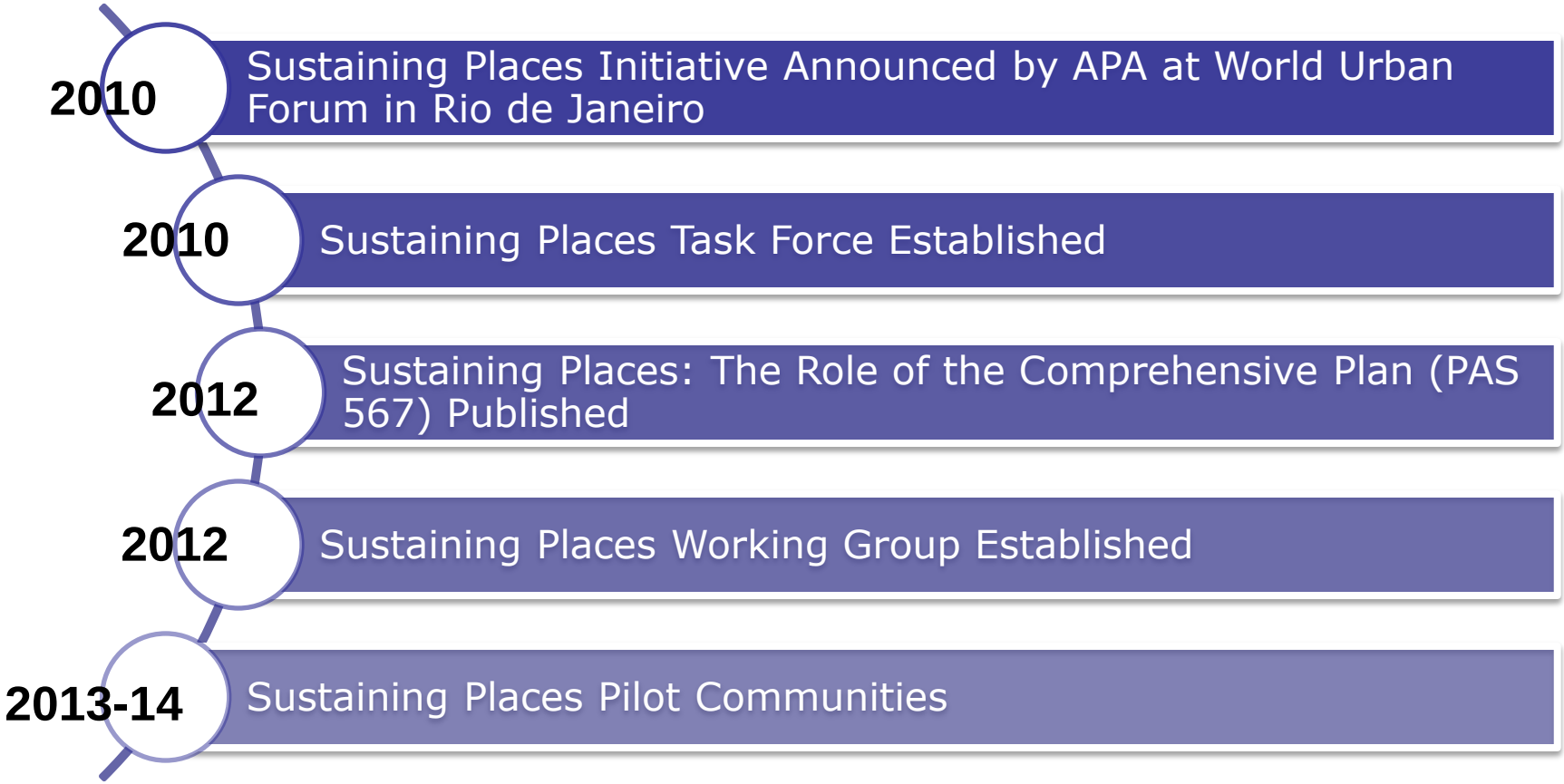
Comprehensive Plan Standards for Sustaining Places

The ultimate aim is to help planners and the communities they serve realize the powerful potential of the comprehensive plan to sustain twenty-first century places.

