

Planning Matters

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Planning Commission Initiates Comprehensive Plan Update

Kentucky Revised Statutes Section 197.197 sets forth that "the comprehensive plan elements, and their research basis, shall be reviewed from time to time in light of social, economic, technical and physical advancements or changes." KRS 197.197 further requires that "at least once every five (5) years, the commission shall amend or readopt the plan elements."

At its May 24th regular meeting, the Planning Commission authorized the staff and Technical Committee to begin the review and update of the Comprehensive Plan and to simultaneously review and develop Zoning and Subdivision Regulations amendments to implement the updated Comprehensive Plan. The 14-member Technical Committee was established last year to assist the Planning Commission in reviewing and drafting updates and amendments to the plan and regulations. The Technical Committee includes four Planning Commissioners (Mike Zoeller, Mark Mathis, Bob Hite, and Shane Kirsch), Nelson County Judge/Executive Dean Watts, two Fiscal Court members (Tim Hutchins and Maynard Wimsett), Bardstown Mayor Dixie Hibbs, two Bardstown City Council member Dick Heaton, former Bardstown City Council member Frank Brown Wilson, Bloomfield Mayor Ronnie Bobblett, Fairfield Mayor Mary Ellen Marquess, New Haven Mayor Tessie Cecil, and Planning Commission Director Janet Johnston.

On May 31st, the Technical Committee held its first meeting to discuss the process and timeframe for reviewing and drafting updates of the Comprehensive Plan and for subsequently drafting Zoning and Subdivision Regulations amendments. During this meeting, Janet Johnston, Planning Commission, provided an overview of statutory requirements for Comprehensive plan updates, and the Technical Committee developed a timeframe for considering and drafting immediate and 2006 updates and amendments.

Immediate Amendments (June—August 2005)

In light of major social, economic, technical and physical advancements or changes in the community, the Technical Committee first decided to review and recommend amendments to the process for evaluating the "compatibility" and "suitability" of developments and to also evaluate immediate issues dealing with the Comprehensive Plan acceptable densities, land uses, and development and public service policies for the Suburban community character areas.

"Compatibility" considers the level or intensity of development adjacent to the site and in the surrounding area, size of the proposal both in terms of acreage of the site and the area of the structures, including the number of units to be occupied, overall site density measured by dwellings per acre in the case of multi-family developments, proximity to more restrictive existing uses and addresses mitigation of adverse impacts on the surrounding existing development.

"Suitability" considers the general location criteria for a specific use type and evaluates the availability and capacity of public water supply and facilities for domestic use and fire protection, availability and capacity of public sewers, highway classification of public road serving the site, size in gross building area and the traffic generation potential of the proposed uses in the case of commercial or office developments, proximity to collector and arterial streets, environmental factors such as prevailing wind directions or the proximity to environmentally sensitive areas or geologic features.

2006 Updates (July 2005– October 2006)

Starting in late July, the Technical Committee and Planning Commission staff also will begin Phases 1 and 2 of the 2006 Comprehensive Plan update. Phase 1 will include the evaluation of the validity of the Comprehensive Plan

What is the Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan serves as a guide for public and private actions and decisions to assure development of public and private property in the most appropriate relationships (KRS 100.183). A comprehensive plan must contain, as a minimum, the following elements:

- (1) A statement of goals and objectives, which shall serve as a guide for the community's physical development and economic and social well-being (Chapter 5);
- (2) A land use plan element, which shall show proposals for the most appropriate, economic, desirable, and feasible patterns for the general location, character, extent, and interrelationships of the manner in which the community should use its public and private land at specified times as far into the future as is reasonable to foresee (Chapter 6);
- (3) A transportation plan element, which shall show proposals for the most desirable, appropriate, economic, and feasible pattern for the general location, character, and extent of the channels, routes, and terminals for transportation facilities for the circulation of persons and goods for specified times as far into the future as is reasonable to foresee (Chapter 7);
- (4) A community facilities plan element, which shall show proposals for the most desirable, appropriate, economic, and feasible pattern for the general location, character, and the extent of public and semipublic buildings, land, and facilities for specified times as far into the future as is reasonable to foresee (Chapter 6).
- (5) Additional elements, which in the judgment of the Planning Commission will further serve the purposes of the comprehensive plan.

