

Distinctions Between Strategic and Comprehensive Plans

Strategic Plans

- employ strategic thinking
- express clear purpose/mission
- provide guiding principles that represent shared values and standards of conduct
- articulate and commit to a clear and compelling vision for the target year (3-10 years)
- establish goals, objectives and time-phased, measurable action/implementation plans toward vision attainment
- include performance indicators, timelines, and key assignments
- are routinely referenced and used to track and report progress

Comprehensive Plans

- are statutorily required
- have a 10-20 year timeframe
- exist as a framework to be filled in as private investment and public capital allow
- set context for public and private development and land use
- guide zoning and land use decisions and identify need for regulation amendments
- provide a template against which private development proposals are reviewed, in order to “react” comprehensively
- land use/zoning components are amended regularly or as needed

Our community does not have a current Comprehensive Plan...

If your community has no comprehensive plan or has a land use and development planning document that needs new purpose or momentum, a strategic plan can bring creative perspective, tools and positioning to facilitate your developing a uniquely effective land use planning process.

Our community has a Comprehensive Plan adopted some time ago that serves its purpose well...

Strategic plan content areas atypical of comprehensive plans may include: approaches to operational and fiscal conditions, ways of engaging stakeholders, workplace culture, the quality of community and relationships, or approaches to perennial or societal issues. Community concerns or desired outcomes are often unrelated to land use and zoning and can be addressed in a creative, collaborative strategic planning process.

Strategic planning focuses aspirations and aligns the community to fulfill them. Traditional municipal tools such as the comprehensive plan, land use plan, park and trail plan, transportation plan, capital improvement plan, human resources manual, financial policy guide, marketing plan or beautification plan are the implementation vehicles.

Our community recently adopted a Comprehensive Plan...

The strategic plan process will continue the public engagement likely undertaken in your comprehensive plan process. It will provide creative, strategic focus to address intangible or non-physical elements of your community, whether organizationally-focused or focused on community ownership and well-being.