American Planning Association, January 2015

Sustaining Places Background



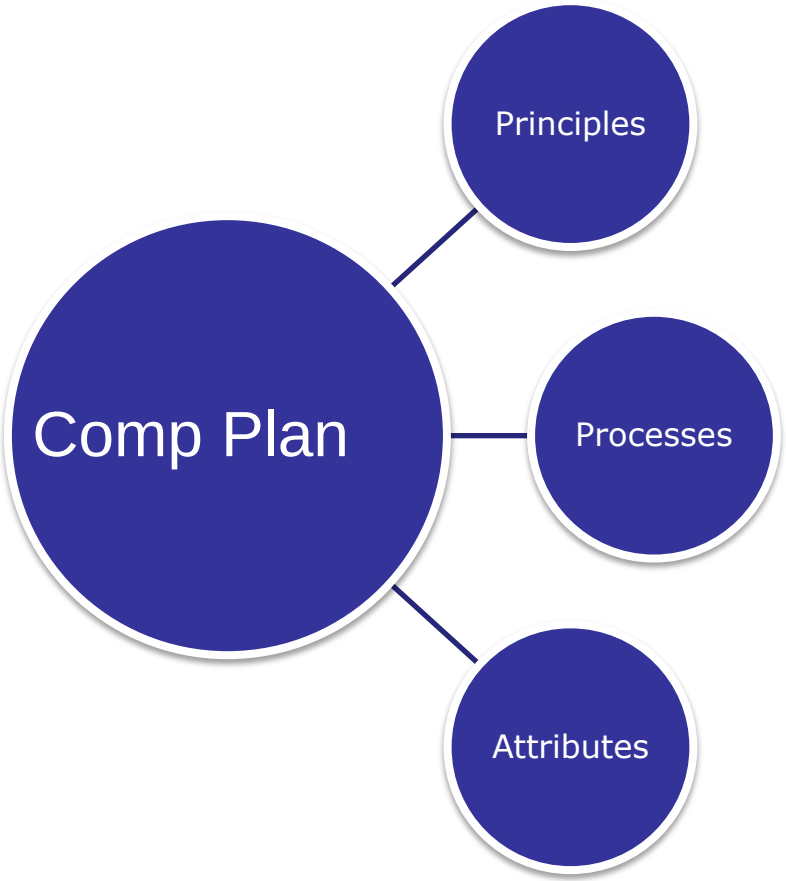
Pilot Communities

Pilot Community	Population
Savona, NY	822
Foxborough, MA	16,865
Wheeling, WV	28,213
Goshen, IN	31,719
Rock Island, IL	39,018
Auburn, WA	70,180
New Hanover County, NC	202,677
Oklahoma City, OK	599,199
Seattle, WA	634,535
Memphis/Shelby County, TN	927,644

The 21st Century Comprehensive Plan: Emerging Trends

- Resilience
- Systems Thinking
- Community Engagement
- Equity
- Implementation
- Adaptation

Comprehensive Plan Standards Framework



Comprehensive Plan Standards Framework

- **Principles:** normative *statements of intent* that underlie a plan's overall strategy, including its goals, objectives, policies, maps, and other content.
- **Processes:** *planning activities* that take place during the preparation of a comprehensive plan and define how it will be implemented.
- **Attributes:** *plan-making design standards* that shape the content and characteristics of comprehensive plans.
- **Best Practices:** *planning action tools* that activate the principles, processes, and attributes.

Plan Principles

1. Livable Built Environment
2. Harmony with Nature
3. Resilient Economy
4. Interwoven Equity
5. Healthy Community
6. Responsible Regionalism

1. Livable Built Environment

Ensure that all elements of the built environment, including land use, transportation, housing, energy, and infrastructure, work together to provide sustainable, green places for living, working, and recreation, with a high quality of life.

Photo: City of Albany

Livable Built Environment: Best Practices

1.1 Plan for multi-modal transportation.	1.7 Encourage design standards appropriate to the community context.
1.2 Plan for transit-oriented development.	1.8 Provide accessible public facilities and spaces.
1.3 Coordinate regional transportation investments with job clusters.	1.9 Conserve and reuse historic resources.
1.4 Provide complete streets serving multiple functions.	1.10 Implement green building design and energy conservation.
1.5 Plan for mixed land-use patterns that are walkable and bikeable.	1.11 Discourage development in hazard zones.
1.6 Plan for infill development.	

