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**MINUTES OF THE LANCASTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
SPECIAL WORKSHOP MEETING**

**December 14, 2023 9:00 A.M.
MINUTES**

Chairman Deese called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

1. Roll Call:

Members Present:

Jim Barnett Charles Deese Yokima Cureton Judianna Tinklenberg

Absent: Ben Levine, Sheila Hinson, Alan Patterson

Others Present:

Allison Hardin, Development Services Dir.

The following press were notified of the meeting by email in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act: The Lancaster News, Kershaw News Era, The Rock Hill Herald, The Fort Mill Times, Cable News 2, Channel 9, and the local Government Channel.

2. New Business

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PRESENTATION

Presentation and overview of Comprehensive Plan purpose, process, and state requirements.

Staff Presentation: Allison Hardin, Development Services Director

DISCUSSION ONLY. NO ACTIONS TAKEN; NO VOTES TAKEN.

3. Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned at **11:00 AM.**

QUICKNOTES

*Planning fundamentals
for public officials and
engaged citizens*

This PAS QuickNotes was prepared by David Morley, AICP, senior research associate at APA and APA's PAS coordinator.

The Local Comprehensive Plan

The local comprehensive plan, sometimes referred to as the general plan or the master plan, is the foundational policy document for local governments. It establishes a framework to guide public and private decisions about future growth, preservation, and change within a municipality or county over the next 20 to 30 years. While the comprehensive plan has traditionally focused primarily on physical development, many contemporary comprehensive plans also discuss a wide range of economic, environmental, and social topics that affect the sustainability of a community.

Background

All states either allow or require local governments to prepare comprehensive plans. However, there is no consensus about what, precisely, constitutes a comprehensive plan. This is largely due to the fact that many state enabling laws are still rooted in the U.S. Department of Commerce's Standard Zoning Enabling Act (SZEa) and Standard City Planning Enabling Act (SCPEa), published in 1926 and 1928, respectively. The SZEa stated that zoning regulations must be "in conformance with a comprehensive plan" but did not define the term. Subsequently, the SCPEa purposely avoided defining the comprehensive plan (or master plan in the act's language), choosing instead to give examples of the subject matter that should be covered in the plan.

While the content and format of comprehensive plans can vary considerably from place to place, there are still a number of common characteristics that help distinguish these plans from other types of local plans (e.g., subarea or functional plans). First, comprehensive plans have a broad scope, meaning they address an extensive range of topics of communitywide concern. Second, they are comprehensive in terms of geographic extent, meaning that a comprehensive plan covers the full area of a local jurisdiction. Third, they present multiple goals and policies to be implemented over a long time period.

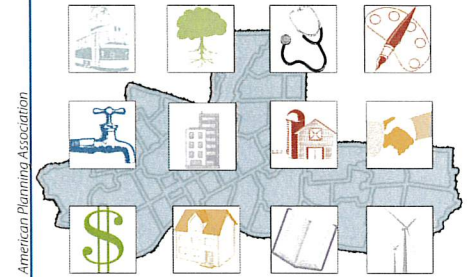
While these three core characteristics have defined comprehensive plans for decades, there is also a set of basic best practices for contemporary plans. First, planners and public officials should develop a comprehensive plan with input from all segments of the community. Second, comprehensive plans should be readily available to and easily understood by any interested community members. Third, comprehensive plans should be formally adopted as official policy by the local legislative body.

Reasons to Prepare a Comprehensive Plan

The local comprehensive planning process gives a community an opportunity to step back and see the big picture. By looking at multiple topics over a long time horizon, planners, public officials, and community members have a chance to discuss both compatibilities and potential points of conflict among different goals and policies. This makes the comprehensive plan an important tool for coordinating local decision making.

The comprehensive plan is the legal foundation that legitimizes local development regulations. In fact, many states require zoning and subdivision ordinances to be in conformance with an adopted comprehensive plan. Ideally, the local comprehensive plan is a primary guide not only for updates to development regulations but also for the creation of local capital improvements plans, which detail planned capital expenditures over a multiyear period.

