Placemaking Execution – Think and Act Like a Developer

Moderator: Luke Forrest, Michigan Municipal League
James Tischler, AICP, MSHDA Community Development
Mark Wyckoff, Land Policy Institute, MSU
Placemaking Execution – Think/Act Like a Developer

James Tischler, AICP, Director
MSHDA Community Development Division

Mark Wyckoff, Professor and Sr. Associate Director
Land Policy Institute, Michigan State University
Purpose of This Session

• Demographics are changing, markets are changing, and communities are changing. This is especially true for “place-based” development. So...should the planning-zoning system change as well?

• Research and practice show that *market-analyzed, stakeholder-engaged, charrette-facilitated, development-oriented processes* produce better projects, but can they also produce better master plans and codes?

• And if so, shouldn’t this be a standardized approach to Michigan communities? This session will present a forum to discuss whether adapting a “developer”-focused approach is the future Michigan planning/regulatory model.
Some of the Barriers

1. Communities have limited Master Plans, outdated Zoning Ordinances and cumbersome processes that prevent quality development and result in missed opportunities.

2. They do so by under-regulation and by over-regulation.

3. They don’t accommodate new development that the community often wants and needs.

4. They unwittingly get the kind of development that prevents the community from being globally competitive for talent, and quality jobs.
Problem 1 (a): Limited Master Plans

- Most Master Plans are old or outdated
- Not based on contemporary analysis of demographic changes or informed by recent market trends
- Focus primarily on land use and infrastructure and
- Fail to consider urban form and value of amenities (parks, trails, entertainment venues, well-equipped public spaces, good transit, etc.)
- Have no section on Placemaking
- Have no section on priorities for public investments
- Have no clear guidance on Plan Implementation
Problem 1 (b): Outdated Zoning Ordinances

- Most Zoning Ordinances are older and more outdated than Master Plans
- Most still have a strong Euclidean influence (stacking of uses)
- Few pay attention to Form
- Most cater to cars and not people, and require excessive parking
- Most limit density and mixed use in locations where they should be the highest
- Most permit by right, suburban development forms in downtowns and along key corridors which kill walkability and the ability to densify
- Most require by special use permit or other special approval, contemporary development forms that add interest to urban places
- Most make it difficult to build downtown and easy to build at the periphery of town
- Most are not sensitive to the time it takes to get through development review and approval
Problem 1 (c): Cumbersome Processes That Prevent Quality Development

- Review procedures that take a long time, are a disincentive for that type of development ever taking place
- Review procedures that require a lot of public review are a disincentive for that type of development ever taking place
- Review procedures that use sequential, instead of parallel review procedures take much longer review times
Problem 2 (a): Under-Regulation

- Regulations in Downtowns and key commercial corridors that allow suburban style development with parking in front as a “use by right”
- Regulations in Downtowns and key commercial corridors that allow one story buildings (instead of requiring 2-3 stories)
- Regulations that permit adult uses, pawn shops, liquor stores and party stores downtown as by right uses
Problem 2 (b): Over-Regulation

- Regulations Downtown that require on-site parking
- Regulations Downtown that require PUDs for mixed-use buildings
- Regulations Downtown that prohibit on sidewalk dining, street performers, bicycle parking, angle parking, or sandwich signs
- Regulations that do not permit “missing middle” housing, by only permitting single family homes, duplexes and garden apartments
Problem 3: Result is Low Quality Development or No Development

- Buildings with long economic lives, a lot of character and adaptable to many different uses are replaced with comparatively cheap buildings with short economic lives and little adaptability to other uses.
- A vacant lot in a downtown full of 2-4 story buildings gets a one story building.
- A key corridor or node gets a cement block or steel siding “dollar store” or a fast food restaurant with parking in the front.
- An historic building with character gets torn down for one of the above.
Problem 4: Communities Aren’t Globally Attractive to Talented Workers

- Talented workers have skills that are in high demand. They can live anywhere they want. They will not choose your city or village unless it is a high quality place with a lot of amenities.
- Jobs increasingly locate where there are an abundance of talented workers.
Every Community Wants to Keep its Youth, But Communities are Driving them Away

• Todays Millennials want quality places to live, with lots of amenities and things to do FIRST. They go to these places and then look for jobs. People in many other age cohorts also want these things, and when they are present, everyone benefits and talent starts to aggregate, attracting new businesses and jobs.