Definition Example

Best Practice

1.3 Coordinate regional transportation investments with job clusters.

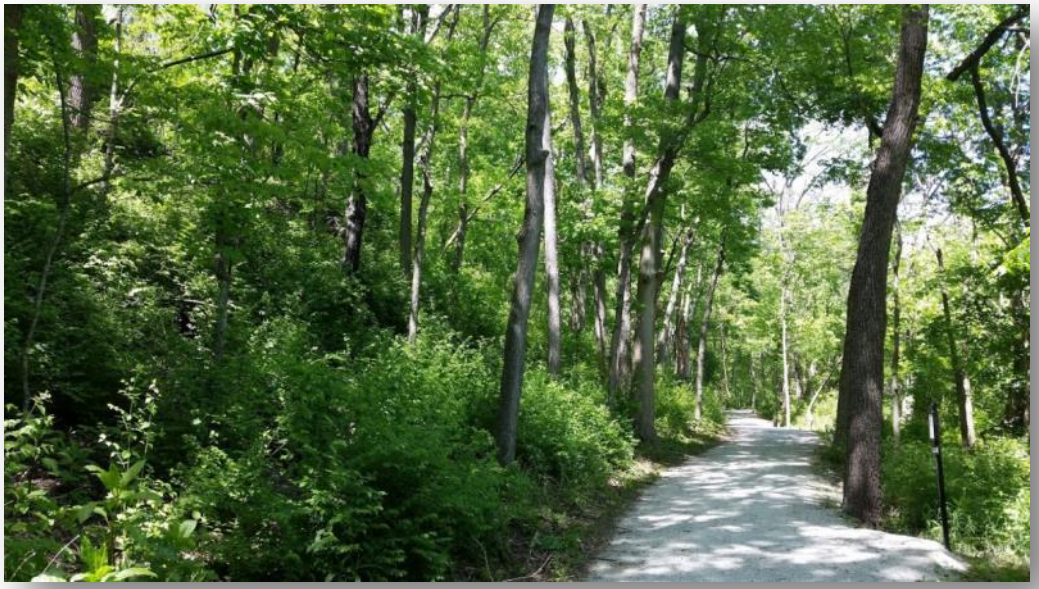
Photo: City of Austin

Definition

Coordinating regional transportation systems and areas of high employment densities can foster both transportation efficiency and economic development. This is important for **creating and improving access to employment opportunities**, particularly for disadvantaged populations without easy access to personal automobiles.

2. Harmony with Nature

Ensure that the contributions of natural resources to human well-being are explicitly recognized and valued and that maintaining their health is a primary objective.



3. Resilient Economy

Ensure that the community is prepared to deal with both positive and negative changes in its economic health and to initiate sustainable urban development and redevelopment strategies that foster green business growth and build reliance on local assets.

Photo: WRT

4. Interwoven Equity

Ensure fairness and equity in providing for the housing, services, health, safety, and livelihood needs of all citizens and groups.

Photo: City of Austin

5. Healthy Community

Ensure that public health needs are recognized and addressed through provisions for healthy foods, physical activity, access to recreation, health care, environmental justice, and safe neighborhoods.

Photo: City of Austin

Photo: East Donegal

Healthy Community: Best Practices

5.1 Reduce exposure to toxins and pollutants in the natural and built environment.	5.5 Provide accessible parks, recreation facilities, greenways, and open space near all neighborhoods.
5.2 Plan for increased public safety through reduction of crime and injuries.	5.6 Plan for access to healthy, locally-grown foods for all neighborhoods.
5.3 Plan for the mitigation and redevelopment of brownfields for productive uses.	5.7 Plan for equitable access to health care providers, schools, public safety facilities, and arts and cultural facilities.
5.4 Plan for physical activity and healthy lifestyles.	

6. Responsible Regionalism

Ensure that all local proposals account for, connect with, and support the plans of adjacent jurisdictions and the surrounding region.

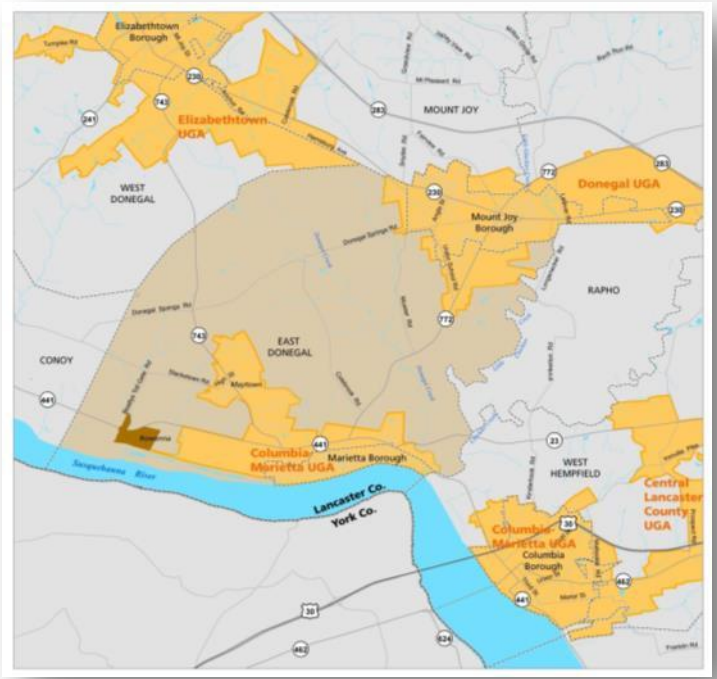


Image: WRT

Plan Processes

7. Authentic Participation
8. Accountable Implementation

7. Authentic Participation

Ensure that the planning process actively involves all segments of the community in analyzing issues, generating visions, developing plans, and monitoring outcomes.

