Sustaining Places –

The Role of the Comprehensive Plan

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Sustainability—Defining Challenge of the 21st Century

Issues

- Resource depletion
- Climate instability
- Energy production
- Economic stress
- Social inequity
- Public health
Sustaining Places Task Force Charge

- Focus on the **comprehensive plan** as policy document & tool to achieve sustainable outcomes

- Examine related changes in **best practices** that integrate sustainability into comprehensive planning

- Look at how plans **effect change** & are **held accountable**
Sustaining Places Task Force Process

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The defining challenge of our time...

Planning for sustaining places is:

- Dynamic, democratic process
- To meet needs of current & future generations
- Without compromising ecosystems
- Balance social, economic, environmental resources
- Incorporate resilience
- Link local, regional, & global concerns
Role of Comprehensive Plan

Plan is ideal vehicle:
• Legal authority
• Scope to cover functions
• History of practice

Plan has mandate to:
• Set community goals
• Engage citizens
• Assign responsibilities
• Achieve consensus
Plans Reviewed

Region:
San Diego Region CA

County:
Marin County CA, Union County OH

Growing Large City:
Seattle WA

Shrinking Large City:
Philadelphia PA, Cleveland OH

Medium/Small City:
Fort Collins CO, Albany NY, Burlington VT, Keene NH
Characteristics of Plans for Sustaining Places

- Adopt sustainability principles
- Integrate policies across programs
- Consider equity, health & wellbeing impacts
- Act on scientific evidence
- Address demands with limited funds
- Implement non-traditional goals
- Monitor sustainability metrics
- Link to regional plans
- Conduct stakeholder engagement
Emerging Model of Sustaining Places Planning

Adaptive planning

- Sustainability goals
- Integrated technical & participatory tracks
- Evidence-based scenarios—What If?
- Metric outcome measures
- Target tracking
- Ongoing implementation
Traditional Community Planning Assumptions

*Past foretells future*

- Economic & population growth projections

*Adjust plans every 5-10-20 years*

- Land use, transportation, & public facilities

*All else remains relatively stable*

- Climate conditions
- Water resources
- Energy supply
- Agriculture
- Ecosystems
- Human health
- Natural hazards

**Trends**
- Population projection
- Economic projection

**Space**
- Land use needs
- Transportation needs

**Facilities**
- Water & energy demand
- Public facilities demand
New Realities

Future is evolving & uncertain growth/decline must be monitored

Plans respond to change strategically as evidence demands

Sources of instability include linkages among:

- Climate condition
- Water resources
- Energy supply
- Agriculture
- Ecosystems
- Economy
- Human health
- Natural hazards
Principles of Planning for Sustaining Places

- Livable built environment
- Harmony with nature
- Resilient economy
- Interwoven equity
- Healthy communities
- Responsible regionalism
- Authentic participation
- Accountable implementation

Community Well Being

Socio-economic Capital

Built Environment
- housing, transportation, infrastructure

Agriculture
- ranches, dairies, croplands, orchards

Natural Systems
- water, air, soil, natural habitat

2007 Marin Countywide Plan

http://co.marin.ca.us/depts/CD/main/fm/TOC.cfm
Livable Built Environment Principle

Ensure that all elements of the built environment, including land use, transportation, housing, energy, and infrastructure, work together to provide sustainable, green places for living, working, and recreation with a high quality of life.

Characteristics:

Transportation choices
Mixed land use at different scales
Infill development
Range of housing types
Access to public facilities
Walkable neighborhoods

Green building stands.
Renewable energy
Urban design standards
Regional transportation
Complete streets
Historic preservation
Livable Built Environment Example

2004 Sustainable Seattle Plan

Urban Village strategy combines smart growth, urban design, & participation

Balances environment, equity, & economic—the 3-E goal

Seattle’s Core Values:
- Community
- Environmental Stewardship
- Economic Opportunity & Security
- Social Equity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>% Citywide Res. Growth</th>
<th>% Citywide Emp. Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban Centers</td>
<td>58% (27,450 households)</td>
<td>73% (61,120 jobs)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Man/Ind. Centers</td>
<td>No target</td>
<td>14% (11,900 jobs)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hub &amp; Res. Urban Villages</td>
<td>25% (11,880 households)</td>
<td>Res. = none Hub = 5% (4450 jobs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of City</td>
<td>16% (7670 households)</td>
<td>No target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>47,000 hh</td>
<td>84,000 jobs</td>
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</table>
Harmony with Nature Principle