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Making the Connection

by Hannah Twaddell, Senior Transportation Planner in the Charlottesville, Virginia, office of Renaissance Planning Group. This article is reprinted with permission from the *Planning Commissioners Journal*, the nation's leading publication for citizen planners. For more information about the *Journal*, visit their Web site at www.plannersweb.com.

Legend has it that a group of nineteenth century American tycoons were developing a town way out on the edge of the Wild West and decided to try something new. They'd found that corner buildings were worth more than those located mid-block, so it stood to reason that a town with more corners would do well. The result? A downtown with a tight street grid and intersections as little as 200 feet apart.

I don't know if those side-burned fellows actually made the fortune they wanted, but that town did indeed grow up to be a prosperous city that enjoys some of the highest rates of walking, biking, and transit ridership in the nation. The story of Portland, Oregon is essential for planners seeking to understand the key to developing walkable, transitfriendly communities: a well-connected street network featuring short blocks and numerous intersections.

CREATING MORE DIRECT CONNECTIONS SHORTENS TRAVEL TIME, WHICH EFFECTIVELY BRINGS PEOPLE CLOSER TO THEIR DESTINATIONS.

I know what you're thinking: "Yeah, that's nice, but we're not Portland." Do shorter blocks and more intersections – that is, greater street connectivity – provide any benefits for communities that don't have a dense urban core?

In a recent report "Planning for Street Connectivity: Getting From Here to There," transportation planning experts Susan Handy, Robert G. Paterson, and Kent Butler analyzed thirteen communities (including four with populations in the 6,000 to 32,000 range) that have connectivity ordinances.¹

Most of the cities and towns in the study have set block length limits for local streets, generally falling in the range of 500 to 600 feet. Some have also placed maximum distance limits on spacing between intersections along arterial streets. Requirements vary according to the roadway context: higher-speed, wide streets such as commercial arterials need more

space between intersections and drive ways in order for traffic to flow properly, while more frequent cross streets in residential areas can help to slow traffic down.

Regardless of their size, communities can realize three major benefits from better connectivity: shorter trips; a wide variety of travel choices; and more cost effective public services and infrastructure.

Creating more direct connections shortens travel time, which effectively brings people closer to their destinations. With more available connections, community residents can get to schools, shopping centers, and other spots that may have simply been off their radar before – not because these places were too far away, but because they were too far out of the way.

Meanwhile, firefighters, police, and ambulance services can save precious minutes reaching the scene of an emergency, and can serve a broader area without driving up their operating costs. Similarly, greater connectivity can reduce costs of providing other services, such as waste collection, by decreasing travel time and mileage. According to Jim Parjon, former planning manager for Cary, North Carolina, the goal of achieving cost savings in public services was the number one priority behind the town's adoption of a connectivity ordinance in 1999.²

Another benefit: by creating more ways for people to get from point A to point B, communities can diversify the flow of traffic and, in many cases, also enable travel choices other than driving. This improves overall mobility and helps reduce congestion on overworked arterials.

But what about that popular suburban street type: the cul-de-sac? By definition ("bottom of the bag" in French), these streets are closed. And people often choose houses on them for that very reason.

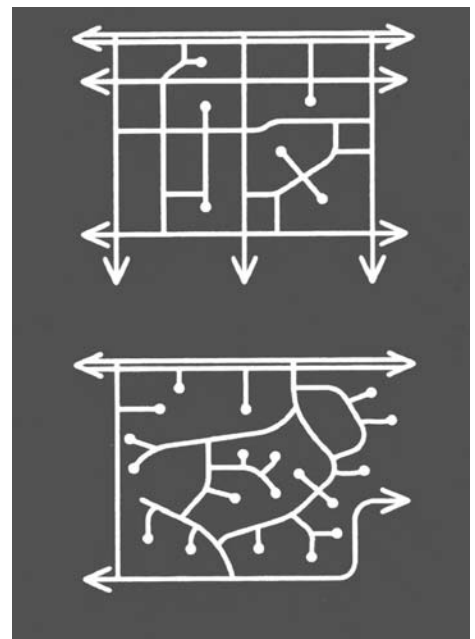
All the communities in the connectivity study do allow cul-de-sacs, but restrict their lengths, from as little as 200 feet to as much as 1,000. Several also direct

developers to create multiple entrances to their site, and/or include stubs to indicate future connections.