Photos: City of Seattle

Authentic Participation: Best Practices

7.1 Engage stakeholders at all stages of the planning process.	7.5 Provide ongoing and understandable information for all participants.
7.2 Seek diverse participation in the planning process.	7.6 Use a variety of communications channels to inform and involve the community.
7.3 Promote leadership development in disadvantaged communities during the planning process.	7.7 Continue to engage the public after the comprehensive plan is adopted.
7.4 Develop alternative scenarios of the future.	

8. Accountable Implementation

Ensure that responsibilities for carrying out the plan are clearly stated, along with metrics for evaluating progress in achieving desired outcomes.

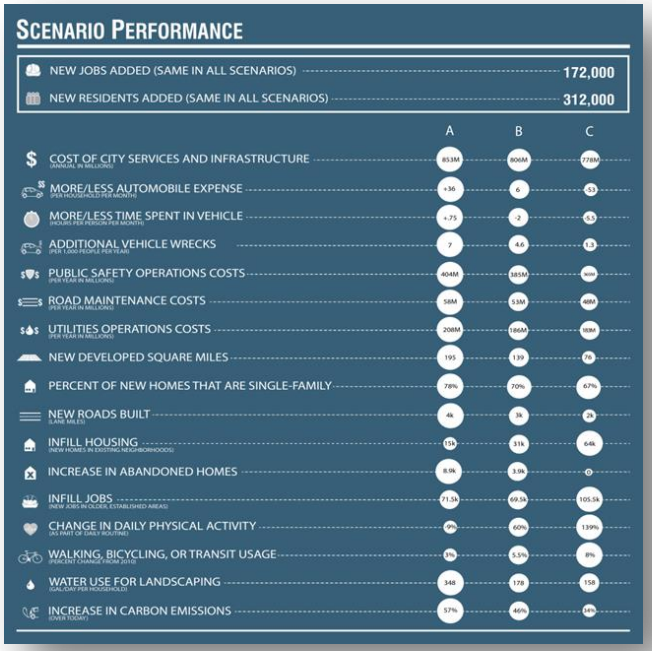


Image: City of Oklahoma City

Accountable Implementation: Best Practices

8.1 Indicate specific actions for implementation.	8.5 Identify funding sources for plan implementation.
8.2 Connect plan implementation to the capital planning process.	8.6 Establish implementation indicators, benchmarks, and targets.
8.3 Connect plan implementation to the annual budgeting process.	8.7 Regularly evaluate and report on implementation progress.
8.4 Establish interagency and organizational cooperation.	8.8 Adjust the plan as necessary based on the evaluation.

Plan Attributes

9. Consistent Content
10. Coordinated Characteristics

9. Consistent Content

Ensure that the plan contains a consistent set of visions, goals, policies, objectives, and actions that are based on evidence about community conditions, major issues, and impacts.

Image: MV2040 General Plan

Consistent Content: Best Practices

9.1 Assess strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.	9.5 Set objectives in support of the goals.
9.2 Establish a fact base.	9.6 Set polices to guide decision-making.
9.3. Develop a vision of the future.	9.7 Define actions to carry out the plan.
9.4 Set goals in support of the vision.	9.8 Use clear and compelling features to present the plan.

10. Coordinated Characteristics

Ensure that the plan includes creative and innovative strategies and recommendations and coordinates them internally with each other, vertically with federal and state requirements, and horizontally with plans of adjacent jurisdictions.