*Ensure that contributions of natural resources to human wellbeing are explicitly recognized and valued and that maintaining their health is a primary objective.*

**Characteristics:**

- Conserve natural areas
- Reduce carbon footprints
- Restore & connect habitats
- Respect topography
- Meet air quality standards
- Achieve climate goals
- Increase energy security
- Commit to green building
- Reduce solid waste streams
- Restore/manage streams
- Conserve resources
- Manage stormwater
- Safe/adequate water supply
- Responsible stewardship
Harmony with Nature Example

Keene Comprehensive Master Plan

Keene Wildlife Action Plan:
Map of Vegetation Communities

These natural vegetation communities contain significant wildlife and ecosystem importance. All communities included here, except for the ubiquitous hemlock-hardwood-pine (hemhwdpine), are given value for their uncommon or rare occurrence throughout the region.
Resilient Economy Principle

Ensure that the community is prepared to deal with both positive and negative changes to its economic health and to initiate sustainable urban development and redevelopment that foster business growth and reliance on local assets.

Characteristics:

- Economic growth capacity
- Commercial/industrial land supply
- Green business encouragement
- Regional competition response
- Community-based economic development
- Innovative/entrepreneurial atmosphere
- Fiscal sustainability/transparency
- Advance plans for disaster recovery
- Balanced land use mix
- Transport access to jobs
- Local ownership promotion
- Neighborhoods at risk plans
- Jobs w/competitive wages
- Educational partnerships
- Efficient infrastructure
As a shrinking city, Cleveland had to re-imagine itself as a city based on a new form of sustainability.

Almost any Clevelander can see the city’s challenges. The Connecting Cleveland 2020 Citywide Plan asks Clevelanders to look beyond the challenges, to view the city and its neighborhoods through a new lens, bringing into focus the incredible opportunities for rebirth that are now blurred by the shadow of the city’s challenges. “Cleveland re-imagined” can be a city where challenges have been transformed into opportunities.

- Contaminated “brownfield” sites can become opportunities for contemporary large-scale redevelopment.
- Obsolete industrial buildings can be converted to trend-setting “live-work” space for artists and others seeking alternative housing.
- Neglected commercial buildings in the heart of city neighborhoods can be renovated as fashionable “mixed-use” projects, with shops on the ground floor and housing above.
- Troubled neighborhood schools can be redesigned and reprogrammed as neighborhood resource centers that promote interaction between students, parents and the community.
- Abandoned rail lines represent opportunities to create trails for bicycling and hiking.
Interwoven Equity Principle

Ensure fairness and equity in providing for the housing, services, health, safety, and livelihood needs of all citizens and groups.

Characteristics:

- Provide affordable housing
- Improve poor neighborhoods
- Include under-served in planning
- Protect vulnerable from hazards
- Distribute costs/benefits equitably
- Make services accessible to minorities
- Coordinate jobs/housing
- Improve at-risk health
- Promote workplace diversity
- Improve old infrastructure
- Measure plan outcomes
Change zoning & subdivision regulations...to accommodate housing types for seniors, empty nesters, young singles, those with disabilities, & others.

Offer incentives (streamlined development review, density bonus, height bonus, etc.) to encourage mixed-income developments with variety of housing types.

http://cultivatingcommunity.net/draft-plan.html
Healthy Communities Principle

Ensure that public health needs are recognized and addressed through provisions for healthy foods, physical activity, access to recreation, health care, environmental justice, and safe neighborhoods.

Characteristics:

Safe & healthy neighborhoods
Opportunities for active lifestyles
Wellness of at-risk populations
Mitigated brownfield sites
Design for walking & biking
Access to affordable health care

Accessible parks, open space
Locally grown healthy food
Adequate schools for all
Support for arts & culture
Environmental justice
Healthy Communities Example

KEY PRINCIPLES

Community Safety
- Foster a safe community

Community Wellness
- Provide opportunities for healthy & active lifestyles
- Support local food production

ACTIONS

Near Term
- Develop policy for agricultural activities on Natural Areas Program lands
- Convene inter-departmental team to acquire/manage open lands
- Build partnerships to support community garden plots

Community gardens and markets help to increase options & availability of healthy & local food options.

