior-Friendly Transportation" by Debbie Sullivan Reslock, *Planning*, June 2015)

HOW DATA CAN ACTUALLY INFORM AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE

Michele Wick, Psychology Research Associate, Smith College

My friend lost two cars to Hurricane Sandy's high tides. He lives on Long Island next to a canal. You can board a skiff from the dock that sits below the edge of grass marking the end of his small backyard and in five minutes motor out to the bay filled with briny Atlantic Ocean water. When Sandy threatened to swamp his lawn, he stayed put despite the plethora of media reports featuring satellite pictures of giant swirling winds, damage reports from Sandy in the mid-Atlantic, and maps highlighting evacuation zones in bright red. My friend lived in the red zone, but he stayed even with all the evidence indicating that he should leave.

Mental Models

My friend's logic would not surprise researchers who study ways to communicate so that people will listen. In his more than 50 years of experience with hurricanes, he remained dry and safe in all of his waterfront homes. His problem was not a lack of data, as an information-deficit model would predict. He had heard it all but filtered it through his preexisting mental model that represented the danger of hurricanes, a model shaped by previous experiences, current biases, and, very likely, incomplete facts. Mental models frame how people perceive and respond to risk. People look for content that confirms their biases while avoiding, dismissing, or forgetting information that does not fit.

My friend's response to Hurricane Sandy illustrates how hard it is to change minds and behavior, even in the face of a highly visible specific threat or a clear opportunity. What about a distant danger, like climate change, that is nearly invisible? How can planners present facts about the mitigation of and adaptation to global warming in ways that will convince people to support planning strategies? Part of the answer lies in knowing constituents and appreciating their differences.

Global Warming's Six Americas

The report series *Global Warming's Six Americas* (Roser-Renouf et al. 2014) highlights the diversity of community opinion beyond the polarized categories of climate change worriers and deniers. Since 2008, this poll of a nationally representative sample of Americans asking about beliefs, behaviors, and policy preferences related to global warming has found six distinct groups: (1) Alarmed, (2) Concerned, (3) Cautious, (4) Disengaged, (5) Doubtful, and (6) Dismissive (Figure 7.1).

Moving across these "interpretive communities" from left to right, the level of concern about global warming decreases—from respondents extremely worried about a climate apocalypse to the belief that climate change science is a hoax. Each of these "Americas" represents a pre-existing set of beliefs and values; individuals add their own experiences, personalities, and emotional styles to the mix. Any communication of data, no matter the media, filters through this matrix and makes one-size-fits-all messages problematic. Framing the data by emphasizing specific aspects of a problem based on the target group is a more effective strategy. Research on best ways to frame issues has revealed several thematic approaches.

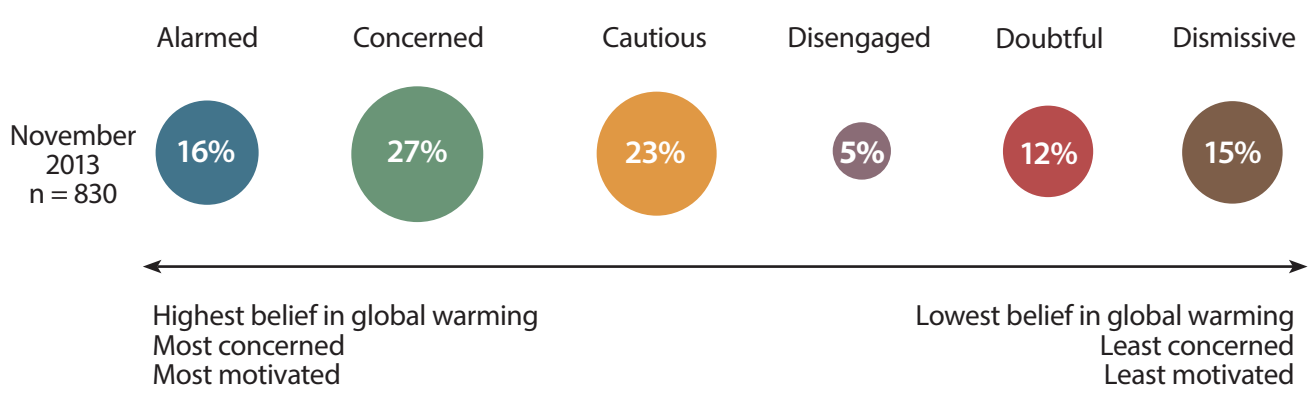


Figure 7.1. Global warming community opinion (Leiserowitz et al. 2014)

Use a Public-Health Framework

Introducing climate change as a health issue appeals to people across a wide cross-section of audiences. Myers et al. (2012) presented a statement to participants about redesigning cities to promote active transportation and transit, which in turn would reduce emissions, car use, and traffic injuries and fatalities and also improve the health and well-being of people. Their study finds that 57 percent of respondents deemed the statement hopeful, including those who identified as cautious, disengaged, and dismissive. Hope is important as it correlates with a readiness to back climate change policies and to practice pro-environmental activities. However, not all health messages are met with equal approval. Pairing clean and more efficient energy sources with healthy air appealed to many respondents. Suggesting that people eat less meat, important for both good health and mitigating climate change, aroused the ire of respondents in all groups (Maibach et al. 2010)

Keep It Local

Far-flung, more abstract information does not trigger people's neurological alarm bells. People tend to focus on what is right in front of them. This puts a crimp in long-term planning strategies. Placing data in local contexts, in both space and time, helps audiences relate climate change issues to their own experiences. Hart and Nisbet (2011) also find that for politically conservative audiences a local focus reduces the boomerang effect, the tendency to react to a message with a view opposite to the intended one. For example, while the Alarmed group might direct their anger toward policy change, the Dismissive group might feel provoked and direct it against the same policy (Myers et al. 2012).

Make It Personal

Anecdotal stories may be the bane of data-driven planners, but this form of communication is more likely to persuade readers than statistics, especially when the audiences do not fully grasp the meaning of the numbers. To boost the persuasive power of statistics, planners should place them in narrative contexts illustrated with vivid images of real-world examples and personal experiences.

Appeal to Loss Aversion

Behavioral economist Daniel Kahneman (2011, 282) has found that "when directly compared or weighted against each other, losses loom larger than gains." Such reasoning may be an evolutionary asset—treating threats as urgent increases survival—but planners know the downside. Designing for the future is a tough sell. To counteract this all-too-human cognitive style, planners want to highlight near-term costs, both monetary and social, and add prevention frames focused on avoiding damage.

Encourage a Move from Monologue to Dialog

Planners can join with other important opinion leaders and stakeholders at community forums across towns and cities (Groffman et al. 2010). Such meetings should be structured to promote dialog about the facts planners want their constituents to know. The benefit is that constituents will walk away with a better understanding of technical information and tend to feel like their concerns are being heard. Frames are "interpretive storylines" (Nisbet and Schuefele 2009) meant to encourage conversation about all manner of complex planning issues, from climate change to emergency evacuation plans. Rooted in facts rather than spin, the judicious use of frames can help people overcome their biases and move to action.

