

URSI 661 : Long Range and Strategic Planning **Spring 2007**

Instructor: Professor David Laverny-Rafter, Ph.D., AICP

Contact: Office-Morris 106, Office Hours-. Monday-3-6, and Wed. 9-12 a.m (other times by appt.)
Telephone: (507)389-1540, FAX (507)389-6377,
E-mail: rafter@mnsu.edu

Course Rationale

This course will focus on the principles and methods utilized in long-range comprehensive and strategic planning. Specifically, the goal of the course is to help each student develop:

- I. An appreciation of the significance of comprehensive planning for local governments.
- II. An understanding of the structure, format, and methods used in producing a comprehensive plan.
- III. An understanding of principles and practices of strategic planning and visioning.
- IV. An opportunity for students to fine-tune their professional oral and written communication skills.

Course Structure

URSI 661 will follow a **seminar** structure which means that the emphasis of each class session will be on active student participation. Class meetings may include some presentations of new material by the instructor but student-led discussions of issues raised in text, exercises and presentations by students of assigned projects will constitute the majority of class time. In this regard, all students will need to sign up to serve as a **Lead Discussant** of one or more assigned readings where you will describe and analyze the major issues in readings.

Course Requirements and Grade Breakdown

Urban planners and managers need professional communication skills (e.g. writing analytical memos, making oral presentations, etc.), so the course will include several types of communication assignments. In addition there will be a field trip and final exam. Specifically, the course will include:

- I. Two written analytical memos: Using the memo format and responding to the questions raised in project assignments, 2 short (approximately 3-5 page single-spaced) written papers will be assigned analyzing case studies and examining the linkage of practice and theory (40%)
- II. Field Project-Comprehensive Plan Analysis (team project): Student teams (of 2 students each) will select a city in Twin Cities metro area and analyze the city's comprehensive plan based on criteria identified in Chapter 3 (pp. 78-82) of course textbook. (30%)
- III. Lead Discussant/Participation : Each student will serve as Lead Discussant of specific chapters and articles assigned in the course schedule and actively participate in class (10%)
- IV. Final Examination : The course will include an essay final exam. (20%)

Accommodations

Every attempt will be made to accommodate qualified students with disabilities. If you are a student with a documented disability, please see me as early in the semester as possible to discuss the necessary accommodations, and or contact the Disability Services office at 389-2825 (V) or 1-800-627-3529 (MRS/TTV).

COURSE SCHEDULE-MSU

Date	Topic	Required Reading/Assign. Due
THE PLANNING AGENDA		
1/16	Introduction to Course	For background info.on planning practice, see PRACTICE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT PLANNING, 3 rd ed. By Charles Hoch, ed.
1/23	The Comprehensive Plan – What is it and why is it needed ?	Berke – Chs. 1
1/30	Sustainability, Smart Growth and Other Principles that Guide Planning Practice	Berke – Ch. 2 Newman & Kenworthy – Ch. 1 (R)
2/6	What Makes a “Good Plan?” Local Government Planning Environment	Berke – Ch. 3
2/13	MEMO #1 Presentations	MEMO #1 DUE
LONG-RANGE PLANNING STUDIES		
2/20	Population and Environment	Berke – Chs. 4-6
2/27	Infrastructure & Land Use	Berke – Chs. 7-8
3/6	Comprehensive Planning Process	Berke-Chs.9-11 and Handouts
3/13	NO CLASS-SPRING BREAK	
3/20	Field Trip	Field Trip
3/27	MEMO #2 Presentations	MEMO #2 DUE
ALTERNATIVE PLANNING STUDIES		
4/3	Strategic Planning	Handouts Berke-Ch.13
4/10	Visioning and Visual Preference Survey	Handouts Berke-Ch. 14
4/17	EIS/EAW and Ecological Footprint	Handouts
4/24	Field Project Presentations	FIELD PROJECT DUE
5/1	NO CLASS – CTS Conference in St. Paul	
5/8	EXAM	EXAM

Course Textbook :

Philip Berke, et al., URBAN LAND USE PLANNING, 5th ed. Univ. Of Illinois Press.

Reserve Readings :

P. Newman and J. Kenworthy. SUSTAINABILITY AND CITIES. Ch. 1

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Analytical Memo #1 : Comprehensive Planning Case Studies

Purpose

This project provides an opportunity to analyze the practice of comprehensive planning by reviewing case studies of two very different comprehensive planning projects written by practitioners. The case studies describe the planning process employed in Howard County, Maryland (an exurban area between Washington, D.C. and Baltimore) and in Wasatch Canyon area of Utah (a mountain, recreational area outside Salt Lake City).

The Assignment

In this analytical memo, you are to compare the manner in which comprehensive planning was implemented with the principles of comprehensive planning as described in course textbook. The instructor will provide you with the two case studies which include Howard County General Plan : The Politics of Growth Management by Uri Avin and Donna Mennito and Wasatch Canyons Plan by R. Becker. Also, the Howard County plan is discussed in Chapter 2 (pp. 63-64) of your textbook.

In your memo, please compare and contrast the 2 plans by discussing each of the following issues :

1. Planning Environment. Describe the environment in which the two case studies were done. Why were the plans initiated ? What were the critical local issues that the plans were expected to address ? What were the political forces supporting or opposing planning in the communities ?
2. Planning Theories and Principles. To what extent were planning principles such as growth management and sustainability considered in these plans ? How is the “sustainability prism” (see Berke, Ch. 2) reflected in these plans ?
3. Planning Processes. Compare the content and process used in the two plans-how were they similar or different ?
4. Outcomes. What were the final outcomes of the case studies ? In your opinion, what were the strengths and weaknesses of the two planning projects ?

