



**Department of Architectural Engineering and Urban
Planning**

ENPL333 – Spatial Planning 1

Lecture 3: Comprehensive Plan

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Definition

Comprehensive Plan - Definitions

- A long-term policy for the spatial distribution of objects, functions, activities and goals. It serves to coordinate government activities at the local level, regulate private development of land and can be used to organize and direct the social, economic, political, and physical forces within an urban area in a rational and productive manner.

Or

- A document of local government that sets forth its major policies concerning desirable future physical development. It provides a single, unified general physical design for an urban area, and attempt to clarify the relationships between physical-development policies and social and economic goals.

Comprehensive Plan - Definitions

Or

- The comprehensive plan is a tangible representation of what a city/urban area wants to be in the future, including:
 - what a city may look like in the future (the shape of its roads, the style of its buildings)
 - how a city will function in the future (what kinds of jobs people will have, how much pollution will be created)
 - what kinds of transportation will move people from one part of the city to another

General Aspects

- A comprehensive plan is an official public document involving not only a set of goals but also a policy to attain those goals. It may consist of a short report or multiple volumes.
- Some plans illustrate the future primarily with maps and pictures, and others describe it in text.
- Some municipalities may use the term master plan or general plan to refer to the document that is here called a comprehensive plan. The name does not matter, but the contents do.

What makes a plan comprehensive?

Three important factors make a plan comprehensive:

1. Geographic coverage

A comprehensive plan should include all of the land area subject to the planning or under the rule of the local government preparing the plan.

2. Subject matter

A comprehensive plan should include all subject matter related to the physical development of the community: land use, transportation, water and wastewater, drainage, parks and open space, school sites, other public and institutional activities, floodplains, and wetlands. In addition, the comprehensive plan should include at least the physical aspects of plans related to economic development and other programs. A comprehensive plan may be broader and may actually include some programmatic plans (e.g., economic development or recreation), but it should include at least all the physical plans for the community's future.

3. Time horizon

A comprehensive plan must consider a fairly long time horizon. Professional planners generally use a time horizon of about 20 years for comprehensive planning; time horizons longer than that tend to exceed our abilities to predict and control the future, and time horizons shorter than that are too short to encourage comprehensive thinking.

Goals

Goals

1. Achieving a pattern of land use that protects the public health

One aspect may be prohibiting densities of development that affect sunlight and good ventilation. It may involve separating industrial or commercial activities that produce health hazards from residential areas. It may mean banning certain types of industrial operations from the community entirely.

2. Public safety

This goal may manifest itself in numerous ways. It may mean requiring sufficient road width in new subdivisions to ensure that ambulances and fire equipment have adequate access in emergencies. Many communities have flood plain zoning to keep people from building in flood-prone areas. At the neighbourhood level it may mean planning for a street geometry that permits children to walk from home to school without crossing a major street. In a high-crime area it may mean laying out patterns of buildings and spaces that provide fewer sites where muggings and robberies can be committed unobserved.

3. Providing the community with adequate circulation

This means a system of streets and perhaps also parking facilities that make possible an orderly, efficient, and rapid flow of vehicular and pedestrian traffic. In many communities it also means providing for adequate public transportation.

4. Provision of services and facilities

An important part of most comprehensive planning efforts is determining the location of facilities such as parks, recreation areas, schools, social services, hospitals, etc. In addition to planning for facilities, it is also important to plan for a pattern of land use that facilitates the provision of public services . For example, the pattern of land use will affect the feasibility and cost of providing public water and sewer facilities. The location of housing relative to the location of schools will determine whether children can walk or must be bused to school.

5. Economic development

In thousands of communities, economic growth or maintenance of the existing level of economic activity is an important goal. A community may seek to develop a pattern of land use that provides for commercial and industrial sites, provides good access to such sites, and facilitates supplying utilities to such sites.