CHAPTER 8

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Perhaps no area of planning, or any other profession for that matter, is changing as quickly as information technology. Discussion of technology and the opportunities it creates is integrated into all of the previous chapters—because technology is everywhere. This chapter explores some of the information services and technology that local government planning agencies are using or that planners should be thinking about.

The information technology available to planners evolves so fast that any discussion about it will be out of date very quickly. For example, 3D printers and 3D printing services, a concept just a few years ago and an unaffordable luxury until recently, have started falling in price so that they are becoming accessible to many planning departments—perhaps even before planners have started to think about how to use them. As such, this chapter will focus less on specific hardware and software solutions and more on information technology concepts and considerations.

Perhaps the most important rule of technology is that simply automating a function is not enough. Planners need to rethink how and why automating functions can take full advantage of new opportunities. As Peter Drucker (2006) put it, "There is surely nothing quite so useless as doing with great efficiency what should not be done at all," suggesting that the best automation package that automates an "old" way of doing something is a waste of resources. Managers talk about ideas leading to innovation and innovation leading to implementation. Technology helps planners implement their ideas and innovations, and it can support a feedback loop to ensure that they are modifying what they do and using technology to think differently.

STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR ONLINE SERVICES

Citizens expect and deserve that many, if not most, government services will be available 24/7. This concept came about before the Internet, with older technology such as informative voicemail or automated fax responses, but the pace of change continues to accelerate. Most planners have embraced these changes for a number of years. In many municipal planning offices, for example, the number of visitors to the offices is a small fraction of what it was a few years ago because citizens can use the web and electronic services instead of coming in. This decrease alone can result in savings that more than cover any investment in these emerging technologies. The pace of change, however, continues to be daunting for most public agencies—not so much because of resistance to the changes themselves but because of the need for constant reinventing and investment. The new challenges for municipal governments are lowering the cost of such offerings so that they are available to smaller communities, lowering internal resistance to making all public information readily available, and addressing the digital divide of data access.

The most successful online programs are the result of strategic planning processes that create clearly defined goals and objectives when it comes to developing and implementing online services (Newcombe 2014). In fact, an established process for identifying and developing new online services is common for cities with exemplary websites. *Governing* magazine reported in 2014 on an audit of the online services that the City of San Diego provides to its citizens. The audit indicated that the list of online services that the city reported it was offering was incomplete and hard to find. In fact, the city offered more than 50 services online, but most, more than half, were not accessible from a dropdown list link on the homepage called "Access Online Services." For users to locate some of the online services, they would "have to know which department offers the service, navigate to the department's webpage, and then locate the link to the service" (Barrett and Greene 2014). The audit also found that in addition to the existing online services the city already provided, it had

other unrealized opportunities for online services, including several categories of permits. The auditors said that one reason the website failed to offer the services that it is capable of offering is that "the city does not have a strategic direction or policy initiative for online service delivery" (Barrett and Greene 2014).

ONLINE PERMIT TRACKING

A core element of any planning department's online presence is an online permitting processing system. Any citywide audit of online services would most certainly recommend that a city move to an online permitting system or, where one is in place, that it improves the system through customization of existing functions and extensions to new modules. Whatever the circumstances, planning managers should routinely evaluate the department's existing online processes and be sure to involve all other departments, officials, and boards or commissions that are involved or provide oversight.

Many communities, especially those with resources and those committed to public information, have made permit tracking available online. This trend, however, is certainly not universal, particularly in smaller communities. Large cities and counties can often afford to buy full permit-tracking software suites with all the bells and whistles. Obviously, as the cost of such products drops and they become more robust, more communities will go this route. The options for full-service suites, including collaborative review and online applications, can still be daunting for many small communities.

Many online permit-tracking systems are powerful and user friendly, allowing online applications and queries. Most local governments have already moved their plans, regulatory codes, and permit applications online, making documents available and searchable and providing hyperlinks between related sections. Other government information has been slower to migrate, impeding the development of truly accessible 24/7 local government. In many cases, governments are simply moving the same paper process online and do not involve a rethinking of the permit process itself. For example, a true one-stop online permit process is still rare, where a developer of a large project can apply for every one of the varied permits required from multiple departments in a single online application. A person wanting to build a house may know what she wants to do but may not know which permits are required. A modern permit system should allow users to describe the process as responses to a series of questions, with the application system determining which permits are required. If government services have not fully moved online, citizens increasingly want to know why their community is lagging.

CONTENT MANAGEMENT

Content management systems are also rapidly migrating online and offsite (to the cloud), although typically at a slower pace than permit systems. Content management systems manage electronic documents, records, and other data through database, indexing, and search-and-retrieval systems. Planners use such systems internally for all data and can also use them to make all public files easily available to the public. Some communities, even those with internal content management systems, do not put them all online, preferring to simply post the most desired files. One argument against making all public files available is that important documents get lost in the mass of digital paperwork. As a result, this does not encourage transparency. Communities, however, can achieve both goals: make important files stand out and make all other public files available through a content management system.

Applications and data available online can be hosted locally, on local government servers, or increasingly offsite in the cloud (Newcombe 2014). When well planned, this migration to the cloud allows more efficient use of local information technology services, avoids the need for local services to host and manage all equipment, dramatically improves data recovery and data integrity, and provides a wide range of more specialized applications. A recent survey of 527 US cities finds that 99 percent have an online presence, but there is a wide range in the types of services available, the mobile-device capabilities of websites, and what content is posted (Riggs, Chavan, and Steins 2015).

DATABASES

Databases are indispensable to local government planning. Planners rely on data from their own local governments and regional planning agencies as well as from other regional partners, state and federal governments, nonprofit organizations, and privately maintained databases. Almost all local governments, regardless of size, have massive databases that are of used for planning activities.. However, the following challenges remain:

- Creating clear and accessible metadata standards (data about which datasets are available and what information they provide)
- Addressing transitions from legacy software to more powerful, accessible, and open-source formats
- Lowering entry costs so that smaller and lower-income communities have full access
- Connecting databases and transitioning to relational databases
- Taking advantage of the era of big data and understanding and mining disparate databases for information

Most planners can access cadastral (property), demographic, and other key databases. In many communities, however, planners are less able to link diverse databases to help with planning efforts. Often much more limited is the ability to gather and process data that might tell a useful story—for example, identifying consumption of city services (e.g., water use by address to target water-saving regulatory or incentive measures or voter participation rates to focus community outreach campaigns) or developing cross tabulations of variables in different databases (e.g., employment data by obesity rates).

Private databases can provide better access to data than ever. The Warren Group (for southern New England) and CoStar (for the United States) are examples of extensive commercial real estate databases that can inform zoning changes, downtown revitalization efforts, and comprehensive planning. However, the fixed cost of some of these databases often puts them out of the reach of many communities.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Geographic information systems (GIS) are used for collection, analysis, and modeling of spatial and geographic data. GIS comprises a number of components: hardware, such as workstations and data collections devices; software, including GIS application packages, extensions and add-ons, software components, and web GIS software; data, primarily vector and raster data but also attribute and metadata; and GIS professionals, including analysts and developers (Dempsey 2012).

