



Smart Planning

Examples of comprehensive plan and annexation checklists to assist with planning and building sustainable communities in Iowa using Smart Planning elements and principles

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Comprehensive Plan Checklist

This is a non-technical way of assessing the extent to which the Smart Planning elements found in *Iowa Code* 18B.2 are included in a city's or county's existing comprehensive plan, and serves as a checklist for communities wishing to draft new comprehensive plans that are consistent with the Smart Planning elements. In addition, this informal evaluation will assist with shared vision for Smart Planning in a region. Identifying areas of improvement will contribute to a future technical analysis and will help with focusing on specific issues that are a concern to the overall health of Iowa. It is unlikely that any plan will receive a check mark in each box provided below.

1) **Public Participation** - Information relating to public participation during the creation of the comprehensive plan or land development regulations:

- Document the public participation process.
- Compile objectives, policies, and goals identified in the public comments that have been received.
- Identify groups or individuals comprising any work groups or committees that were created to assist the decision-making body of the municipality.

2) **Issues and Opportunities** - Information relating to the primary characteristics of the municipality and a description of how each of those characteristics impacts future development of the municipality:

- Historical information about the municipality
- Municipality's geography, natural resources, natural hazards
- Population, demographics, labor force
- Types of employers and industry
- Political and community institutions
- Housing
- Transportation
- Educational resources
- Cultural and recreational resources
- Characteristics and community aesthetics important to future development

3) **Land use Element** - Objectives, information, and programs that identify current land uses within the municipality and that guide the future development and redevelopment of property, consistent with the municipality's characteristics identified under the Issues and Opportunities Element:

- Amount, type, intensity, and density of existing land use.
- Trends in the market price of land used for specific purposes.
- Plans for future land use throughout the municipality.
- Information on property that has the possibility for redevelopment.
- A map relating to the current and future provision of utilities within the municipality.
- Information and maps that identify the current and future boundaries for areas reserved for soil conservation, water supply conservation, flood control, and surface water drainage and removal.
- An analysis of the current and potential impacts on local watersheds and air quality.

4) Housing - Objectives, policies, and programs to further the vitality and character of established residential neighborhoods and new residential neighborhoods and plans to ensure an adequate housing supply that meets both the existing and forecasted housing demand. The comprehensive plan or land development regulations may follow or identify:

- An inventory and analysis of the local housing stock which may include specific information such as age, condition, type, market value, occupancy, and historical characteristics of all the housing within the municipality.
- Specific policies and programs that promote the development of new housing and maintenance or rehabilitation of existing housing and that provide a range of housing choices that meet the needs of the residents of the municipality.

5) Public Infrastructure and Utilities - Objectives, policies, and programs to guide future development of the following:

- Sanitary sewer service
- Storm water management
- Water supply
- Solid waste disposal
- Wastewater treatment technologies
- Recycling facilities
- Telecommunications facilities
- Comprehensive plan or land development regulations may include estimates regarding future demand for such utility services.

6) Transportation - Objectives, policies, and programs to guide the future development of the following:

- Safe, convenient, efficient, and economical transportation system
- Plans for a transportation system may be coordinated with state and regional transportation plans.
- Consideration pertaining to the need for diverse modes of transportation should also include accessibility, improved air quality, and interconnectivity of the various modes of transportation.

7) Economic Development - Objectives, policies, and programs to promote:

- Stabilization, retention, or expansion of economic development and employment opportunities
- An analysis of current industries and economic activity
- Identify economic growth goals for the municipality
- Identify locations for future brownfield or grayfield development

8) Agricultural and Natural Resources - Objectives, policies, and programs addressing the following:

- Preservation of agricultural and natural resources
- Protection of agricultural and natural resources

9) Community Facilities - Objectives, policies, and programs to assist future development of the following:

- Educational facilities
- Cemeteries
- Health care facilities
- Child care facilities
- Law enforcement
- Fire protection facilities
- Libraries
- Other governmental facilities that are necessary or desirable to meet the projected needs of the municipality.

