
Comprehensive Planning Approach

Methods

UERPC follows Iowa's Smart Planning Guidelines for comprehensive planning. These guidelines recommend a comprehensive approach to planning that incorporates ten principles intended to produce greater economic opportunity, enhance environmental integrity, improve public health outcomes, and safeguard quality of life. The guidelines also identify 13 elements that may be included in a comprehensive plan. These elements serve as the basis for each chapter in the plan:

- Public Participation
- Issues and Opportunities
- Land Use
- Housing
- Public Infrastructure and Utilities
- Transportation
- Economic Development
- Agriculture and Natural Resources
- Community Facilities
- Community Character and Culture
- Hazards
- Intergovernmental Collaboration
- Implementation

Work is conducted in conjunction with a Community Steering Committee, City Manager, City Council and the City Planning and Zoning Commission with significant public engagement.

Planning Philosophy

UERPC's planning philosophy is based on the importance of community vision, knowledge and implementation. Engaging the public to develop a vision for the future of the community is the foundation of the planning process. We work to provide pertinent data and statistics that generate informed goals and strategies from community leaders and the public. Each project and community is unique and each final plan should be a useful tool specifically designed to guide the city's decision-making processes and ensure implementation of the goals, strategies and actions within the final plan.

Comprehensive Plan Uses:

- Provides a guiding document for city decision-making
- Creates a demographic and economic snapshot of the community
- Uses past data to project future growth or decline
- Develops an inventory of community assets
- Identifies community needs
- Sets a long range vision for the community
- Identifies specific actions to achieve the vision
- Develops a future land use map

Planning Schedule

- Phase One: Organization of planning process and community visioning
- Phase Two: Collection and interpretation of background data and asset inventory
- Phase Three: Public participation to identify needs, priorities and actions
- Phase Four: Plan Finalization – Create maps and input all information into a draft document and review with community.
- Phase Five: Review and adoption

Planning Options

Community planning can take many forms including large projects such as comprehensive planning and hazard mitigation planning, as well as smaller facilitation and/or community engagement projects. Planning generally involves data and background information collection; facilitating and compiling stakeholder input and priorities through a variety of methods including meetings, surveys and focus groups; and creating a final document or action plan.

Examples of community plans

- Long range comprehensive plans
- Strategic plans for community or nonprofit leadership
- Capital improvement plans
- Riverfront, downtown or other significant district master plans
- Community Marketing plans
- Community Wellness plans
- Safe Routes to School plans
- Park and Recreation plans
- Business plans
- Hazard Mitigation Plans
- Housing Needs

The Menu

Public Participation:

- Community Visioning
- Element Specific Brainstorming Sessions (Think Tanks)
- Surveys - Online
- Door to Door Questionnaire
- Focus Groups
- Council or Steering Committee Goal Setting or Strategy Development

Community Data:

- Population – full analysis of past, present and future trends (includes age groups and gender)
- Housing – age, condition, types, projected need
- Economic Development – workforce analysis (education, age, commuting), current business makeup by industry (manufacturing, retail, agriculture, service), city finances

Asset Inventories:

- Cultural – events and places
- History – community and building
- Recreation
- Natural Resources
- Roads, bridges, sidewalks
- Water/Sewer
- Stormwater
- Utilities
- Community Buildings
- Housing

Future Land Use Mapping

Hazard Identification

Downtown Analysis

Community Retail Analysis

Market Analysis