6. Environmental protection

This may involve restrictions on building in wetlands, steep slopes, or other ecologically valuable or fragile lands. It may also involve preservation of open space, prohibition or limitations on commercial or industrial activities that would degrade air quality, and so on. In recent years, many municipalities have also come to see a need to do what they can to reduce total greenhouse gas emissions, an attitude exemplified by the phrase “think globally, act locally.”

7. Wise and efficient expenditures of public funds/ Fiscal health

General Components

General Components

1. An inventory of existing conditions
2. A statement of needs and goals
3. Implementation strategies with time frames

Elements of Comprehensive Plan

Elements

The term element refers to a **part** of the plan that deals with a **discrete subject**, such as transportation or parks and open spaces. Less often, a plan element may **deal with a specific geographic** part of the urban area, such as the downtown, urban fringe, shoreline, etc.

In many plans, **elements are simply chapters of a larger report**, which is collectively called the comprehensive plan. In some communities, however, **elements are published as separate reports**; some of those may be so large that they seem like **separate plans**.

The **exact elements** that are part of a comprehensive plan **varies** among cities, however, in **most cases** a comprehensive plan **consists** of the **following elements**:

1. Land use

- The **most important element** of a comprehensive plan because everything that makes up a city has to be located somewhere.
- **Different classifications** are used to describe the ways in which land is used, such as for residential, commercial, and industrial uses.
- **Looks** at **existing land uses** by preparing an **inventory** of all the different types of land uses in the area and **using maps** that show how all the land in a city is being used, along with other important features of the city such as roadways or rivers.
- **Illustrates** the community's **future land use pattern**. **General and specific maps** show how all the land in the community will be used for different purposes in the future.
- **Coordinates future land** use with **related elements of the plan**, such as transportation and housing, in order to make sure that these elements work well together and provide enough space for future development

2. Housing

- Looks at both the **quantity** and **quality** of **housing** in the community.
- An **assessment** of **current housing conditions** looks at a wide range of **housing characteristics**, including the mix of different **types of housing** in the community (such as single-family homes and apartment buildings), the **age** and **physical condition** of housing, and issues related to **housing affordability** and **homeownership**
- **Information** on **how well the current housing stock** is serving the community **with forecasts of population and economic trends** to make **plans for future housing improvements**, including **how much housing** will be needed in the future and **what types of housing** will be needed.
- **Plans for future housing** are **coordinated** with **other plan elements**, like **land use and transportation**, to help **figure out the best locations** for **future housing development** and to **identify areas with existing housing** that may **require redevelopment**.

3. Transportation

- Looks at all **means that keeps a city connected**, ranging from roads and subways to rivers and sidewalks.
- An assessment of transportation conditions looks at **how well the city is connected** (can people get from here to there?) and **how well people are served by the transportation system** (can they get where they need to go?)
- Planning for **future transportation** involves looking at **options for improving** the existing transportation system, and **reducing the impact of transportation on the environment** by searching for alternatives to the automobile (like mass transit, bicycling, and walking), and **coordinate transportation options with land use changes**

4. Infrastructure and services

- Infrastructure includes roadways, power lines, water, and sewage systems, power plants etc.
- Services include schools, hospitals, police and fire protection
- Planning for infrastructure and services is **closely coordinated with the city's land use patterns** to figure out **where to locate** and **provide needed** infrastructure and services.

5. Environmental issues

- Comprehensive plans look at many **different types of environmental issues**, including **preserving** a city's **natural elements** (such as water resources or animal habitats), **providing open space** and recreational areas, and **preserving** nearby **agricultural areas**.
- The environmental element of a plan also **looks at the city's own impacts on the environment**, such as **how pollution** from factories or automobiles contributes to environmental degradation or negatively impacts human health.