10) Community Character - Objectives, policies, and programs to identify characteristics and qualities:

- That make the municipality unique
- That are important to the municipality's heritage
- That are important to the municipality's quality of life

11) Hazards Element - Objectives, policies, and programs that identify:

- Natural and other hazards that have the greatest likelihood of impacting the municipality.
- Natural and other hazards that pose a risk of catastrophic damage as such hazards relate to land use and development decisions.
- Steps necessary to mitigate risk after considering the local hazard mitigation plan approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

12) Intergovernmental Collaboration - Objectives, policies, and programs for joint planning and joint decision-making with other municipalities or governmental entities which include the following:

- School districts and drainage districts, for siting and constructing public facilities and sharing public services.
- Identify existing or potential conflicts between the municipality and other local governments related to future development of the municipality and may include recommendations for resolving such conflicts.
- Identify opportunities to collaborate and partner with neighboring jurisdictions and other entities in the region for projects of mutual interest.

13) Implementation - A compilation of programs and specific actions necessary to implement any provision of the comprehensive plan. Including changes to the following:

- Any applicable land development regulations
- Any applicable official maps
- Any applicable subdivision ordinances

Annexation Checklist

This serves as a checklist for communities wishing to be consistent with the Smart Planning principles during a city's or county's annexation process. In addition, this informal evaluation will assist with shared vision for Smart Planning in a region. Identifying areas of improvement will contribute to a future technical analysis and will help with focusing on specific issues that are a concern to the overall health of Iowa. It is unlikely that any plan will receive a check mark in each box provided below.

1) Collaboration

- Were the comprehensive plans of neighboring jurisdictions reviewed and considered during the annexation planning process?
- Is this annexation consistent with any formal cooperative agreements on land use, transportation, annexation, etc., that may exist with neighboring jurisdictions? (28E agreements; annexation moratoria; cooperative fringe area plans, etc.).

2) Efficiency, Transparency, and Consistency

- Does the community have a comprehensive plan? If so, does the plan anticipate the proposed annexation? (Should this include fiscal impact models? Should fiscal impact models be included in the comprehensive plan?)
- Were citizens active in the development of the comprehensive plan? (The Public Participation element of a plan prepared consistent with Smart Planning.)
- Does the plan address the provision of services to the proposed annexation? If so, does it include a timetable for the provision of services?
- Does the community have a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP)? If so, does the CIP anticipate the provision of capital improvements to the proposed annexation?

3) Occupational Diversity

- Does the comprehensive plan designate the proposed annexation as potential commercial or industrial future land use(s)?
- If 'yes' to (a), does the comprehensive plan, or a regional economic development plan identify needed economic sectors that projects on this land could fill?
- If yes to (a), will potential commercial or industrial development in this location be in proximity to existing housing, infrastructure and transportation alternatives?

4) Revitalization

- Does the comprehensive plan set forth a revitalization strategy?
- What impact will the proposed annexation have on the plan's revitalization strategy for established commercial, industrial or residential neighborhoods?
 - The need to dedicate resources to maintaining existing infrastructure?
 - The need to maintain a concentration of commercial activity in the revitalizing area?
 - The vacancy/occupancy rates of areas in need of revitalization, and the potential impact of the proposed annexation on these rates?

5) Housing Diversity

- Does the comprehensive plan designate proposed annexation for residential development?
- Does the comprehensive plan, or a separate housing plan, identify needed housing types in needed price ranges?
 - Is a project proposed for the annexed property that will satisfy one or more of the identified needed housing types/price ranges?
- Is the proposed annexation near public transportation (if applicable) and/or employment centers?

6) Agricultural Protection and Natural Resources

- Does the comprehensive plan identify critical resource areas?
- Does the comprehensive plan identify areas suitable for agricultural land preservation?
- If yes to the first two, is the proposed annexation outside the areas identified in the first two?
- Will the proposed annexation encourage the extension of infrastructure and services to or through critical resource areas or prime agricultural land?
- Will the development of the proposed annexation likely result in conflicts with adjacent rural (non-urban) land uses?

7) Sustainable Design

- Will the proposed annexation result in “strip” development pattern?
- Does the comprehensive plan or other community policies promote sustainable design principles, such as stormwater management, LEED construction?
- Will the proposed annexation result in brownfield redevelopment?

8) Transportation Diversity

- Does the proposed annexation easily integrate into existing grid street network?
- Does the proposed annexation easily integrate into existing transit routes (if applicable)?
- Does the proposed annexation integrate into existing trail networks (if applicable)?
- Is the proposed annexation within sufficient proximity to existing development to promote walkability?
- Does the comprehensive plan or other community policies promote mixed use, complete streets, or walkable neighborhoods?