An up-to-date comprehensive plan provides a measure of certainty to landowners and developers and reduces the likelihood of arbitrary decisions by local officials. Because a comprehensive plan shows how a community hopes to change over time, it gives applicants a sense of the types of



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*Comprehensive plans cover a wide range
of topics of communitywide concern.*



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Making Great Communities Happen

development projects that are likely to be approved in a specific location and helps owners and developers avoid spending excessive time and money on incompatible proposals. The data gathering and analysis that informs a comprehensive plan also improves the factual basis for land-use decisions. Last but not least, the comprehensive planning process builds an informed constituency. As planners, public officials, and community members exchange ideas and listen to alternative perspectives, they become invested in the vision of the plan and willing to assist in implementing plan policies.

Plan Content and Format

Traditionally, a comprehensive plan is comprised of a series of thematic elements (i.e., chapters or major sections). Common topics for plan elements include land use, transportation, housing, economic development, and community facilities. In recent years an increasing number of communities have added elements addressing the environment, natural hazards, public health, climate change, intergovernmental cooperation, or energy to their comprehensive plans. While the themes of the plan may be more or less expansive depending on state requirements, community context, and local interests, there are a number of basic features common to many comprehensive plans.

Virtually all comprehensive plans include a discussion of issues and opportunities. This discussion describes the legal authority or mandate for the plan; summarizes the community's long-term vision for growth, preservation, or change; provides data and analysis that establish the context for the broad goals and objectives of the plan; and sets the stage for policy considerations detailed in subsequent plan sections.

Most comprehensive plans contain one or more sections presenting goals and objectives related to the thematic elements of the plan. Goals are general statements about desirable future conditions. Objectives are statements of measurable outcomes in furtherance of a certain goal.

Finally, many comprehensive plans include both specific policy statements and action steps. Policies are statements of intent with enough clarity to guide decision making, and actions are directives about programs, regulations, operational procedures, or public investments intended to guide the implementation of specific policies.

While many comprehensive plans are formatted and designed to read like a richly illustrated book, advances in website design and improvements in broadband access open up additional opportunities for communities to share plan content in more accessible and interactive formats. Many contemporary plans have their own websites that allow community members to view plan themes or features using hyperlinks and embedded media content.

Plan Implementation

While a broad base of community support is often the most important factor that influences if and when plan recommendations will be enacted, providing a detailed implementation program in the plan itself can be an effective tool to organize local efforts. This implementation program should include a list of specific public or private actions connected to each policy recommendation in the plan. Ideally, the program will also identify a responsible party and include a cost estimate and a time frame for each action.

Summary

The local comprehensive plan is a community's official statement about how it hopes to grow or change over the next 20 to 30 years. Comprehensive plans differ from other local plans in terms of scope, geographic coverage, and legal authority. While different communities will choose to emphasize different themes in their plans, the hallmark of an effective plan is that it provides valuable guidance to public- and private-sector decision makers.

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FURTHER READING

1. Published by the American Planning Association

American Planning Association. 2014. "Comprehensive Plan Standards for Sustaining Places." Available at www.planning.org/sustainingplaces/complanstandards.

Meck, Stuart, ed. 2002. Chapter 7. Local Planning. In *Growing Smart Legislative Guidebook*. Chicago: American Planning Association. Available at www.planning.org/growingsmart.

2. Other Resources

Kelly, Eric Damian. 2010. *Community Planning: An Introduction to the Comprehensive Plan*, 2nd ed. Washington, D.C.: Island Press. Available at <http://islandpress.org/community-planning>.

Meck, Stuart. 2006. "Comprehensive Plans." In *Planning and Urban Design Standards*. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons, Inc. Available at www.planning.org/store/product/?ProductCode=BOOK_RPUD.

Comprehensive Planning and Zoning

Lancaster County, SC

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Contents

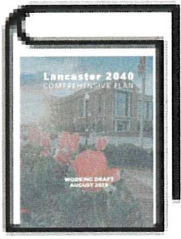
- Overview
- Parts of the Comprehensive Plan
- Why We Plan
- Enabling Legislation
- Comprehensive Plan Elements and Review
- How We Implement the Comprehensive Plan
- Why Is Zoning Called UDO
- How Do We Pay for the Big Things
- How This Relates to Our Comp Plan Rewrite
- Questions

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Comprehensive Plan Overview

- **Foundational policy document for local governments**
- Establishes a framework to guide public and private decisions about future growth, preservation, and change over the next 20 to 30 years
- Started out to guide physical development
 - *First plan in US: The Plan of Chicago, 1909*
- Now: taking “comprehensive” to heart – discusses many community issues

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Parts of the Comp Plan

- Elements (fancy word for chapter topics)
- Inventory of Existing Conditions
- Statement of Needs and Goals
- Implementation Strategies (with time frames)
- Maps and Data
- Review Process
- Reporting of Public Involvement

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Why Do We Plan?