GIS is common in modern planning offices as the cost to implement GIS has decreased, the analytical skills of planners have developed, and a wealth of data has become readily available. And the applications in urban planning are numerous. In "Geographic Information Systems in Urban Planning" (p. 97), Frank Stafford discusses the role of GIS in addressing planning issues and informing planners and policy makers. Shannon McElvaney and David Rouse explore geodesign, a powerful merging of geospatial data and design practices, in "Geodesign and Planning" (p. 98).

SMARTPHONE AND WEARABLE TECHNOLOGY APPLICATIONS

The world of smartphones and wearable technologies evolves daily, creating new information for all aspects of the planning process. These applications also provide new ways to get the same information that used to be delivered in other ways. Noise complaints, for example, used to involve calling out code enforcement officials of some kind (e.g., building inspectors, community compliance officers, or police). Now, with a free smartphone application, staff and citizens can get basic decibel readings, determine if there are real violations, and contact local authorities or enforcement agencies.

Of course, new technologies and applications are constantly emerging, making any attempt to classify them quickly out of date. However, the following are a few broad, and largely overlapping, functions of applications with respect to planning:

- Mapping and GPS to track, collect data, and display information
- Monitoring of noise, lighting levels, bus headways, and other measures that allow local government and the public to assess regulatory and service-level standards
- Information services to allow citizens to access all government information
- Interactive services to allow citizens to apply for permits and report problems
- Participatory government to engage the community
- Smartphone payment systems to replace cash, credit cards, and fare cards for transit, parking, and other public service fees

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is indispensable to the modern planning office. The International City/County Management Association reports that 88 percent of all local governments in the United States have a social media presence (ICMA 2015). At the very least, planning departments should have some kind of social media outlet to post information, follow community

trends, and provide links to their websites. The applications will change, but creating a presence on social media makes planning accessible to the public and is critical for a planning office of any size. Larger offices may make an effort to be on all of the most popular social media platforms and to aggressively use social media for community engagement. However, every office needs to create some presence. The discussion of public engagement in Chapter 6 describes some of the ways in which local planning departments use social media.

PRINTING

The cost of printers, color printers, large format printers, and, increasingly, 3D printing continues to drop, although the cost of consumables for all printers remains high. Most departments have long since moved from outsourced printing to in-house printing except for large press runs, 3D printing, and, for small departments, large-format printing. Conversely many departments have stopped printing publications like fact sheets and guidebooks and simply make documents available on the web, decreasing printing budgets and allowing on-demand printing of the most up-to-date versions of documents.

Planners are now discovering increasingly affordable 3D printers and 3D print services. The ability to show models and alternatives to communities during any planning or permitting process—or better yet to engage in the public in hands-on design—makes this technology very exciting. Whether simply to create base models of existing conditions or to use it for what-if scenarios, 3D printing opens up a wealth of new planning opportunities. The City of Louisville, Kentucky, used 3D printers at a kickoff event for its new planning initiative, Vision Louisville. Staff created plastic models of buildings that community participants were then able to place on a map of the city (Jaffe 2012). In San Francisco, a real estate developer created a detailed 3D model of the city—one of the largest ever produced—at a much lower cost than producing a similar handcrafted model (Terdiman 2014).

TECHNOLOGY LOOKING FORWARD

For planning managers, new technologies highlight two seemingly contradictory approaches. The steady deliberative approach involves consistently evaluating new opportunities; this is the model of continuous improvement discussed earlier. At the same time, however, planners must also be equally willing to embrace technologies that provide opportunities for disruption and to think about how to do things differently and better rather than simply applying new technology to old processes.

The only thing that planners can reliably predict about information technologies is that they will continue to evolve rapidly, providing new opportunities and lowering the cost of what can be done today. At the same time, some emerging technologies and software products may result in new costs for equipment like 3D printers and for software licenses. Some of these changes will develop slowly while others will be immediately disruptive, requiring planners to adapt very quickly to changes in the way everyday operations are handled. Managers will need to keep abreast of trends and have well-trained staff who can report regularly on new applications and tools that the department needs to adopt and implement in order to stay current.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND URBAN PLANNING

Frank Stafford

The high installation and operational costs of geographic information systems (GIS) initially was a barrier to the adoption of geospatial technologies in the field of urban planning. A grid-based software system known as IMGRID was the strongest application in these early days. It focused mainly on mapping and less on analytical functions. As the price of hardware has decreased and the user friendliness of GIS software has increased, the use of GIS in urban planning has grown. Today, GIS has a multitude of public- and private-sector planning applications.

As the world continues to move toward urbanization, the need for effective urban planning is more essential than ever. However, urban planning has also become more complex, partly because of the infrastructure already in place—planners often do not have the liberty to modify existing infrastructure and instead have to work with it. In addition, what could be achieved 50 years ago through surveying is no longer sufficient. To achieve planning objectives today, highly specialized equipment, advanced software, and skilled labor are necessary.

GIS is a powerful analytical and modeling tool to address a wide array of urban planning problems and questions. It has long been used to monitor different geographic features for changes and trace patterns over time. It collects different kinds of spatial data in one system and allows users to examine different aspects of this information. Additionally, digital spatial information can be considered in more varied and objective ways. These factors in turn help planners understand conditions in an area and make informed planning and policy decisions.

GIS is useful, for example, for monitoring an area or conducting a feasibility study of a location for a specific purpose (e.g., assessing the suitability of a location for the construction of a bridge or dam or even smaller structures like schools and hospitals). However, in cases where variants of a design or alternate plans are being considered, GIS is supplemented with more specialized equipment to produce better results.

Another example of the application of GIS is in environmental planning, and it is increasingly being used to address problems of spatial modelling. Factors such as the chemical, biological, topographical, and physical properties of an area can be examined and considered using GIS. GIS analyses provide information such as the environmental suitability of a site and the level and nature of contamination. GIS can also be used to ascertain the feasibility of an area for waste disposal and treatment. Larger-scale areas, like wetlands, can be easily analyzed through GIS and remote sensing technologies.

Early urban planners had to rely on the ideas of sociologists, designers, architects, and economists to guide planning objectives. The advent of GIS changed this scenario and the possibilities of urban planning. Today, GIS is not just a tool to capture and analyze spatial data but is also a valuable asset for decision making, policy development, and planning.

(The original version of this article, "GIS in Urban Planning," was published on *GIS Lounge* and is available at www.gislounge.com/gis-urban-planning)

GEODESIGN AND PLANNING

Shannon McElvaney, Community Development Manager, Esri, and David C. Rouse, FAICP, Managing Director, Research and Advisory Services, American Planning Association

Our world is facing many challenges: from extreme weather, population growth, urbanization, and globalization, to increasing levels of social inequity, environmental damage, and resource depletion. Never before has there been such a need for planners to anticipate future trends, propose solutions, and help communities and decision makers make the most informed, wisest choices possible.