That being said, it's really not necessary to force open every subdivision in order to improve community-wide connectivity. It would be counter-productive (not to say, poor planning) to insist on a rigid connectivity principle applicable to every block. The key is to create strategically located links that benefit broad cross-sections of the community.

As respected transportation planner Walter Kulash notes, "Good connectivity does not necessarily mean eliminating every last cul-de-sac. The real purpose of connectivity is to provide a variety of routes for daily travel, such as to schools, grocery stores, and after school activities." Kulash further observes: "Proposed street connections that face strong opposition are often a scapegoat for the things people don't like about their community."

If you're connecting a quiet old neighborhood to an ugly strip shopping center, people aren't going to like it. Focus on the overall question of what you want for your community.³



Local street connectivity patterns compared — from diagram by City of Salem, Oregon

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¹ *Planning for Street Connectivity: Getting From Here to There* (American Planning Association PAS Report #515).

² Remarks during session at April 2004 American Planning Association conference in Washington, DC.

³ First quote by Kulash from recent email to author; second quote from remarks by Kulash during session at April 2004 APA conference.

Nelson County Growth Barometer

Throughout the 2nd Quarter, the number of zoning compliance permits issued for residential and commercial construction remained steady. The Planning Commission reviewed and issued 300 zoning compliance permits. The estimated construction cost of all permits was \$20,896,959. Of the total permits, 102 permits were issued for conventional single-family dwellings, and all residential permits resulted in 130 new dwelling units, including 102 conventional dwellings, 13 manufactured dwellings, 2 duplexes, 2 4-plex townhouses, and 1 3-plex townhouse. The total estimated residential construction cost for the 2nd quarter was \$14,900,649.

During the 2nd Quarter, most residential development occurred within the Urban, Suburban, and Deatsville Village commu-

nity character areas, as defined by the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Maps. Also, most residential development occurred within the Urban, KY 245, Bloomfield Road (US 62), and Springfield Road (US 150) corridors.

The following tables show the geographical distribution of permitted residential units by community character areas and geographic corridors:

Community Character Areas	% of total
Hamlet	1%
Naturally Sensitive	4%
Rural	19%
Suburban	23%
Town	2%
Urban	36%
Village	15%

Geographic Corridors	% of total
Urban Area	36%
Boston Road Corridor	5%
KY 245 Corridor	22%
Louisville Road Corridor	2%
Bloomfield Road Corridor	16%
New Haven Road Corridor	5%
Springfield Road Corridor	14%

Between April and June, the Planning Commission reviewed and issued zoning compliance permits for 8 new commercial structures and 2 new industrial structures, including a new distillery storage facility at Heaven Hill, new car wash on Bloomfield Road at Woodlawn Road, 2 new office buildings at Maywood, new retail center on Culpeper Street, and new mini-warehouse buildings on Arnold Lane in Bloomfield. ♦

Zoning Compliance Permit Analysis

Total Zoning Compliance Permits Issued by Type, Number, Estimated Cost, & Jurisdiction
January—June 2005