**Responsible Regionalism Principle**

Ensure that all local proposals account for, connect with, and support the plans of adjacent jurisdictions and the surrounding region.

**Characteristics:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City &amp; regional activity connections</th>
<th>Green-print plans</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fair share housing</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pop &amp; econ projections</td>
<td>Needs &amp; priorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional visions &amp; plans</td>
<td>Shared fiscal resources</td>
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</table>

Coordinate regional land use, open space & mobility programs
Responsible Regionalism Example

San Diego Regional Plan

Transportation & land use key elements

Encourage future growth in Developed Land areas

Maintain Conservation areas & open land

Integrated Regional Investment Strategy
Authentic Participation Principle

*Ensure that the planning process actively involves all segments of the community in analyzing issues, generating visions, developing plans, and monitoring outcomes.*

**Characteristics:**

- City/neighborhood involvement
- Organize constituencies
- Techniques geared to populations
- Social media use
- Agency staff involvement
- Diverse participation
- Stakeholder reps.
- Ongoing information
- Disadvantaged leadership
- Transparent decisions

*Alternative vision scenarios & outcome evaluations*
Authentic Participation Example

Responsive Government

Increase diversity on decision-making boards
Implement neighborhood design process
Reorganize city government
Develop more creative information access

Youth Civic Participation

Implement civics curriculum in schools
Develop community service internships
Add youth representatives to boards & commissions

Burlington 2030 Plan

http://burlingtonlegacyproject.org/files
Accountable Implementation Principle

Ensure that responsibilities for carrying out the plan are clearly stated, along with metrics for evaluating progress in achieving desired outcomes.

Characteristics:

- Involve public in goal setting
- Coordinate implementing agencies
- Set plan-related invest. priorities
- Monitor outcomes/goal progress
- Use indicators/metrics
- Assign responsibilities
- Commit resources
- Report during budgeting
- Balance upgrades, new services & green technology
Accountable Implementation Example

What must change in Albany as a system?

Which strategies target needed changes?

Keys to achieving the vision:

- Improve Albany’s image & quality of life
- Increase fiscal capacity
- Facilitate & mobilize private investment
- Establish Albany’s reputation as a Green Community

Albany 2030 Plan

http://albany2030.org
Beyond Best Practices: Cities as Resource Producers

• Settling for neutral impacts (emissions trading, green building, etc.) won’t make up for past damage or sustain future growth

• Turn cities from consumers into producers of environmental resources—biodiversity, energy, clean air & water

• Use metrics to identify & measure real sustainability

• Shape development decisions with real time outcome monitoring

Challenge: Reconciling Supply & Demand

Supply of Resources is Regional

- Air
- Habitat
- Energy
- Water
- Workforce

Demand for Resources are Local Decisions

- Land Use
- Mobility Choice
- Energy Use
- Water Use
- Employers
# Horizontal Integration of Plan Elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Integrated for:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land Use</td>
<td>Policy Coordination</td>
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<tr>
<td>Circulation</td>
<td>Internal Consistency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Capital Improvement Plan Consistency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conservation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open Space</td>
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<tr>
<td>Noise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economic Prosperity</td>
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<td>Recreation</td>
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<td>Historic Preservation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urban Design</td>
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</table>
Vertical Integration of Plans
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning Scale</th>
<th>Example Sustainability Policies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regional Plan</strong></td>
<td>• Air quality management&lt;br&gt;• Habitat conservation system&lt;br&gt;• Watershed and water quality management&lt;br&gt;• Regional transportation network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local Jurisdiction Plan</strong></td>
<td>• Land use types and location policies&lt;br&gt;• Green building policies&lt;br&gt;• Jobs/housing coordination&lt;br&gt;• Economic base capacity&lt;br&gt;• Bicycle circulation network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Plan</strong></td>
<td>• Parcel land use &amp; zoning&lt;br&gt;• Community public facilities strategy&lt;br&gt;• Housing options&lt;br&gt;• Mobility connections &amp; pedestrian master plan&lt;br&gt;• Community character &amp; urban design policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Master Plan</strong></td>
<td>• Development program&lt;br&gt;• Building &amp; site design&lt;br&gt;• Distributed energy systems&lt;br&gt;• Landscaping for water conservation&lt;br&gt;• Bicycle, pedestrian, and transit network connections</td>
</tr>
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</table>
The San Diego Example
A City Set in a Bio-Diverse Region
Housing Growth in the San Diego Region
GHG Inventory Project Results

