

Development-Ready Communities

1st in a series of 4 Briefs geared towards creating an effective and efficient approach to development



Image of Lathrup Village's planned Village Center created by Clearzoning, Inc.

Great communities need to put their best foot forward to attract the kind of economic development that maintains or improves their quality of life. Up-to-date plan review services and development-related ordinances that incorporate state-of-the-art practices will send the message to prospective developers that the community values development and is therefore a sound investment. **This issue focuses on Planning for the Future**

Growth is inevitable and desirable, but destruction of community character is not. The question is not whether your part of the world is going to change. The question is how. Edward T. McMahon, The Conservation Fund

Development-Ready Community: Step 1. Plan for the Future

Often development approval is delayed because developers, property owners, residents, staff, and officials have differing views on the size, intensity, character, and location of development. **Planning for the future** is critical for any community to adapt to changes that occur over time. Community planning analyzes the needs of the current residential and business population and considers what is forecasted for the future. It asks the questions: “what kind of community do we want for ourselves and our children?” “what’s working?” and, “what needs work?” It is crucial to have solid planning behind development decisions—and to share those plans with the development community so they understand what the community wants. Common elements of successful community planning include:

- **Create a Community Vision**
 - Define what the community wants to be, what it should look like, and how it should function.
 - Reaffirm the community vision and goals regularly to ensure its use in land use policy and development decisions. Include residents, business owners and the development community in the visioning and goal-setting process
 - Communicate the vision and goals with the public on a regular basis, using a variety of media
- **Develop a comprehensive Master Plan** that reflects the community’s vision
 - Update every five (5) years (or sooner if significant changes occur in the community or region)
 - Provide opportunities for residents, business owners and the development community to provide input
 - Allow for growth in areas where infrastructure exists; include plans for infrastructure based on community needs
 - Promote the master plan within the community to educate, raise awareness, and encourage its use as a guide for development
 - Partner with the private sector to implement the plan
- **Prepare Capital Improvements Programs** that are updated annually that incorporate Master Plan strategies. Coordinate CIP plans between a community’s legislative body and planning commission.

Part of being development-ready means communicating the community vision and plans for the future with residents, business owners, and visitors using a variety of techniques at multiple points in time.