- The local comprehensive planning process gives a community an opportunity to step back and see the big picture. By looking at multiple topics over a long time horizon, planners, public officials, and community members have a chance to discuss both compatibilities and potential points of conflict among different goals and policies. This makes the comprehensive plan an important tool for coordinating local decision making.
- The comprehensive plan is the legal foundation that legitimizes local development regulations. In fact, many states require zoning and subdivision ordinances to be in conformance with an adopted comprehensive plan. Ideally, the local comprehensive plan is a primary guide not only for updates to development regulations but also for the creation of local capital improvements plans, which detail planned capital expenditures over a multiyear period.
- An up-to-date comprehensive plan provides a measure of certainty to landowners and developers and reduces the likelihood of arbitrary decisions by local officials. Because a comprehensive plan shows how a community hopes to change over time, it gives applicants a sense of the types of development projects that are likely to be approved in a specific location and helps owners and developers avoid spending excessive time and money on incompatible proposals. The data gathering and analysis that informs a comprehensive plan also improves the factual basis for land-use decisions.
- Last but not least, the comprehensive planning process builds an informed constituency. As planners, public officials, and community members exchange ideas and listen to alternative perspectives, they become invested in the vision of the plan and willing to assist in implementing plan policies.

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Comprehensive Planning Requirement in South Carolina (Enabling Legislation)



Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act, 1994



Found in Title 6, Chapter 29 of SC Code of Laws



Local governments may not enact zoning or development regulations in the absence of a comprehensive plan

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Section
6-29-510
SC Code of
Laws

(A) The local planning commission shall develop and maintain a planning process which will result in the systematic preparation and continual re-evaluation and updating of those elements considered critical, necessary, and desirable to guide the development and redevelopment of its area of jurisdiction.

(B) Surveys and studies on which planning elements are based must include consideration of potential conflicts with adjacent jurisdictions and regional plans or issues.

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Section
6-29-510
SC Code of
Laws

(C) The basic planning process for all planning elements must include, but not be limited to:

(1) inventory of existing conditions;

(2) a statement of needs and goals; and

(3) implementation strategies with time frames.

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(D) A local comprehensive plan must include, but not be limited to, the following planning elements:

Population Element	Housing Element
Economic Development Element	Land Use Element
Natural Resources Element	Transportation Element
Cultural Resources Element	Priority Investment Element
Community Facilities Element	Resiliency Element

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Population Element <i>SC Code of Laws 6-29-510 (D)(1)</i>	Code: considers historic trends and projections, household numbers and sizes, educational levels, and income characteristics • <i>Who are we?</i> • <i>Where do we live?</i> • <i>Do we have children?</i> • <i>What level of education have we reached?</i> • <i>How much income does our household make, and can we afford what we need?</i> • <i>How has our population grown – changed – since our last plan?</i>
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Economic Development <i>SC Code of Laws 6-29-510 (D)(2)</i>	Code: considers labor force and labor force characteristics, employment by place of work and residence, and analysis of the economic base • <i>Where do we work?</i> • <i>Who are our biggest employers?</i> • <i>What is the average household income for our area?</i> • <i>Do our residents have enough opportunities for employment in our area?</i> • <i>How far do we drive to work?</i> • <i>What job skills exist in our area?</i>
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Natural Resources <i>SC Code of Laws 6-29-510 (D)(3)</i>	Code: considers coastal resources, slope characteristics, prime agricultural and forest land, plant and animal habitats, parks and recreation areas, scenic views and sites, wetlands, and soil types • <i>Where are our rivers, lakes, tributaries, wetlands, floodplains?</i> • <i>Where do our native animals live?</i> • <i>What plants and trees are native to our area?</i> • <i>What types of soils support our homes and roads?</i> • <i>Where are our parks, and where else do we recreate outside?</i>
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Cultural Resources

SC Code of Laws
6-29-510 (D)(4)

Code: considers historic buildings and structures, commercial districts, residential districts, unique, natural, or scenic resources, archaeological, and other cultural resources

- What things do we hold dear about our area?
- What opportunities do we have to interact with the arts in our county?
- Where are our historic buildings and resources?
- Who lived here before we did, and what can we learn from them?
- What makes our area unique?