Comprehensive Plan – Example 1

City of Edmonds – population 41,840





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Comprehensive Plan

Highway 99 Planning Project

Urban Forest Mgmt Plan

Plans | Long Range Planning

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+ Code Enforcement

Comprehensive Planning

▶ **2017 Comprehensive Plan (4.7 MB)**

Many of the city's long-range planning activities fall under the Growth Management Act (GMA) and are encompassed in the City's main [Comprehensive Plan document \(4.7 MB\)](#) which contains the following chapters and plan elements:

- [Title, index, Purpose and Scope, General Background \(1.3 MB\)](#)
- [Community Sustainability \(208 KB\)](#)
- [Land Use \(1.7 MB\)](#)
- [Housing \(334 KB\)](#)
- [Economic Development \(383 KB\)](#)
- [Community Culture and Urban Design \(201 KB\)](#)
- [Utilities \(96 KB\)](#)
- [Capital Facilities \(5.5 MB\)](#)
- [Transportation \(4.6 MB\)](#)

The comprehensive plan also includes additional plans which are adopted by reference and contained in separate documents:

- [Parks, Recreation and Open Space \(PROS\) Plan \(15 MB\)](#)
- [Community Cultural Plan \(6 MB\)](#)
- [Streetscape and Street Tree Plan \(16 MB\)](#)
- [Shoreline Master Program \(Title 24 of Edmonds Community Development Code\)](#)

For land use designations and patterns, you should also consult the [Comprehensive Plan Map \(2018\) \(4.3 MB\)](#). You may also want to explore other maps and studies that are available for reference.



<http://www.edmondswa.gov/2011-07-27-22-31-43/comprehensive-plan.html>

Comprehensive Plan – Example 2

City of Bellevue

Community Development / Planning / Comprehensive Plan

Planning

> Comprehensive Plan

- Comprehensive Plan Amendments
- Housing Needs Assessment
- Countywide Planning Policies
- Ratifications

Comprehensive Plan

Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan is the city's foundational policy document, guiding growth and development here for the next 20 years. The maps, goals and policies of the plan provide the basis for Bellevue's regulations, programs and services.

[Comprehensive Plan Story Map](#)

The City Council adopted the current Comprehensive Plan on Aug. 3, 2015 ([agenda memo](#)), dedicating it to Nan Campbell, former Bellevue mayor. The plan was updated following two years of public outreach.

Plan Organization

The comprehensive plan is organized into two volumes, one focused on citywide policies and the second on goals and policies for Bellevue's 16 neighborhood areas.

Volume 1 has background information about Bellevue and the community vision for the future, along with goals for elements such as housing, transportation, human services and parks.

Volume 2 contains goals and policies of the subarea (or neighborhood area) plans and a consolidated list of long-range transportation facility projects.

<https://planning.bellevuewa.gov/planning/comprehensive-plan>

Comprehensive Plan – Example 2

City of Bellevue - population 123,771

General Elements - Volume 1

- [Cover and Dedication](#)
- [Table of Contents](#)
- [Introduction and Vision](#)
- [Citizen Engagement](#)
- [Land Use](#)
- [Neighborhoods](#)
- [Housing](#)
- [Capital Facilities](#)
- [Utilities](#)
- [Transportation](#)
- [Economic Development](#)
- [Environment](#)
- [Human Services](#)
- [Parks, Recreation and Open Space](#)
- [Urban Design and the Arts](#)
- [Shoreline Management](#)
- [Glossary](#)



Subarea Plans - Volume 2

- [Cover, Introduction and Table of Contents](#)
- [BelRed](#)
- [Bridle Trails](#)
- [Crossroads](#)
- [Downtown](#) (2017)
- [Eastgate](#)
- [Factoria](#)
- [Newcastle](#)
- [Newport Hills](#)
- [North Bellevue](#)
- [Northeast Bellevue](#)
- [Richards Valley](#)
- [Southeast Bellevue](#)
- [Southwest Bellevue](#)
- [Wilburton/NE 8th St.](#)

[Comprehensive Transportation Project List](#)

[Citywide Comprehensive Plan map](#)