The following discussion explores a new design approach that is rooted in the history of planning practice and enabled by rapid advances in digital technology. This approach—called *geodesign*—provides a framework and set of tools for exploring issues from a transdisciplinary perspective and for resolving conflicts between differing points of view.

Introducing Geodesign

So exactly what is geodesign? In its simplest form, geodesign is a made up of two words—geography and design. *Geography* is about place and processes, the human and the natural, across both space and time. It seeks to organize, understand, and describe the world. Geographic information systems—the computerized systems by which we organize and analyze geographic information to support wise decision making—is well established in the planning world. *Design* is about intent or purpose. A creative act requiring imagination, design can produce something entirely new, or improve upon something that already exists. It often requires the creation of a sketch or model, followed by an iterative process of rapid redesign and evaluation of alternatives in order to attain the desired result.

Geodesign combines the best of both of these worlds, providing a new way of thinking that integrates science and values into the planning and design process. In many ways, geodesign is the evolution of GIS, made possible by advances in technology — from so-called "cloud" computing and open data, to distributed networks and sophisticated modeling (Dangermond 2010). A short definition well suited for planning was given at the American Planning Association's National Planning Conference in 2013: "Geodesign is an iterative design method that uses stakeholder input, geospatial modeling, impact simulations, and real-time feedback to facilitate holistic designs and smart decisions" (McElvaney and Walker 2013).

Geodesign in Practice

To better understand how geodesign works, imagine assembling a team of diverse stakeholders whose goal is to improve public health by implementing complete street guidelines. A transportation engineer, a biking advocate, a sustainability director, an arborist, a health official, and a city planner all contribute valuable knowledge, including metrics that can be used to measure performance and help guide decision making. A GIS analyst uses this information and the local zoning code to create a set of rules, a kind of city DNA that essentially encodes the team's values directly into how the street might look, feel, and function as they suggest changes. And it is not one size fits all. The rules can be modified or recombined with any number of other factors to allow the impacts of different design variations to be evaluated and discussed.

Esri's CityEngine, a three-dimensional (3D) modeling software application that specializes in the procedural

Figure 8.1. CityEngine's complete streets rule allows planners to optimize a street scene across multiple variables (Esri)

generation of 3D urban environments, is such a city DNA generating tool. The complete streets standards are just one variation built into a set of procedural rules that outline how the road, bike lane, sidewalk, bus stop, and adjoining buildings might perform, much like your DNA instructs a protein to build muscle (Figure 8.1).

Now imagine picking up a stylus and sketching the initial design for a four-lane boulevard through a new area of town. As you sketch, a "dashboard" (digital chart) provides "on-the-fly" assessment of the economic, social, and environmental impacts of the proposed design, such as:

- Construction and maintenance costs of sidewalks and bikeways
- Storm water runoff and nonpoint source pollution
- Predicted vehicle related deaths and injuries based on a 40-mph speed limit
- Estimates of air pollutants and their impact on health and climate
- Heat island estimates
- Benefits of trees for carbon sequestration and stormwater reduction

All these assessments have one thing in common. They are performed using software that references geographic space: precise locations on the earth that are influenced by the natural and built environment. This close coupling of design with geography is what sets geodesign apart from regular design.

In this example, you might conclude from the assessment of the original boulevard design that the number of injuries and the amount of air pollutants are too high. The dashboard further reveals that certain design modifications — shielding pedestrians from vehicles by sketching trees between the road and sidewalk and calming traffic by sketching in curb extensions—lowers the predicted impacts significantly, but not enough. An additional iteration is needed to meet the team's goals.

A decision is made to divide opposing lanes with a median to further decrease vehicle-related death and injury. Someone then recommends changing the median type from concrete to a bioswale planted with trees. These changes are sketched, and the dashboard reveals that the new design reduces runoff, nonpoint source pollution, and air pollutants while also reducing injuries. The trees provide added public health benefits, such as shading of pedestrians and reduction of the urban heat island effect. The geodesign team is satisfied with the latest design.

That is geodesign in practice. It allows the planner to receive near real-time feedback on the impacts of sketch designs or policy decisions from GIS analyses being performed in the background. The vision of the geodesign approach is to provide a fundamental alternative to the way planning and design are currently done, leading towards better solutions, better designs, and a better future.

(Excerpt from "Geodesign and the Future of Planning" by Shannon McElvaney and David C. Rouse, *PAS Memo*, March/April 2015)

CHAPTER 9

PLANNING LEADERSHIP

This report began by discussing vision and so perhaps it is only fitting that it ends with reflections on leadership, since they are so strongly related. This chapter first explores leadership and lessons for planning managers and continues with a discussion of the planning office of the future. Ultimately, the best planning directors, mayors, managers, and leaders of a community are those with compelling visions and who are willing to take risks to fulfill those visions. The most successful are those who can share their visions and their communities' visions in just a few sentences—the one-minute elevator pitch that inspires and brings along the community. Charisma in a planner is a great trait, but it definitely is not an essential one. Vision and an entrepreneurial risk-taking attitude, however, are irreplaceable.

It can be a long journey to get somewhere if leadership does not know where it wants to go or cannot share its vision with the community. As Kouzes and Posner (2009) point out, "Being forward-looking—envisioning exciting possibilities and enlisting others in a shared view of the future—is the attribute that distinguishes leaders from non-leaders . . . The only visions that take hold are shared visions—and you will create them only when you listen very, very closely to others, appreciate their hopes, and attend to their needs." Although their research is about leadership in general, it is especially applicable for both planning leadership and staff planners.

Converting the vision into a mission-driven operation is the next step for planning managers. A mission-driven operation may start with a mission statement, but it needs to be far more than just a statement. A mission needs to be the compass that drives the organization. Customer service, transparency, accountability, and all aspects of good government are part of planning, but an effective vision and mission create a dynamic planning organization that can serve the community. Planning functions without an articulated mission guiding those functions create a vacuum that attracts a de facto mission—one that usually does nothing that upsets the status quo and ultimately is not a mission that serves the community.

At the same time, the head of a department cannot be the only person articulating a vision and a mission and providing leadership. Many very good planners see themselves as technicians, and they may not always be great leaders. Great planning managers, however, need to also be leaders. Local government planning leadership comes in many different forms and uses various approaches. There is not one leadership style, and leaders should be comfortable with their individual leadership styles. Many leaders, for example, "lead from behind" by focusing on coaching and collaboration. Such a leadership style, however, does not excuse leaders from having to make difficult decisions and take risks. Planning leaders need to possess key characteristics that reflect great leaders: visionary and entrepreneurial perspectives, an openness to new ideas, the willingness to work collaboratively and to bring people together, a focus on problem solving (instead of a focus on why problems cannot be solved), and the ability to generate enthusiasm and respect.

LESSONS IN PLANNING LEADERSHIP

Every successful planning leader needs to be able to bring a vision alive, take risks, and bring an entrepreneurial perspective. The following are examples of effective leadership strategies and approaches by local government planning leaders.