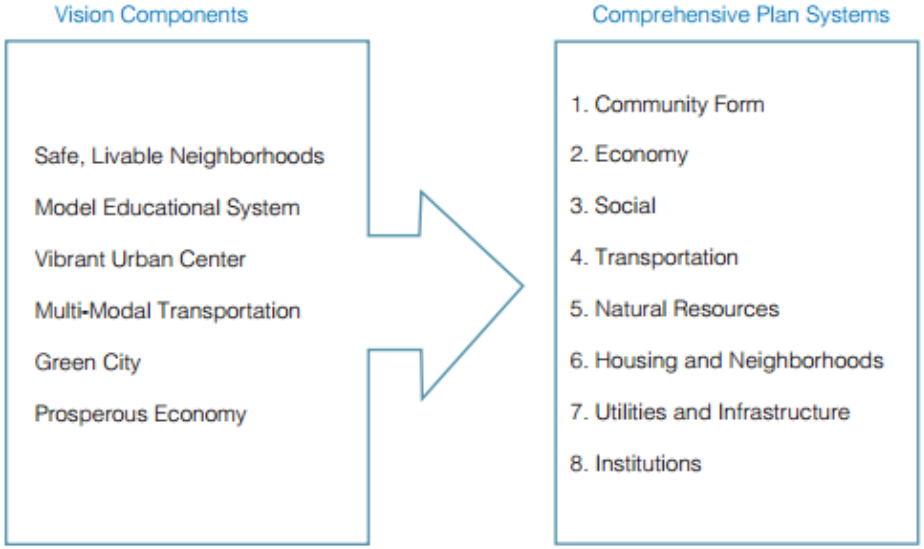


Image: City of Albany

Plan Scoring System

Procedure to measure a comprehensive plan against a national standard

Establishes scoring criteria for best practices

- Not Applicable
- Not Present (0 points)
- Low (1 point)
- Medium (2 points)
- High (3 points)

We are evaluating establishing a formal plan recognition program

APPENDIX C: SCORING MATRIX

TOTAL SCORES		NOTES
PRINCIPLES		
1. LIVABLE BUILT ENVIRONMENT		
2. HARMONY WITH NATURE		
3. RESILIENT ECONOMY		
4. INTERWOVEN EQUITY		
5. HEALTHY COMMUNITY		
6. RESPONSIBLE REGIONALISM		
I. TOTAL PRINCIPLES SCORE (ADD 1–6)		
PROCESSES		
7. AUTHENTIC PARTICIPATION		
8. ACCOUNTABLE IMPLEMENTATION		
II. TOTAL PROCESSES SCORE (ADD 7 AND 8)		
ATTRIBUTES		
9. CONSISTENT CONTENT		
10. COORDINATED CHARACTERTISTICS		
III. TOTAL ATTRIBUTES SCORE (ADD 9 AND 10)		
TOTAL PLAN SCORE (ADD I, II, AND III)		
TOTAL POINTS AVAILABLE *Count the number of applicable practices and multiply by 3. The maximum is 255 points (if all practices are applicable).*		
PLAN SCORE PERCENTAGE *(Total Plan Score/Total Points Available)*		

Level of Achievement (based on Plan Score Percentage)
Designated: 70–79%
Silver: 80–89%
Gold: 90–100%

For more info:

www.planning.org/sustainingplaces/compplanstandards/

Please take our survey by Monday!

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/compplanstandards

David Rouse, Research Director
American Planning Association
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202.3491010

Seattle 2035
YOUR CITY, YOUR FUTURE

Using *Sustaining Places* to Update Your Plan

City of Seattle
Department of Planning & Development

Seattle Snapshot

- 662,400 pop (2015)
- 83 square miles
- 1/3 people of color
- 41% solos
- 21% millennials
- Housing 50/50
- Transportation: 50% SOV
- Tech, Aerospace, Life Sciences, Maritime

Seattle 2035

Plan Milestones

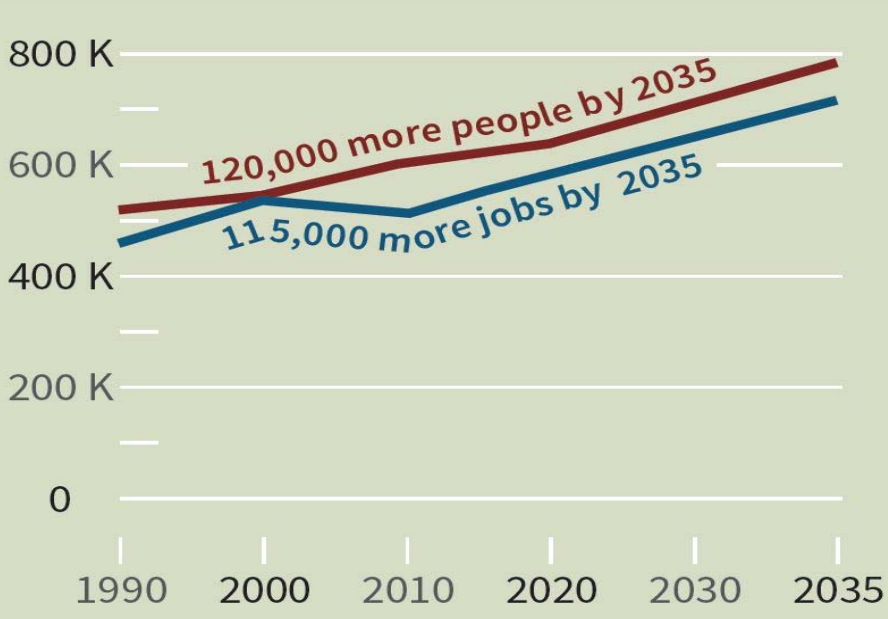
- 1990 Growth Management Act
- 1994 Towards a Sustainable Seattle
- 1994-2000 Neighborhood Planning
- 2004 Last update
- **2016 Seattle 2035**
- 2023 Future update