Hypothetical GHG Emissions Reduction Targets
San Diego County

- 2006 Levels
- 2020 BAU Projections
- AB 32 Target
- Executive Order S-3-05 Target (2050)
GHG Inventory Project Results

GHG Emissions for San Diego County (2006)
Regional Comprehensive Plan for the San Diego Region

Final
July 2004
Smart Growth Concept Map

Smart Growth Areas
- Existing/Planned Potential
- Metropolitan Center
- Urban Center
- Town Center
- Community Center
- Rural Village
- Special Use Center
- Mixed Use Transit Corridor

Habitat Planning Preserve Areas
Existing Major Employment Areas
Urban Area Transit Strategy Boundary
2050 Regional Transportation Plan
Smart Growth Tools for Local Jurisdictions

Resources

Visual Simulations

Smart Growth Incentive Program and Environmental Mitigation Program
Jurisdictions That have Updated or Are Updating their General/Specific Plans

[Map showing jurisdictions with different update statuses: In Progress, 2004-2011, Pre-2004]
A City of Villages
Prime Industrial Lands
Village Propensity Map
Conservation Element

Climate Change

- Reduce carbon footprint, mitigate impacts, and adapt to changes

- Address sustainable building and practices that reduce global climate change

- Encourage clean tech industries to benefit San Diego’s environment and economy
Climate Change Addressed Throughout the General Plan

| TABLE CE-1 Issues Related to Climate Change Addressed in the General Plan |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| **Issues**                  | **General Plan Policy**   | **Section**    | **Policy**       |
| Conservation                | A. Climate Change and Sustainable Development | CE-A.1          |               |
| Land Use and Community Planning | A. City of Villages Strategy | LU-A.1 through LU-A.11 |               |
| Mobility                     | A. Walkable Communities | MI-A.1 through MI-A.9 |               |
| Urban Design                 | A. General Urban Design | UD-A.1 through UD-A.10 |               |
| Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions and Alternative Modes of Transportation | I. Environmental Justice | LU-I.11          |               |
| A. Walkable Communities | MI-A.1 through MI-A.9 |               |               |
| B. Transit First             | MI-B.9 through MI-B.9 |               |               |
| C. Street and Freeway System | MI-C.9 through MI-C.9 |               |               |
| E. Transportation Demand Management | MI-E.1 through MI-E.8 |               |               |
| F. Bicycling                 | MI-F.5 |               |               |
| Urban Design                 | A. General Urban Design | UD-A.1 through UD-A.10 |               |
| Energy Efficiency            | A. Climate Change and Sustainable Development | CE-A.3 through CE-A.9 |               |
| A. General Urban Design      | UD-A.4 through UD-A.5 |               |               |

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| Land Use and Community Planning | F. Park and Recreation Guidelines | RE-F.1          |               |
| Urban Design                 | A. General Urban Design | UD-A.8c, UD-A.12 |               |
| A. General Urban Design      | UD-A.8c, UD-A.12 |               |               |
| Public Facilities, Services and Safety | I. Waste Management | PF-3.1 through PF-3.4 |               |
| A. General Urban Design      | UD-A.8c, UD-A.12 |               |               |
| D. Water Resources Management | CE-D.1, CE-D.2, CE-D.4 |               |               |
| I. Sustainable Energy        | CE-I.4, CE-I.6 |               |               |
| Public Facilities, Services and Safety | I. Waste Infrastructure | PF-3.1 through PF-3.4 |               |
UPTOWN Community Plan

Conceptual Urban Form Framework
The Uptown District Master Plan
A 14-acre mixed-use redevelopment project initiated by the City of San Diego Planning Department in 1986.

The Uptown District

- 318 Residential Units (townhomes, flats, and artist’s lofts ranging from 652 to 1,249 square feet)
- 145,000 square feet of Commercial and Retail space, one of Southern California’s most successful Ralph’s grocery stores
- Neighborhood Community Center and Public Green
Thank you.

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