Collaborate and lead, simultaneously. Shawn Warnke is the city manager of Tremonton, Utah. His portfolio includes work as a planner. Warnke has the ability to build community and collaboration and defer to his elected city council, while at the same time being willing to be the first person in a room to take a position on an issue. When community members decided that they wanted to build a community splash park, Warnke made sure that those efforts would be supported by

the city while ensuring city needs were addressed. When a hot-dog-and-ice-cream social related to a planning issue was a success, he immediately identified these events as a way to engage a community that had not traditionally been engaged.

Share the vision. Doug Melnik is the chief sustainability officer for the City of San Antonio, Texas. He previously directed twin planning and sustainability portfolios for the City of Albany, New York. Melnik helped deliver good city comprehensive and regional sustainability plans in Albany, but perhaps, more importantly, he brought a passion for sustainability that is palpable and helped step up the level of community engagement.

Inspire and empower. Nate West is the director of community and economic development in Port Angeles, Washington. West can have very strong views on everything, but he brings a management style that engages stakeholders. West's staff, the city council, the city manager, the boards, and dozens of community groups are excited about solving problems, feel welcome at the table, and step up and take action. Activities include revitalization of the waterfront and downtown and reinvention of the city by bringing the community together, all while searching for the resources to make things possible.

Just do it. Mercy Davison is the town planner for Normal, Illinois, with a portfolio including traditional planning functions and all things green. As a one-person planning office for a town of 53,000, Davison could easily get lost in the weeds, but instead she stays focused on both the community vision and implementation. When Normal's sustainability plan identified the need for community gardens as a first step, she expanded her duties to ensure this was completed, making the plan's first year a success. With strong town interest in bicycle planning, Davidson started attending the Wisconsin Bike Summit because Illinois did not have such an event. After three years, she organized the Illinois Bike Summit. She saw a gap and filled it, always working to get the community involved in these efforts.

Collaborate and find the balance. Laura Carstens manages the planning services department of the City of Dubuque, Iowa. She has raised the profile of planning there by overseeing the creation of the first comprehensive plan in 60 years, establishing a unified development code, and launching downtown and riverfront restoration projects. Carstens' leadership emphasizes communication, goal orientation, integrity, and collaboration. She has built teams with skills and ideas that complement her own, and she describes her management style as follows: "I try to be humble about my own skills and appreciative of the talents of others. I am passionate about my work in city planning, but I do not micromanage. I facilitate, guide, challenge, and motivate through an open, transparent process. My goal is a win-win-win for the community, the neighborhood, and the developer, whenever possible."

Build consensus. Kathy Hersh is retired from her job as director of community development for the City of Nashua, New Hampshire. Hersh's work was critical in the revitalization of downtown Nashua and its waterfront and in greenways and open-space preservation around the city. She demonstrated leadership through her clear and passionate vision and never shied away from proposing new ideas. Most importantly, Hersh was a consensus builder and worked to bring the community to the table.

LEADERSHIP AHEAD

Planners are motivated by a love for their communities and the desire to make them stronger. They strive to be leaders to serve their communities. But if they forget to manage and pay attention only to the details, all the visions and aspirations may not come to fruition. While management should focus on the big ideas, the building of institutions is also essential to achieving real goals that benefit communities. In "The Planning Office of the Future" (p. 103), David Rouse describes the work of the American Planning Association's Planning Office of the Future Task Force, which identified the trends and principles that are shaping and will continue to shape the work and strategies of planning managers.

THE PLANNING OFFICE OF THE FUTURE

David C. Rouse, FAICP, Managing Director, Research and Advisory Services, American Planning Association

In 2014 William R. Anderson, president of the American Planning Association (APA), appointed a series of task forces to make recommendations on critical issues for the planning profession. The Planning Office of the Future Task Force was charged with reporting on planning management models for large and small jurisdictions, how technology is changing management and service provision, and how to be more effective with fewer fiscal resources. Chaired by Joseph Horwedel, (also chair of APA's City Planning and Management Division), the task force included a mix of experienced practitioners and young planners just entering the profession. It gathered input through a well-attended session at the 2014 National Planning Conference in Atlanta, a survey of division members, an online discussion forum, and a focus group of young planners. The task force made its final recommendations in a report to the APA Board of Directors at the 2015 National Planning Conference in Seattle.

The task force began its work by identifying key trends that will impact the work of public planning agencies over the next 5 to 10 years. These include demographic shifts caused by socioeconomic trends and migration patterns; the effects of technology on how people interact with each other, their institutions, and their service providers; the inadequacy of twentieth-century planning practices to solve twenty-first-century problems; and the need to establish the value of planning in economic and fiscal terms. To address these trends, planning agencies will need to monitor demographic changes in communities and embrace these changes in internal organizations; promote equitable access to and transparency in the use of technology to engage and inform the public; reevaluate practices, tools, and approaches for dealing with environmental, economic, and social change; and assert the economic value of planning by setting targets, measuring outcomes, and understanding the dollars and cents of real estate development.

The task force then identified five principles to guide the planning office of the future in dealing with the above and related trends. These principles are:

1. **Thinking big:** Create, impart, and execute big ideas.
2. **Exercising leadership:** Lead the community in addressing emerging issues and trends.
3. **Changing culture:** Foster an innovative, collaborative, and entrepreneurial culture.
4. **Implementing big ideas:** Focus on implementation and outcomes.
5. **Advancing equity:** Be the voice for equity and fairness.

Thinking big means creating ideas that are visionary and broad and, at the same time, practical to implement. Transformative examples in which planners played a key role include Boston's Central Artery/Tunnel Project, Arlington County's transit-oriented development plans, and Oregon's urban growth boundaries.

Exercising leadership means getting close to decision makers and leading in different ways with different segments of the community, including elected officials, citizens, and other agencies. For example, planners in Pittsburgh exercised community leadership in facilitating the transition from an economy heavily reliant on steel manufacturing to more sustainable forms of development, such as brownfield redevelopment, transit-oriented development, and greenways that link neighborhoods to parks, trails, and riverfronts.

Changing culture means reimagining the internal dynamics of the planning office and how it interacts with the community—from nurturing entrepreneurship and inspiring purpose-driven work and lifelong learning to developing creative office structures that engage the community to utilizing mobile technology. For example, the Tallahassee-Leon County Planning Department encourages future-oriented "intrapreneurship" (employees taking on the mindset of entrepreneurs) within the department while creating a "culture of community" that welcomes staff input and ideas. (The Tallahassee-Leon County Planning Department received the APA National Planning Excellence Award for a Planning Agency in 2014.)

Implementing big ideas means establishing meaningful, measurable goals (including consideration of a "stretch" goal to take the organization beyond its comfort zone), setting priorities, and reporting regularly on progress. For example, the City of San Jose, California, set a very aggressive goal in its 2011 general plan to raise the jobs-to-employee resident ratio from 0.8 to 1.3, and it actively tracks progress in terms of job growth and new employment for current residents (San Jose 2011).

