DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL AFFAIRS
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

Master Plan Primer

MASTER PLAN - GENERAL DESCRIPTION:
The master plan, sometimes referred to as a comprehensive plan, is a framework and guide for accomplishing community aspirations and intentions. It states goals and objectives and recommends courses of action for future growth and development of land, public facilities and services and environmental protection.

PLAN ELEMENTS THAT MAY BE INCLUDED:

- Statement of Objectives, Policies and Programs
- Relationship of Plan to the Trends/Plans of the Region
- Land Use
- Transportation
- Utility and Facility Plan
- Urban Influence Area
- Housing
- Cultural/Historical/Social Setting
- Educational Facilities
- Energy
- Environment
- Recreation and Tourism*

*the only plan element required by statutes (see C.R.S. 30-28-106 and 31-23-206)

BASIS/ BACKGROUND FOR PLAN INFORMATION:
The plan is based on inventories, studies, surveys, analysis of current trends and must consider social and economic consequences of the plan, existing and projected population.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN:
The principal purpose for a master plan is to be a guide for the achievement of community goals. A plan will also:

1. State and promote broad community values in its goals, objectives, policies and programs.
2. Establish a planning process for orderly growth and development, and economic health.
3. Balance competing interests and demands.
4. Provide for coordination and coherence in the pattern of development.
5. Provide for a balance between the natural and built environment.
6. Reflect regional conditions and consider regional impacts.
7. Address both current and long-term needs.

USING THE PLAN:
The adopted plan has the potential for many uses and will define the way it is to be used in its implementation section. Among the uses of the plan are the following:

1. A basis for regulatory actions: The plan serves as a foundation and guide for the provisions of the zoning regulations, subdivision regulations, the official map, flood hazard regulations, annexation decisions and other decisions made under these regulations.
2. A basis for community programs and decision making: The plan is a guide and resource for the recommendations contained in a capital budget and program, for a community development program, and for direction and content of other local initiatives, such as for water protection, recreation or open space land acquisition and housing.
3. A source for planning studies: Few plans can address every issue in sufficient detail. Therefore, many plans will recommend further studies to develop courses of action on a specific need.
4. A standard for review at the County and State level: Other regulatory processes identify the municipal plan as a standard for review of applications. Master plans are important to the development of regional plans or inter-municipal programs, i.e., a regional trail network or valley-wide transit program.
5. A source of information: The plan is a valuable source of information for local boards, commissions, organizations, citizens and business.
6. A long-term guide: The plan is a long-term guide by which to measure and evaluate public and private proposals that affect the physical, social and economic environment of the community.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR PREPARATION AND ADOPTION OF THE PLAN:
The planning commission is responsible for preparing the plan, distributing the plan, holding public hearings on the plan, and adopting the plan.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT:
Citizen participation helps to guide the planning commission in making decisions and in promoting community understanding of planning needs and issues. At least one public hearing will be held by the planning commission and by the legislative body before the plan is adopted. To generate support, understanding, and active participation in planning, however, more community involvement is usually needed. Citizens who are not well informed can present obstacles to the implementation of the plan by rejecting bylaws and by not supporting or participating in local programs.