	Total		City of Bardstown		Nelson County	
	Permits	Est. Cost	Permits	Est. Cost	Permits	Est. Cost
Total Permits	584	\$49,213,994	118	\$15,978,441	458	\$33,235,553
Non-Commercial Permits	538	\$36,411,135	88	\$4,436,932	442	\$31,974,203
Agricultural Structures	28	\$233,350	0	\$0	28	\$233,350
Accessory Additions	7	\$56,387	1	\$987	6	\$55,400
Accessory Structures	129	\$1,468,630	32	\$232,645	97	\$1,235,985
Demolitions	2	\$0	0	\$0	2	\$0
Duplexes (8 units)	4	\$457,000	3	\$257,000	1	\$200,000
Manufactured Homes, double-wide	11	\$590,627	0	\$0	11	\$590,627
Manufactured Homes, single-wide	12	\$148,300	0	\$0	12	\$148,300
Multi-Family Alterations/Remodeling	1	\$25,000	0	\$0	1	\$25,000
Single-Family Additions	81	\$1,390,157	18	\$208,300	63	\$1,181,857
Single-Family Dwellings	249	\$30,504,058	29	\$3,554,000	220	\$26,950,058
Single-Family Alteration/Remodeling	10	\$262,626	5	\$184,000	5	\$78,626
Townhouses (15 units)	4	\$1,275,000	0	\$0	4	\$1,275,000
Total Commercial Permits	46	\$12,802,859	30	\$11,541,509	16	\$1,261,350
Commercial Accessory Structures	1	\$20,225	1	\$20,225	0	\$0
Commercial Additions	3	\$127,500	1	\$80,000	2	\$47,500
Commercial Alteration/Remodeling	10	\$267,800	7	\$143,800	3	\$124,000
Commercial Demolitions	1	\$0	1	\$0	0	\$0
Commercial Structures	16	\$8,290,463	8	\$7,393,213	8	\$897,250
Commercial Tenant Fit-Ups	6	\$798,000	5	\$738,000	1	\$60,000
Industrial Additions	4	\$601,800	3	\$486,800	1	\$115,000
Industrial Alterations/Remodeling	1	\$279,471	1	\$279,471	0	\$0
Industrial Structures	2	\$1,000,000	2	\$1,000,000	0	\$0
Public Structures	1	\$17,600	0	\$0	1	\$17,600
Public Addition	1	\$1,400,000	1	\$1,400,000	0	\$0

Tell Us a Story!

by Tim Butler, AICP, Immediate Past President, Kentucky Chapter of American Planning Association

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APA on a national level is undertaking an effort to better "tell the planning story." Quite frankly I didn't even know we had a story. I hope it ends well. The thought is that when persons, politicians, the public, and in fact anyone and everyone thinks of planning that they should think of APA. This is a noble cause and one that I think is worth the effort. APA needs to raise its profile and stature to the point where it is the "go to guy" on policy and information relating to land use issues. I think however that we need to be careful as to how we "tell the story." In fact if, as balance of this article provides, you were to let some fool like me tell the story or even decide how it's told, the results might be disastrous.

If I were responsible for telling the planning story, I would have to at least consider hiring a mime. That's right a mime. Wouldn't that be special? Can't you just picture the mime trapped in a planning box? I guess it would have to be a "big box" (he or she would never get out) but I would prefer a new urbanist box (I'll let you picture that one on your own). I think that the public would be genuinely entertained but I guess there might be some question about the quantity of information actually imparted to the public (with a mime you never, I repeat, never have to worry about the quality of information). I must admit in a rare moment of honesty that I never really understood the whole mime thing but that I am intrigued by the thought of a planner mime!

Is the planning story perhaps the greatest story ever told? (I know it's The Bible, but just pretend with me please). Picture this. Paul Farmer, Executive Director of APA with a pompadour hairdo playing the lead in the "10 planning commandments." Let's see if I still remember them from college (I was disappointed when they weren't on the AICP exam). Number 1: Thou shalt not divide a lot below the minimum lot size allowed in the applicable zone. Number 2: Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's zoning, CUP or anything else that is thy neighbors. Number 3: Thou shalt not bear false witness against anyone testifying at a zoning hearing. Well you know the rest. But couldn't you just picture Paul Farmer coming down from on high having communed with a burning bush (which is probably a violation of a landscaping ordinance) with the commandments etched in stone only to