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Community Facilities

SC Code of Laws
6-29-510 (D)(5)

Code: considers water supply and distribution; sewage system, wastewater treatment; solid waste; fire protection, emergency medical services, and general government facilities; education facilities; libraries and other cultural facilities

- Do we have clean water?
- Do we have operating sewer and trash systems?
- Do we have enough fire stations, emergency staff, and offices for government to operate?
- Where are our schools, trade schools, and universities?
- Where do we go to interact with our cultural events?

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Housing

SC Code of Laws
6-29-510 (D)(6)

Code: considers location, types, age, condition of housing; owner and renter occupancy; housing affordability; analysis of nonessential housing regulatory requirements and market-based incentives for affordable housing

- Do we live in safe housing? Is it new, old, or in-between?
- Do we have enough houses for our population?
- Do we have enough affordable options for our population?
- What can we do to streamline regulations to make housing more affordable?

*Note: SC Code of Laws requires collaboration with homebuilders, developers, contractors, and housing finance experts for this element

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Land Use

SC Code of Laws
6-29-510 (D)(7)

*Note: SC Code of Laws requires that this element be developed in coordination with the transportation element

Code: inventory of existing and future land use by category: residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, forestry, mining, public and quasi-public, recreation, parks, open space, and vacant or undeveloped

- Where do we put our commercial buildings? Our industry? Our residences? Our parks?
- Are those uses in the right place?
- If not, where should we put them in the future, and why?

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Transportation

SC Code of Laws
6-29-510 (D)(8)

*Note: SC Code of Laws requires that this element be developed in coordination with the land use element

Code: considers transportation facilities, including major road improvements, new road construction, transit projects, pedestrian and bicycle projects, and other elements of a transportation network.

- Where are our roads?
- What shape are they in?
- Who owns the roads?
- Where should we put new ones?
- What roads are being planned now, and how will that affect our land use?
- How do people get around our area if they don't have cars? Can we make things safer for them?

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Priority Investment

SC Code of Laws
6-29-510 (D)(9)

Code: analysis of likely federal, state, and local funds available for public infrastructure and facilities during the next ten years, and recommendations for needed public infrastructure and facility projects such as water, sewer, roads, and schools

- Where are we likely to get funding from the federal, state, or local governments (like the penny tax) for public infrastructure?
- What projects could we build/improve with those funds?
- How would we pay for those projects?

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Resiliency

SC Code of Laws
6-29-510 (D)(10)

Code: considers the impacts of flooding, high water, and natural hazards on individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, economic development, public infrastructure and facilities, and public health, safety and welfare

- *We live in an area subject to flooding – how has flooding impacted our area in the past? How could it impact us in the future?*
- *Are our economic systems ready to bounce back after a disaster?*
- *How many people are at risk to exposure to natural hazards in our area?*
- *What can we do to lower that number?*

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Comprehensive Plan Review Required

- **Section 6-29-510 (E):** The local planning commission shall review the comprehensive plan or elements of it as often as necessary, but **not less than once every five years**, to determine whether changes in the amount, kind, or direction of development of the area or other reasons make it desirable to make additions or amendments to the plan. The comprehensive plan, including all elements of it, must be **updated at least every ten years**.



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How We Implement the Comp Plan



Development Regulations
Capital Improvement Plans



Code Enforcement
Plan Monitoring

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Legal Foundations for Implementation/Enforcement

- **Section 6-29-720:** When the local planning commission has prepared and recommended and the governing body has adopted at least the **land use element** of the comprehensive plan as set forth in this chapter, the governing body of a municipality or county **may adopt a zoning ordinance** to help implement the comprehensive plan.
- **Section 6-29-1130:** When at least the **community facilities element, the housing element, and the priority investment element** of the comprehensive plan as authorized by this chapter have been adopted by the local planning commission and the local governing body or bodies, the local planning commission may prepare and recommend to the governing body or bodies for adoption **regulations governing the development of land** within the jurisdiction.
- **Section 6-29-950:** The governing authorities of municipalities or counties may provide for the enforcement of any ordinance adopted pursuant to the provisions of this chapter by means of the **withholding of building or zoning permits**, or both, and the **issuance of stop orders against any work** undertaken by an entity not having a proper building or zoning permit, or both. ...No permit may be issued or approved unless the requirements of this chapter or any ordinance adopted pursuant to it are complied with.