Advancing equity means making equity part of the values, goals, and day-to-day activities of the planning office; engaging the community in innovative and inclusive ways; and equi-

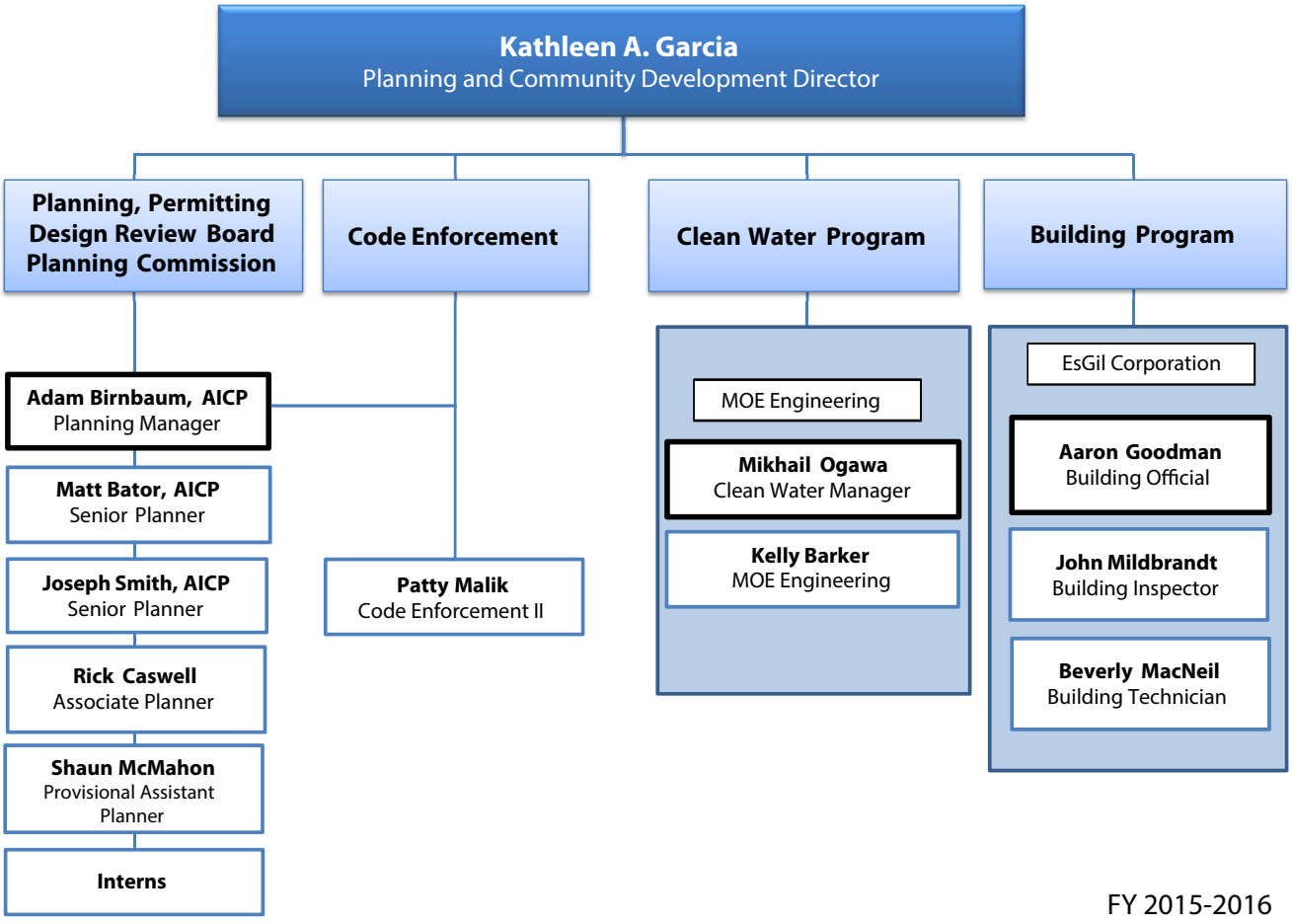
tably and fairly "doing what planners do best." Planning offices are uniquely positioned to address equity and fairness in an integrative manner through planning across scales (from comprehensive plans to neighborhood plans), functions (e.g., transportation and parks and open space plans), and implementation of projects. For example, Portland's 2012 comprehensive plan has a "Framework for Equity" section that establishes strategies to achieve equitable outcomes (Portland 2012).

The need for planners to be leaders is a common thread across these five principles. In a complex, rapidly changing world, planning agencies need to embrace and get out in front of change or risk becoming irrelevant. The positive takeaway is that the opportunity is great, as communities and other professions are increasingly looking for the creative problem-solving, integrated thinking, and collaborative approaches that the best planners provide. With the types of leaders profiled in this chapter, and many others who are accomplishing similar things, the planning office will have a bright future.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the exemplary leadership provided by task force chair Joseph Horwedel, who passed away in February 2016. Joe was a dedicated chair of APA's City Planning and Management Division and a devoted champion of APA and its divisions. He was former planning director of San Jose, California, and played a central role in the city's growth and transformation over three decades. Joe will be truly missed by his colleagues and friends.

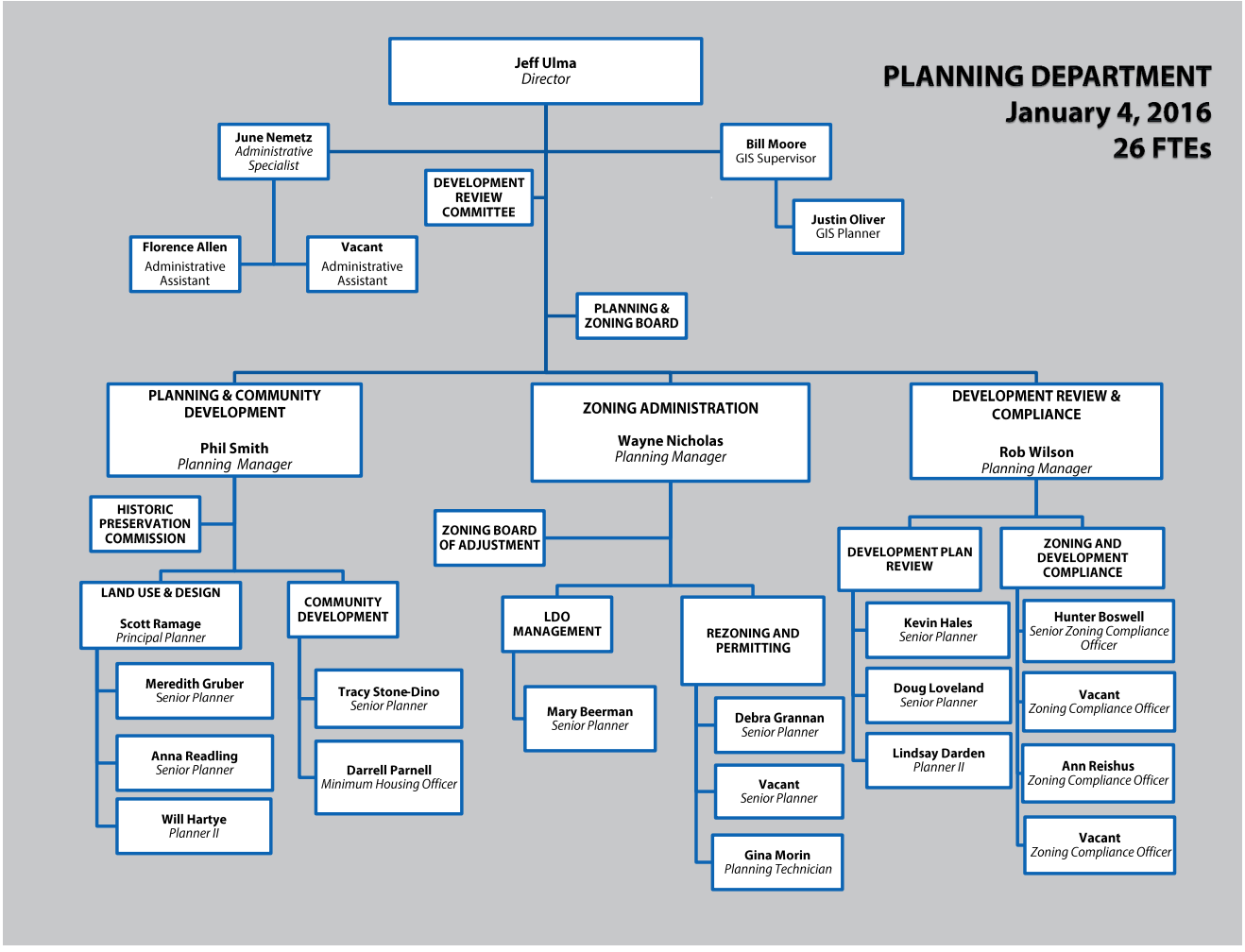
APPENDIX A: SAMPLE ORGANIZATIONAL CHARTS