Seattle's pioneering plan for a sustainable city combines the principles of smart growth, urban design, and public participation with principles of sustainable place.

Seattle 2035

Urban Village Strategy drives many best practices

Seattle Population and Employment Growth (1990-2035)



Seattle 2035

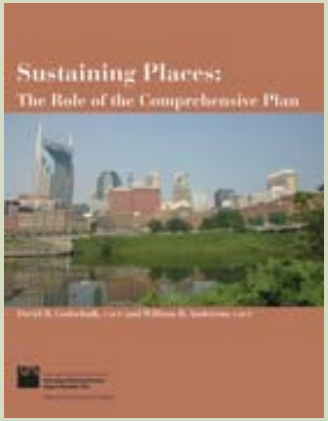
Four Core Values

- **Race and** Social Equity
- Community
- Environmental Stewardship
- Economic Opportunity & Security

Seattle 2035

October 2013 - April 2015
Building Awareness & Identifying Issues
May - June 2015
Consider Alternatives
July - September 2015
Review Draft Plan
October - December 2015
Mayor's Recommended Plan
Early 2016
Final Plan
Ongoing Public Engagement

APA's Assessment of 2004 Plan



Seattle's pioneering plan for a sustainable city combines the principles of smart growth, urban design, and public participation with principles of sustainable place.

TOWARD A SUSTAINABLE SEATTLE SCORECARD

	Low	Moderate	High
Livable Built Environment. The plan focuses on urban villages, transit-oriented development (TOD), and multimodal transportation; it emphasizes an integrated approach to planning, environment, and design.			X
Harmony with Nature. The plan has strong environmental and energy elements, including watershed protection, tree protection, and urban forest management.			X
Resilient Economy. The economy is not one of the emphases of the plan.		X	
Interwoven Equity. The plan emphasizes empowering neighborhoods.			X
Healthy Community. The plan is very good on this criterion.			X
Responsible Regionalism. The plan could be improved.		X	
Authentic Participation. The plan provides for extensive outreach and has an educational component.			X
Accountable Implementation. The plan sets ambitious and innovative goals for the urban villages strategy, but the implementation procedures were not specific.		X	

Seattle 2035

Assessing Our Current Plan: Processes & Attributes

Strengths	Areas for Improvement
• Transportation options • Mixed land use • Urban design standards • Green building • Green infrastructure • Access to employment	• Equity • Climate adaptation • Post disaster economic recovery • Regionalism • Authentic Participation • Transportation standards • Open space

Seattle 2035

Plan Framework

- ~~Urban Village Strategy~~
- **Growth Strategy**
- Land Use
- Shoreline Management
- Housing
- Economic Development
- Container Port
- Capital Facilities
- Transportation
- Utilities
- Environment
- **Parks and Open Space**
- ~~Human Development~~
- **Community Well-being**
- ~~Cultural Resources~~
- **Arts and Culture**
- Neighborhood Planning

Seattle 2035

Large Family of Long Range Plans

Adopted by Ordinance

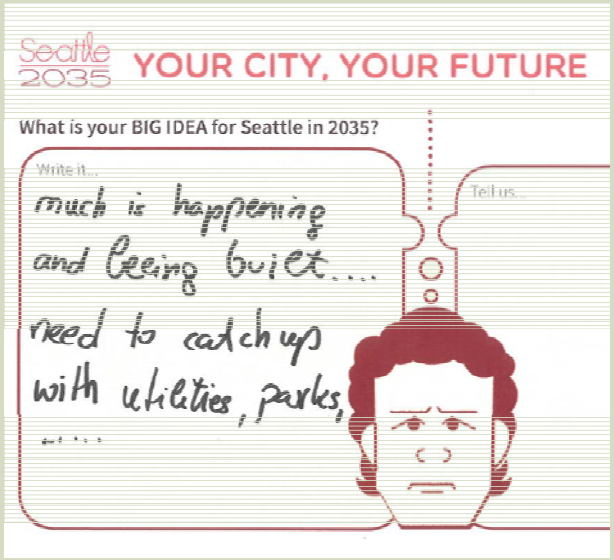
- Comprehensive Plan

Adopted by Resolution

- Transportation Strategic Plan
- Modal Master Plans (Transit, Bicycle, Pedestrian, Freight)
- Climate Action Plan/ Climate Preparedness Strategy
- Long Term Recovery Framework
- Affordable Housing Strategy
- Neighborhood Plans/ Area Plans
- Parks Strategic Plan
- Utilities Strategic Plans
- Plans to support voter levies

