

# Community Master Plans



## So What is a Master Plan?

A town's view of how it would like to look in the future!! A master plan consists both of policy statements and maps.

## Who prepares it? Who adopts it? What is its authority?

**Preparing and adopting** the master plan is the responsibility of the local planning board which often assigns the task to a Master Plan Committee. And the planning board may hire staff and/or consultants to work with them in its preparation.



The master plan is to be adopted by the planning board, after a public hearing has been noticed and held. Like all public documents, it is subject to the right to know law.

**A master plan is guidance document**—not a legal instrument for managing community growth. The plan is implemented through a **zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations and site plan review regulations** as well as other community programs. **The capital improvement plan** is another vehicle for implementing the master plan.

## What has to be in the Master Plan?

Master plans can take a variety of forms and formats, depending on the community's desires. Some are extensive documents. Others are more basic. Some communities have printed them like a newspaper while others have a simple poster or fold up one piece document.

Under current state law, a municipal master plan must include only two elements: **A vision statement, and a future land use plan**

It is recommended, however, that the master plan at least comment on each of the following topics:

Transportation  
Community Facilities  
Economic Development  
Natural Resources

Natural Hazards  
Recreation  
Utility/Public Service  
Cult./Historic Resources  
Regional Concerns

Neighborhood Plans  
Community Design  
Housing Needs  
Implementation

## How long does it take?

Usually it takes one to two years, but may vary depending on the level of effort the community devotes to the project.

**Make No Little Plans.** *They have no magic to stir men's blood and probably will themselves not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that noble, logical diagrams, once recorded, will not die.* Daniel Burnham, Chicago Architect and Planner, 1846 – 1912