Planning and Community Development Department, City of Del Mar, California

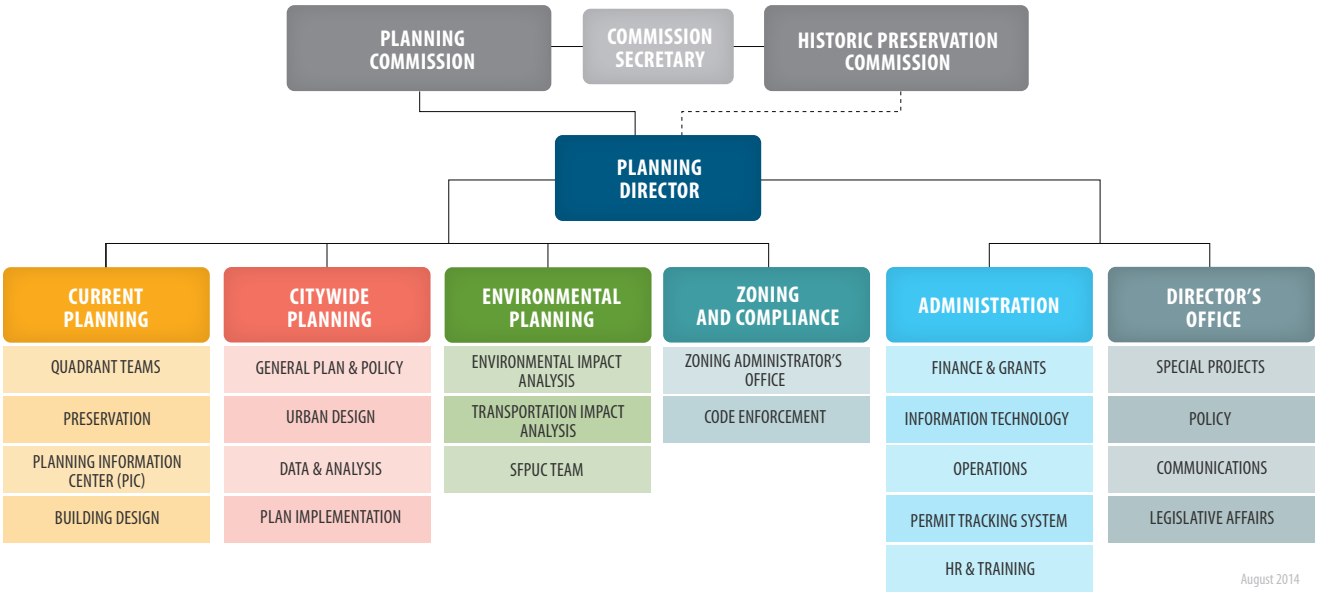


FY 2015-2016

Planning Department, Town of Cary, North Carolina



Planning Department, City and County of San Francisco



APPENDIX B: PLANNING DEPARTMENT VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS

City of Little Rock, Arkansas, Planning and Development (Mission Statement)
To enhance the quality of life for the citizens of Little Rock by providing a Department which encourages quality growth, development and redevelopment, and the stabilization of neighborhoods through a concentrated effort of planning, land use controls, historic preservation, permitting, and enforcement.

Available at www.littlerock.org/citydepartments/planninganddevelopment.

City of Los Angeles, California, Department of City Planning (Strategic Plan 2010)
Mission Statement: We honor our heritage and shape our future by partnering with all Angelenos to transform Los Angeles into a collection of distinctive, healthy, and sustainable neighborhoods — the tapestry of a great city.

Vision: We strive to create an efficient, effective, and sustainable organization that becomes the focal point for planning in Los Angeles; a trusted resource that provides innovative solutions, engages with the community, nurtures staff, and cultivates leadership.

Available at http://cityplanning.lacity.org/Statements/StrategicPlan_Web.pdf.

City of Redondo Beach, California, Planning Department (Mission Statement)
The Planning Department is committed to providing high-quality, proactive services and programs to enhance the quality of life of residents, businesses and visitors, and to promote a well-designed, physically integrated, livable and prosperous community consistent with citizens' long-range vision.

Available at www.redondo.org/depts/planning.

City of San Luis Obispo, California, Community Development (Mission Statement)
Our mission is to serve all persons in a positive and courteous manner and help ensure that San Luis Obispo continues to be a healthy, safe, attractive, and enjoyable place to live, work, or visit. We help plan the City's form and character, support community values, preserve the environment, promote the wise use of resources, and protect public health and safety.

Available at www.slocity.org/government/department-directory/community-development.

City of Santa Clara, California, Planning and Zoning Department (Mission Statement)
We believe the residents and developers of Santa Clara City are entitled to professional, efficient and accurate guidance from trained professionals in the areas of construction, renovation and demolition, and planning of any and all property within the city.

We are committed to provide such assistance to residents and our fellow professionals in a courteous and timely manner. Therefore, the mission statement of the Planning & Zoning Department shall be to provide knowledge and service regarding local, state and federal building codes and standards in a manner, which supports our commitment to the safety of our residents and to the integrity of the department.