Seattle 2035

Challenges



- Racial disparities
- Unprecedented growth
- Affordable housing
- Inadequate transit
- Imported talent
- Quality of life impacts
- Refresh the Urban Village Strategy?

Seattle 2035

Relationship to STAR Community Ratings

BUILT ENVIRONMENT 93.5/100	CLIMATE & ENERGY 90/100	EDUCATION, ARTS & COMMUNITY 61.5/70	ECONOMY & JOBS 83.1/100	EQUITY & EMPOWERMENT 75.8/100	HEALTH & SAFETY 90.9/100	NATURAL SYSTEMS 83.2/100	INNOVATION & PROCESS 50/50
Ambient Noise & Light 2.4/5	Climate Adaptation 15/15	Arts & Culture 15/15	Business Retention & Development 20/20	Civic Engagement 10.5/15	Active Living 14.9/15	Green Infrastructure 19.6/20	Best Practices & Processes 10/10
Community Water Systems 15/15	GHG Mitigation 20/20	Community Cohesion 15/15	Green Market Development 14.7/15	Civil & Human Rights 10/10	Community Health & Health Systems 20/20	Invasive Species 6.4/10	Exemplary Performance 10/10
Compact & Complete Communities 19.6/20	Greening the Energy Supply 12.2/15	Educational Opportunity & Attainment 14/20	Local Economy 10.9/15	Environmental Justice 5.3/15	Emergency Prevention & Response 14.3/15	Natural Resource Protection 20/20	Local Innovation 25/25
Housing Affordability 15/15	Industrial Sector Resource Efficiency 10/10	Historic Preservation 7.9/10	Quality Jobs & Living Wages 17.4/20	Equitable Services & Access 18.8/20	Food Access & Nutrition 12.7/15	Outdoor Air Quality 15/15	Regional Priority & Collaboration 5/5
Infill & Redevelopment 9/10	Resource Efficient Buildings 10.5/15	Social & Cultural Diversity 9.6/10	Targeted Industry Development 5.6/15	Human Services 12.4/20	Indoor Air Quality 2.4/5	Water in the Environment 14/20	
Public Spaces 15/15	Resource Efficient Public Infrastructure 7.3/10		Workforce Readiness 14.5/15	Poverty Prevention & Alleviation 18.8/20	Natural & Human Hazards 13/15	Working Lands 8.2/15	
Transportation Choices 17.5/20	Waste Minimization 15/15				Safe Communities 13.6/15		

Seattle 2035

Looking Forward

Using the standards and best practices for future phases

- Public discussion of Draft Plan this fall
- Planning Commission review
- Legislative process with a new City Council
- Attributes
- Measuring plan performance

Seattle 2035

IMAGINEAUSTIN
Imagine Austin: Our plan for the future
Webinar: Best Practices and Lessons Learned for Sustainable Comprehensive Planning
Matt Dugan, City of Austin, Planning and Zoning Department
August 21, 2015