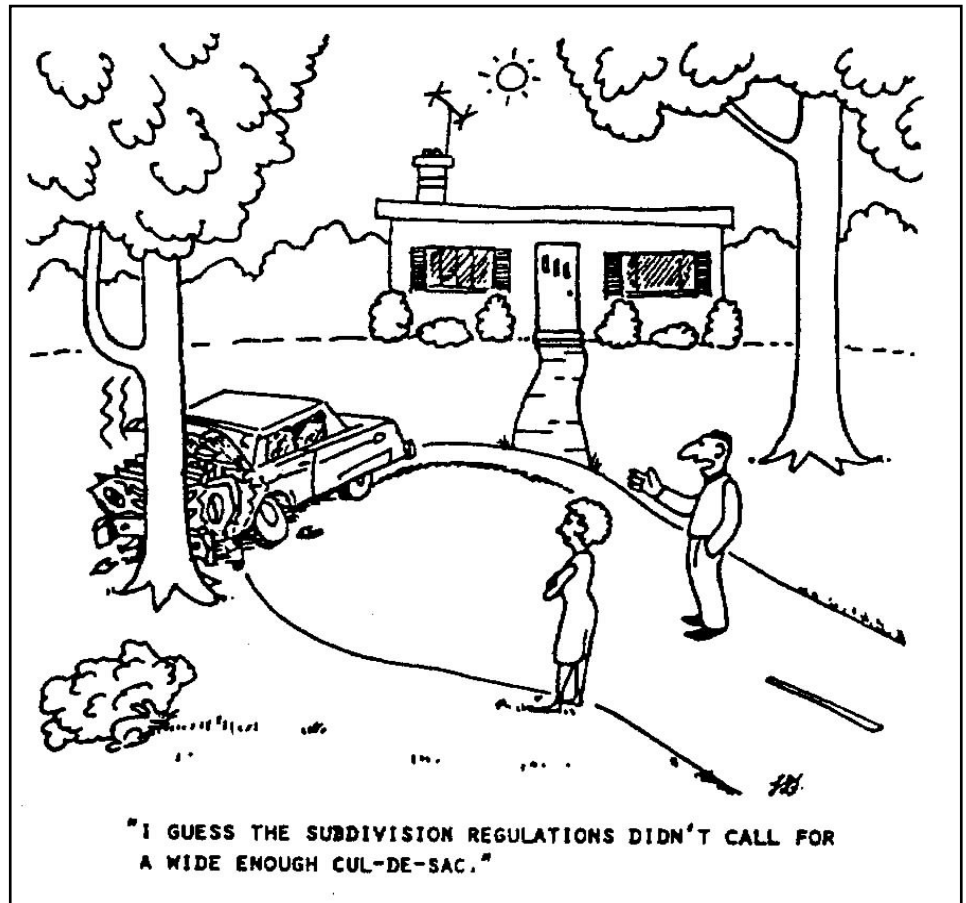
find that the planning flock is worshipping the graven image of urban sprawl? I suspect that he would be compelled to part the water in the retention basin and lead us all into the land of new urbanism. Academy Award winner? Probably not, but at least it would get part of the message across.

How about a cartoon character that tells the planning message? "Planner Man!" Able to plan a community in a single bound. Of course he would have to be a little geeky in real life (aren't we all). Part of his uniform would have to be a super pocket protector with all sorts of neat gadgets such as GIS, GPS, and whatnot. Absolutely he would get the girl every time, rescuing her from the evil developer. I can picture last minute escapes from the bulldozer can't you. Maybe the side kick could be an engineer or surveyor or something. I thought about a lawyer but the professional liability insurance would probably be a bear.

My final thought, and perhaps my best,

would be to organize and promote a "Blue Collar Planning Tour." I say bring the message to the masses. Larry the Planner Guy says, to someone who hasn't completed all of the conditions imposed as part of a development plan approval, "Git 'er done!" We might be able to entice Jeff Foxworthy to do a series of "you might be a planner if" jokes. For example, "If you're the only one at the public hearing who doesn't giggle when the term PUD is mentioned . . . You might be a planner." "If on your honeymoon night you worry that the hotel might be exceeding the maximum floor area ratio . . . You might be a planner." I could picture a whole write-in campaign for the best "you might be a planner if" jokes. It would be something that could bring us all together.

I guess the bottom line for me is that if you are going to tell the planning story, why not think outside the box. Besides, if you stay inside the box, you may run into the planning mime! ♦



Comp Plan Update

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the Comprehensive Plan research, and Phase 2 will include a citizen input survey and review of the goals and objectives (Chapter 5).

