



BLUEPRINTHOUSTON
It's about your future

Planning Practices in Three Cities

San Diego

1. Pro active Planning Department

The Planning Department is the focal point of the planning process along with support of City Council, the Planning Commission and the Mayor. The Strategic Element Framework is a function of the Planning Department.

2. Regional and city cooperation/collaboration/coordination

The planning process is a coordinated effort by the Planning Commission, Planning Department, Planning Community Groups, county, region, Metro and Port District, and the Smart Growth Implementation Committee as well as all citizens who participated in the public outreach forums. As part of the Technical Working Group, all the city departments play a role in approving and implementing the plan.

3. Citizen Participation

Citizen involvement is a long-standing practice in the city. Community planning groups have long been formal mechanisms for community input in decision-making processes. Over 250 public meetings took place from 1999 to 2001 to educate, involve and invoke input into the process.

Public outreach for the Strategic Element Framework included 20 town hall style public meetings, 225 Strategic Framework Citizen Committee meetings, 47 public workshops with Planning Commission, City Council Land Use and Housing committee and; Community Planners Committee and over 100 meetings and presentations with stakeholder groups and partners.

4. Planning Groups

Certified planners are essential to the planning process. The city provides professional, certified community planners for each village. One planner from the community planning group, (usually the chair) forms the Community Planners Committee. They work with the citizens, the planning department and the local community planning group to draft the plan and hold charettes, forums and workshops throughout the process. They are also instrumental in helping form the proposals for the pilot villages and implement the plan. The mayor has a long-term planner on his personal staff.

5. Pilot Villages Program

The Pilot Village Program provides an opportunity to demonstrate how the village concept can be realized. These villages serve as a catalyst toward implementation of the city of Villages strategy around the City and act as a model of possibility for every community in San Diego. The City partners with communities, other agencies and private developers to implement the City of Villages strategy in these locations.

They define what their village will look like, design, width of sidewalks, mix of commercial and residential, mobility, density, street scape, land use, parkspace, building height. No two villages will be alike.

Nashville

1. General Plan

Nashville's *Concept 2010* plan was adopted in 1992. The plan set forth a vision, goals and core values to provide a framework for the city's future development.

2. Nashville Community Plans:

General plans for desired community character; 14 community sub areas, similar in size to Houston's super neighborhoods.

3. *Community Sub-Area Plans*

Nashville/Davidson County is divided into 14 community sub-areas, similar to Houston's super neighborhoods. General plans for future "community structure" are developed by the Planning Department and are to be updated every five years.

4. Nashville Small Area Plans

Neighborhoods, corridors, and other "special places" are identified in the sub-area planning process. More detailed plans may be developed by the Planning Department for these places.

5. Functional Plans

The Planning Department prepares functional plans in conjunction with other departments for services and infrastructure that cut across sub-areas. These include mobility, public safety, housing, economic development, historic preservation, parks and recreation, and bicycle-pedestrian facilities. These plans are integrated with the sub-area and small area plans. The Planning Department is also tasked with preparing the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) to integrate the facilities needs identified by various other departments

6. Variable Standards

The Planning Department is developing a "Transect Based" system of community standards for items like sidewalks, building set backs, curb cuts and street designs. This approach recognizes that "one-size-fits-all" standards are not appropriately applied to areas as different as downtown, the urban neighborhoods and new suburban communities.

7. Pro-active planning process

The Planning Department's philosophy is to get ideas out on the table on what residents would like to see before development occurs. They use a highly visual approach that depicts what the buildings and streets should look like, based in community input in the sub-area or small area planning process. In some cases these ideas are translated into design guidelines.

8. Citizen Involvement

The Planning Department has an effective process for citizen involvement, designed to gain maximum input but not waste the residents' time or burn them out. Most of the department's staff resources are devoted to neighborhood involvement and facilitation and they are encouraged to come up with creative ways to publicize community meetings. They do an initial, facilitated "listening" session, report back on what they heard, then come up with a draft plan for review. A small design group creates visual representations of the neighborhood's wishes.

Charlotte

1. Land Use Vision: Centers and Corridors Plan

Developed by a citizen committee of 100, this plan sets forth a land use vision for future growth and development of the region, linking Charlotte with neighboring cities in a 20 mile ring surrounding the city. Vision foresees highest intensity and mixed use development along major regional transporting corridors and in existing centers. Wedges are the areas of low to medium density residential development with their support services organized within planned centers. Vision has provided direction for development of every transportation/transit, district and area plan since 1994 when the vision was adopted by the Planning Commission and City Council.

2. The 2015 Plan

In 1997, the 2015 Plan articulated comprehensive goals based on a review of a fully urbanizing community. Key goal areas: economic development, transportation, neighborhoods, education, parks, land use and urban design and regionalism.

3. Neighborhood Plans

Planning Department staff prepares neighborhood concept and implementation plans intended to serve as a framework to guide future public and private decision making towards long term agreed upon objectives. Prepared with citizen input. Planning Committee of Planning Commission reviews for consistency with policies and citywide plans. Forwarded to City Council for adoption as a concept plan. Implementation plan used by staff as guidance when funding becomes available and private development occurs. Example: Washington Heights.

4. Charlotte Neighborhood Quality of Life Index

The Quality of Life index permits a comparison of the quality of life between and among Charlotte's neighborhoods. Index provides a benchmark, the first stage in an ongoing program to monitor progress toward goals of sustaining and renewing neighborhoods. Department of Neighborhood Development contracts with UNC Charlotte Urban Institute to examine 173 neighborhood statistical areas every two years. Uses 19 variables to categorize neighborhoods as fragile, threatened or stable. Index is one of performance measures used in city's scorecard.

5. Corporate Scorecard

In 1990 the City Council participated in a strategic visioning exercise that established 5 priority focus areas for long term progress and then adopted several institutional mechanisms to ensure the City meets its annual objectives: 5 council committees responsible for 5 focus areas; 5 Cabinets of senior

management meet monthly to update strategies for each focus area; annual scorecard measures progress. Neighborhood Quality of Life Index is one indicator. Scorecard keeps focus on long term goals and outcomes.

6. Additional Efforts by Charlotte to Coordinate Planning

The Joint Use Task Force is a voluntary group of mid level managers who meet monthly to identify opportunities to coordinate the CIP decisions of 12 entities, including the city planning department and city manager, other towns, county, school district, community college district, library, fire, police, etc. In addition, using GIS data, the Planning Department of Charlotte prepares a map that shows all city projects under way and under consideration as a means of identifying opportunities to avoid duplication and/or save money.