We willingly participate in a program of continuing education and testing in order to keep our staff informed on the latest techniques and requirements within the building trades industry as well as customer service and computer literacy.

In our performance of the duties we will bear witness to the realization of our mission and thereby warrant the respect engendered to our department as professionals with the community we serve.

Available at www.sccity.org/planning-and-zoning-department-mission-statement.

Madison County, Illinois, Planning and Development Department (Mission Statement)
It is the mission of Madison County Community Development to provide a progressive, responsive and timely de-

velopment process that focuses on the public interest and results in a balanced, sustainable county.

Madison County Community Development receives and administers Block Grants and other funds to facilitate the development and preservation of affordable housing, to aid in providing public services and facilities for low and moderate income citizens, and assisting in the creation of employment and economic opportunities in Madison County.

Availableatwww.co.madison.il.us/departments/community_development/mission_statement.php.

Prince George's County, Maryland, Planning Department (Mission and Vision Statements)
Mission Statement: To help preserve, protect and manage the County's resources by providing the highest quality planning services and growth management guidance and by facilitating effective intergovernmental and citizen involvement through education and technical assistance.

Available at www.pgplanning.org/About-Planning.

City of Keene, New Hampshire (Planning Department Mission Statement)
To provide professional advice and technical expertise to elected officials, appointed boards and commissions, city departments and citizens to assist in understanding and addressing key community issues and priorities.

To continue to focus on a long term commitment to economic vitality, environmental integrity, and development design quality through the highest quality master plans, plan implementation and development review.

To encourage:

- planning principals that promote rational, economical and environmentally efficient use of land, to allow Keene to grow in a manner consistent with the goals of the community
- protection of the natural environment and the City of Keene's critical and unique natural resources
- the utmost quality development and uses of the land through the application of conscientious regulations
- identification and protection of land to maintain open space and the natural beauty of the City of Keene's hillsides, trails, woodlands and scenic vistas
- both economic growth and the enhancement of Keene's quality of life, safe and efficient modes of transportation, and identification of land suitable for all types of housing for the City of Keene's residents

To reflect the highest ethical and professional standards, and with enduring respect for our customers and the public trust.

Available at www.ci.keene.nh.us/departments/planning/mission-statement.

Broome County, New York, Department of Planning and Economic Development (Mission Statement)
The Broome County Department of Planning and Economic Development serves to promote the sound and orderly economic and physical growth of Broome County and its constituent municipalities. It provides technical planning guidance and assistance to the County Executive and County Legislature and implements projects and programs designed to improve the economy, environment, and physical infrastructure of the county. The department extends professional services to local municipalities and other public and private entities in the areas of land use planning and zoning, grantsmanship, economic development, cartography, community assistance, research, and infrastructure development.

The Department of Planning and Economic Development consists of the following divisions:

- Planning and Economic Development
- Geographic Information System/Mapping
- Environmental Management Council (EMC)
- Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study (BMTS)

Available at www.gobroomecounty.com/planning.

City of Asheville, North Carolina, Planning and Urban Design Department (Mission)
The City of Asheville Planning and Development Department is dedicated to providing sound, professional land use guidance as well as the highest level of technical and customer service to achieve safe and healthy residential neighborhoods and sustained economic growth. The department promotes the orderly, harmonious use of land and improved quality of life for Asheville's diverse community and future generations.

Available at www.ashevillenc.gov/Departments/Planning UrbanDesign.

City of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, Planning Department (Mission Statement)
The Planning Department works to improve the welfare of people and the community by creating more convenient, equitable, healthful, efficient, and attractive place for present and future generations.

That's a big order and it requires involvement and interest from the whole community. Planning enables civic leaders, businesses, and citizens to play a meaningful role in creating a great city that balances new development and essential services, environmental protection, and innovative change.

Available at www.okc.gov/planning/.

Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County, Tennessee, Planning Department (Mission Statement)

The Planning Department provides design guidance, reviews zoning and subdivision applications, and shapes public policy related to growth and development. We are committed to proactive, community-based planning founded on public participation, and to the building of livable, sustainable communities.

Available at www.nashville.gov/Portals/0/SiteContent/Planning/docs/about/MissionStatement.pdf.

County of Sauk, Wisconsin, Planning and Zoning Department (Mission Statement)

Protect the County: The Office of Planning and Zoning shall strive to protect and promote the health, safety and general welfare of all citizens and visitors of Sauk County and protect the environment and Sauk County's physical and natural resources through the professional administration and equitable enforcement of all Sauk County codes and ordinances.

Prepare for Tomorrow: The Office of Planning and Zoning shall strive to protect and enhance the County's quality of life through the application of professional planning practices including actively soliciting the citizen's views on the issues facing Sauk County.

Educate the Citizens: The Office of Planning and Zoning shall strive to educate, inform, and assist all citizens of Sauk County in all facets of the physical and natural environment including the works and functions of this Office so as to involve all persons in defining the Sauk County of tomorrow.

Ensure the Public Trust: The Office of Planning and Zoning shall strive to maintain, update and expand upon the staff's knowledge and expertise in state-of-the-art planning practices and code enforcement techniques and to constantly upgrade staff professionalism and competence in public service and stewardship of the public trust.

Available at www.co.sauk.wi.us/planningandzoningpage/planning-and-zoning-department-mission-statement.

City of Evanston, Wyoming, Planning and Development (Mission and Vision Statements)

Vision Statement—The Planning and Development Department offers a responsible vision for the future of the community. This vision is shaped by citizen input, and community values, goals, and objectives. Department policies reflect creativity, practicality, and common sense. We promote quality of life for everyone.

Mission Statement—The Mission of the Planning and Development Department is to provide prompt, customer-friendly services. We offer advice, alternatives, and public education within a profession setting.

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This report is dedicated to the memory of **Joseph Horwedel** in recognition of his commitment and service as chair of the American Planning Association's City Planning and Management Division and as planning director of San Jose, California.

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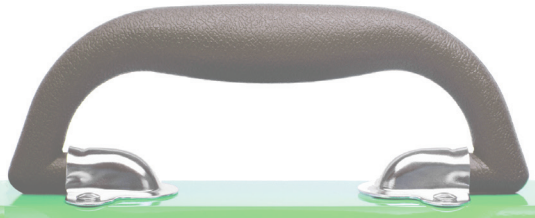

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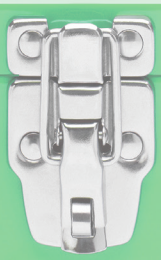

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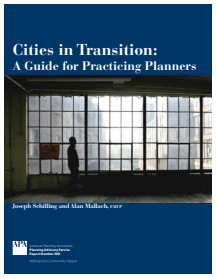

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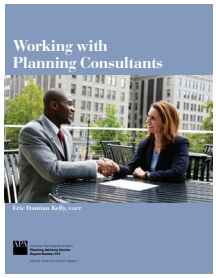

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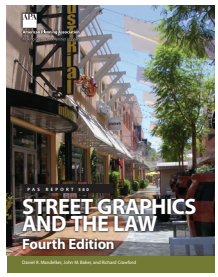

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