Memo and Presentation

The memo should be a 3-5 single-spaced report covering the four points listed above and following the memo format. The oral presentation should have visuals (e.g. power point, handouts) listing main points and last no more than 5 minutes.

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Analytical Memo #2: Analysis of New Urbanism/Smart Growth Developments

Purpose

In Chapter 1 (pp. 15-18), your textbook, the authors describe New Urbanism and Smart Growth as offering “visionary alternatives of desired outcomes compared to the dominant pattern of conventional low density development.” This project provides an opportunity to analyze the practice of implementing New Urbanism designs by reviewing examples of two projects developed by Calthorpe Associates, one of the leading New Urbanist planning firms in the U.S.

The Assignment

In this analytical memo, you are to compare the manner in which New Urbanism was implemented with the principles of New Urbanism and Smart Growth discussed in class and in your textbook. To implement the assignment, go to Calthorpe’s Web site (www.calthorpe.com) and then hit on “Projects” and select two projects from among the many listed in “Urban Revitalization” or “Community Design” sections of site. Make hard copy of information presented on each project and write a report discussing the following issues related to the two plans :

1. New Urbanism/Smart Growth Principles. What are the key characteristics of New Urbanist designs that separate them from conventional land use development?
2. The two Calthorpe Projects: Provide a brief description of the two projects in terms of land use, open space, transportation, public facilities, etc.
3. Critique of New Urbanism Implementation. Critique the extent to which each of the two projects reflected New Urbanism principles described in your textbook and in class and failed in incorporating New Urbanism principles.
4. Recommendations. Provide three recommendations on how the projects could be improved to better reflect New Urbanism.

Memo and Presentation

The memo should be a 3-5 single-spaced report covering the four points listed above and following the memo format. The oral presentation should have visuals (e.g. power point, handouts) listing main points and that last 5 minutes.

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Field Project: Comprehensive Plan Analysis (Team Project)

Purpose

In this project, two students will form a team in order to critique a comprehensive plan produced by a Minnesota city within the last five years.

The Assignment

Select one city that has completed a major Comprehensive Plan update within the last ten years (for Comp.Plans that are available on-line, check listing on “Planning Internet Links” handout). Obtain a copy of their most recent Plan and schedule an interview with one of their local planners. After reviewing your plan and conducting your interview with one of the city planners, provide a critical review of the plan and all relevant background materials/studies. **In analyzing the plan, complete the “Plan Quality Evaluation Protocol” provided in the Appendix at the end of Chapter 3 of your textbook.** Based on this evaluation, write a report responding to the following issues :

1. Content of the Plan : Describe the substantive areas addressed in the plan ; data gathered on population, land use, development/growth patterns, etc ; data analysis techniques that were used (e.g. statistical analysis, projections GIS, etc.) ; alternative growth scenarios considered ; influence of Metropolitan Council policies on the plan (e.g. affordable housing, growth management) ;
2. Process followed in producing the plan: Describe the plan in terms of who produced the plan (e.g. consultants, in-house staff), the steps followed and amount of time required, methods used to encourage citizen participation, the involvement of special interest groups (e.g. Chamber of Commerce, neighborhoods, environmentalists), involvement of local officials, distribution of final document in community via internet, printed copies, etc.
3. Visual appeal or whether the plan is user-friendly for the average citizen ,
4. Plan utilization or how local planners are using the plan on a regular basis,
5. Analysis and Recommendations : Are the local planners satisfied with the current plan and the process that the city used ? Why or why not ? Do you think this plan reflects the “best practices” in comprehensive planning ? Why or why not ? Specifically, what are three ways that you would improve the plan or the process used in producing the plan ?

Report and Presentation

Your team should produce a 10-15 page double-spaced report analyzing the assignment issues identified above. Be specific in your description and analysis and attach appendices such as maps, tables, etc. that support your conclusions. In addition, each team should be prepared to make a ten minute oral presentation of your report with appropriate visuals.

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Planning Internet Links

American Planning Association : www.planning.org

Fresh Energy (Sustainable Minnesota) : www.freshenergy.org

Center for Livable Communities (Ahwahnee Principles) : www.lgc.org/center

Congress for New Urbanism : www.cnu.org

League of Minnesota Cities : www.lmnc.org

League of Minnesota Cities Handbook – Chapter on Comprehensive Planning and Land use, go to www.lmnc.org/handbook/chapter14.pdf

Metropolitan Council – 2030 Regional Development Framework – go to www.metrocouncil.org

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency – go to www.pca.state.mn.us

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency : www.epa.gov

Minnesota Dept. of Administration, Office of Demographics and Geographic Analysis : www.mnplan.state.mn.us

One Thousand Friends of Minnesota : www.1000fom.org

Smart Growth Network : www.smartgrowth.org

Urban Land Institute : www.uli.org

Some Comprehensive Plans on the Web

Bloomington: www.ci.bloomington.mn.us – go to “Planning Commission” and then to “planning home,” the plan is called “Comprehensive Plan 2000”

Burnsville: www.burnsville.org/ftpfiles/complan.pdf

Minneapolis: www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/citywork/planning - called “Minneapolis Plan”

Minnetonka: www.eminnetonka.com – enter “comprehensive guide plan” in search box, the Plan is called “Comprehensive Guide Plan”

Woodbury: www.ci.woodbury.mn.us/planning/complan.html

FOR OTHER PLANS AVAILABLE ON-LINE, search Google by entering “comprehensive plan, Minnesota cities”