The citizen input surveys will be distributed in late July, and the Planning Commission will visit all legislative bodies to discuss the goals and objectives in August. Based on the survey results and discussions with the legislative bodies, the Planning Commission, along with an Update Committee, will either recommend readoption of the goals and objectives or will draft and recommend amended goals and objectives. Public workshops and hearings to present the goals and objectives will be held in August and September, and subsequently, the legislative bodies will either readopt or adopt amended goals and objectives in October.

Upon the readoption or amendment of the goals and objectives, the Planning Commission will start Phase 3, which will involve the review and amendment of the Land Use and Community Facilities Plans (Chapter 6) and Transportation Plan (Chapter 7). Phase 3 will involve numerous Committee meetings and public workshops through August 2006. Upon completion of the final Comprehensive Plan elements, the Planning Commission will hold a public hearing in September 2006.

Throughout the update process, the Planning Commission will also review and draft amendments to the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to ensure consistency and coordination of the Comprehensive Plan and implementation tools.

All committee meetings are open to the public. The Planning Commission encourages citizen input and participation in the update process. For more information on the Comprehensive Plan update, please contact Janet Johnston, Director, by phone 348-1805 or by email at

Making the Connection

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And there's the heart of it. In many communities, people feel the only way they can get peace and quiet is to buy a house on a cul-de-sac, even if it means taking on a higher mortgage and buying a third car. It's not that cul-de-sacs and private neighborhoods are bad. It's that there are so often no desirable alternatives. If the only good places kids can gather to play in our communities are asphalt turnarounds, we have a bigger problem than a lack of connectivity.

To take true advantage of the benefits of connectivity, we must first establish a vision for development patterns that work for all of our community's residents – those here now, and those we want to attract. Then we can focus on investments and connections that meet the needs and desires of not only those who love cul-de-sacs, but also those longing for pleasant, safe, connected communities: seniors who can't drive; young professionals drawn to vibrant urban centers; and families who want their kids to be able to walk to playgrounds, schools, and ice cream shops.

The process of creating a community is

rather like weaving a tapestry. Upon a framework of natural and built boundaries – rivers, mountains, and streets – we weave a fabric of buildings, private and public spaces, and natural areas.

We can change the fabric of our community as it evolves, but our options for so doing are largely defined by its framework. Connected street networks provide a framework for cohesive communities that can provide public services in a highly efficient way and can adapt to change without losing their core identity.

Whether the vision is to revitalize a flagging rural town, maintain character in a fast-growing village, or corral suburban sprawl, the quality and characteristics of the street network are, quite literally, the foundation for a community's success. It was true for the tycoons of yesteryear, and it's true for us today: good connections are fundamental for a community's long-term prosperity. ♦

For more information on the land use and transportation planning, visit the Planner's Web at www.plannersweb.com



Do cul-de-sacs set the framework for much of your community?

Upcoming July Meetings & Hearings

12th	11:00 a.m.	Development Review Board meeting
	7:30 p.m.	Planning Commission public hearing
13th	8:00 a.m.	Technical Committee meeting
14th	10:00 a.m.	Nelson County Board of Adjustment meeting
20th	9:30 a.m.	Subdivision Review Committee
26th	7:30 p.m.	Planning Commission meeting
27th	8:00 a.m.	Technical Committee meeting



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News

Tim Butler, attorney and land use planner and former Planning Commission Director, was recognized at the Kentucky Chapter of American Planning Association's Spring Conference at Lake Cumberland for his outstanding contributions and commitment to land use planning in Kentucky. KAPA presented Tim with the Chapter's most prestigious award, the William Bowdy Award, for his efforts, contributions, and achievements. Tim was recognized for his years of service as a professional planner, legal counsel, and KAPA member and officer. Prior to serving as the Director in Nelson County, Tim worked at the Jefferson County Planning Commission. Tim is a certified planner (AICP) and serves as the legal counsel for several Planning Commissions throughout Kentucky. Tim has been a very active member in KAPA and has served in many officer and committee positions, including President and Legislative Chair. Congratulations, Tim!!

**coming
soon**

Planning Commission website

www.ncpz.com

The Planning Commission's website will be online in August 2005. The website will include general information on the Planning Commission, Boards of Adjustment, Development Review Board, and Historical Review Board as well as downloadable ordinances, regulations, applications, brochures, forms, meetings and deadlines schedules, fee schedules, etc.