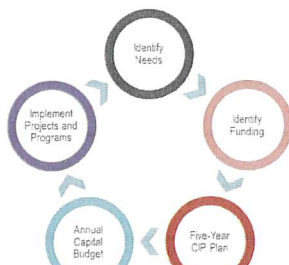
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How to Regulate Development: Zoning, Subdivision, or UDO?

- **Zoning Ordinance/Regulations:** Specify where you can put things on the ground, how many, and how you get there
 - *Enforced by staff; appeals to BZA*
- **Subdivision Ordinance/Regulations:** Rules regarding how you divide up land, including access, infrastructure, and order
 - *Enforced by Planning Commission; appeals to circuit court*
- **Unified Development Ordinance:** Zoning and Subdivision regulations combined into a unified document

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Capital Improvements Plan (AKA How We Pay for Some of the Big Things)



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The new comprehensive plan focuses in on issues relative to the unique areas in our county:

Panhandle
Greater Lancaster
Southern Lancaster

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The First Part

- Introduction
- How the Plan Was Created
- Public Input
- Vision and Guiding Principles
- County-Wide Demographics and Growth Discussion
- Future Land Use Map
- County-Wide Implementation Strategies

HOW TO USE THIS PLAN?

In reviewing this plan, the Comprehensive Plan can be used by elected and appointed officials to review proposed developments and other projects related to the future of Lancaster County. The Plan includes a vision, guiding principles and implementation strategies for the entire County. It also includes implementation strategies for individual regions of the County. Lancaster County's responsibility is primarily responsible for the implementation of the strategies in this Plan.

The County's responsibility can also consider the future land use principles when considering projects in light of the scope of the plan. To ensure consistency, this Plan also includes a future land use map, which is used to identify areas where the county should grow in the coming years. This tool will be particularly helpful in reviewing developed lands.

Lastly, there is a large amount of information contained in the County contained in the elements of the Plan. This can be used to provide a better understanding of the conditions and how they might change in the coming years. In the County's future, the strategic changes that will be necessary to ensure its continued growth and development. Therefore, the Comprehensive Plan is particularly important to ensure the success of this Plan may need to be modified.



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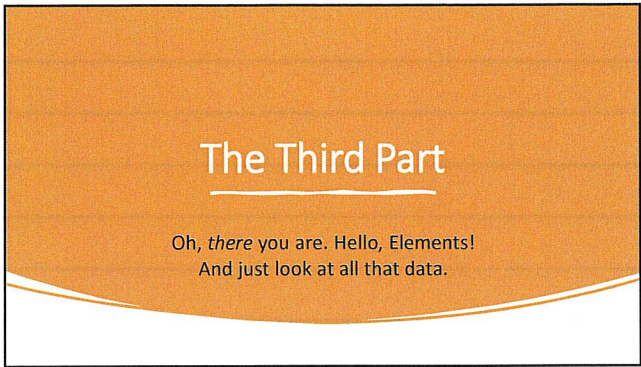


The Second Part

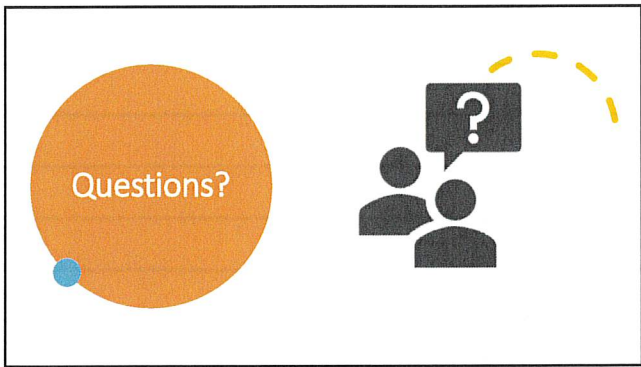
Region-Specific Issues and Strategies to Address Them:

- **Panhandle**
- **Greater Lancaster**
- **Southern Lancaster**

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