Comprehensive Plan are hard to

- Create
- Communicate
- Implement

This is difficult work

City Council Goals

Community Engagement

Sustainability

Implementation

Create

Create

Engagement + Data

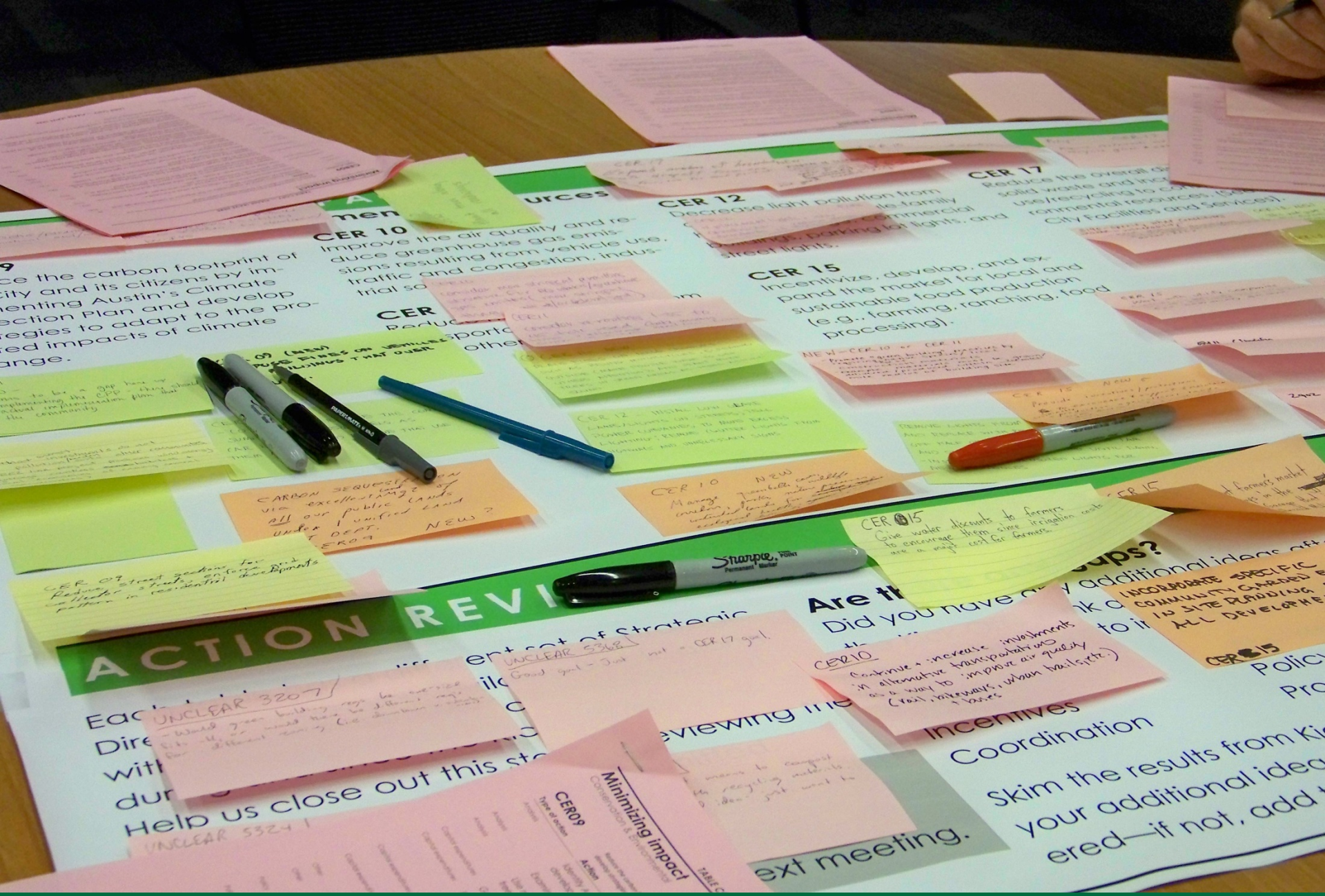
Create

Lessons Learned

- Stay on schedule
- Less traditional outreach, more targeted outreach
- Involve those that will implement
- Dialog and aggregation
- The limits of the plan

Communicate

Communicate



Communicate

Lessons Learned

- **Messaging the what and why**
- **Sound bites for *planning*?**
- **Multiple formats**
- **Top-down *and* bottom-up approach**
- **Media is interested in controversy**

266 pages

(343 with appendices)

231 Actions

189 Policies

8 Priority Programs

1 Growth Concept Map

1 Vision

By the Numbers

Planning vs. Implementation

Community Engagement

Regulatory Framework

Capital Investments

Organizational Alignment

Partnerships

Levels of Implementation

Priority Programs

1. Invest in a compact and connected Austin
8. Revise development regulations and processes

5. Creative Economy
7. Create a “Healthy Austin” program

3. Workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses
6. Household Affordability

2. Sustainably manage our water resources
4. Green Infrastructure

Implement

Priority Programs Teams

- Department lead(s)
- Project manager / champion
- Staff from multiple departments
- Work program with short-term and ongoing steps
- Reports on progress for annual report

The Road Ahead

1. Get to work
2. Act for the whole
3. Expand the growth-shaping toolkit
4. Measure progress and adapt

Implement

Lessons Learned

- Fund and staff implementation
- Interdepartmental teams
- Leadership / support from
- Connect the dots
- Measure and report out
- Become a doer

August 21, 2015 Webinar

Best Practices and Lessons Learned for Sustainable Comprehensive Planning

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