• *The high quality Place has to come first!*
Placemaking to Create Quality Places is Required

- Placemaking is the process of creating quality places where people want to live, work, play and learn in.
- There need to be several of these in each region.
- Each community has to be an authentic place that builds on its unique assets, and it must understand its role within the region.
- Creating quality places is a constant process of Placemaking, that focuses on public spaces and the interface of private spaces with public spaces (building facades, setbacks, height and parking especially).
What Developers Want

• All Developers
  • Predictability
    • Clear community *vision* for the area they are interested in
    • Clear *development regulations*
    • Development “*by right*” with few special approval procedures
  • Reasonable Time Frames for Review and Approval

• Best Developers
  • Evidence of Master Plans with broad stakeholder engagement and support
  • Evidence the Planning Commission and Council are on the same page
  • Evidence the community supports quality development
  • Evidence the community will get approvals right, but in a reasonable time
  • A real partnership
What Communities Must Ensure

• Quality new development in conformance with Plans and Regulations
• Minimize negative impacts on adjoining property
• Concerns of disadvantaged persons are adequately considered

• Both of the above require BEFOREHAND:
  • Engaged citizenry and businesses with basic knowledge of planning and zoning
  • Broad stakeholder involvement in creation and updating of Plans and Regulations
  • Well-trained and coordinated staff, planning commission and council
Where to Target

- **Centers**: the Downtown
- **Key Nodes**: major transit stops; transportation junctions
- **Key Corridors**: linking important destinations (such as anchor institutions)
Five Essential Principles

1. Community must *put people ahead of cars* downtown, at key nodes and along key corridors – human scale design
   - Community must be walkable (complete and safe sidewalk system)
   - Community must be bikeable (complete and safe bicycle system; slow, with parking)

2. *Increase residential density* downtown, at key nodes and along key corridors

3. Must *allow mixed-uses* Downtown, at key nodes and along key corridors
   - Retail and personal service on first floor, second and third floor residential; office on second floor if building is 4+ stories
   - No on-site parking requirement
   - Encourage mixed-income units

4. Put *Building Form over Use* when it comes to regulation outside of Single Family Res.
   - Allow no one story buildings downtowns or at key nodes and probably not along key corridors
   - No parking in front of buildings

5. If over 5,000 population, must have *fixed route transit* from downtown to key locations, unless everything is compact
Lack of Supporting Infrastructure

- Missing infrastructure that can support density and mix of uses
  - Sidewalks
  - Rapid transit
  - Pedestrian friendly roads
Plans, Zoning, & Review Processes Must Be Adequate

- So if Master Plans, Zoning and Development Review Processes do not address the issues raised above, it will be very difficult to attract and retain quality development or skilled workers.
- What tools are available to help achieve this goal?
Main Street Program Will Help

The Main Street Four-Point Approach® is a community-driven, comprehensive strategy that encourages economic development through historic preservation in ways that are appropriate for today’s marketplace. The four points include:

- **Design:** Enhancing the downtown’s physical environment by capitalizing on its best assets including historic buildings, and creating an inviting atmosphere through attractive window displays, parking areas, building improvements, streetscapes and landscaping.

- **Economic Restructuring:** Strengthening a community’s existing economic base while also expanding and diversifying it.

- **Promotion:** Marketing a downtown’s unique characteristics to residents, visitors, investors and business owners.

- **Organization:** Involving all of the community's stakeholders, getting everyone working toward a common goal and driving the volunteer-based Main Street program.
The Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) Program is a state-wide certification program that supports communities to become development ready and competitive in today’s economy. It encourages communities to adopt innovative redevelopment strategies and efficient processes which build confidence among businesses and developers. Through the RRC program, local municipalities receive assistance in establishing a solid foundation for development to occur in their communities – making them more attractive for investments that create places where people want to live, work and play.

Once engaged in the program, communities commit to improving their redevelopment readiness by undergoing a rigorous assessment, and then work to achieve a set of criteria laid out in the RRC Best Practices. The six RRC Best Practices are:

- Community Plans and Public Outreach
- Zoning Regulations
- Development Review Process
- Recruitment and Education
- Redevelopment Ready Sites
- Community Prosperity
There is More You Can Do

• Target Market Analysis (TMA)
• Charrette-based Master Plans and Zoning Ordinances
• Form-based Codes (for at least the Downtown, key Nodes and along key Corridors)
• IN SHORT: Create *streamlined development review procedures* with more development “by right” that are tied to market-analyzed, stakeholder-engaged, charrette-facilitated, Master Plans and Form-based Codes
Target Market Analysis

• The TMA method differs from other methodologies:
  • Analyzes the WHOLE range of household types.
  • Analyzes the WHOLE range of residential building types:
    • Detached Single Family; Attached Single Family (Rowhouse, Townhouse); Attached Multi-Family (Apartments, Lofts, Live-Work)
    • The housing preferences of a wide variety of household types is found – to make a conservative estimate of POTENTIAL demand.
  • These housing types in URBAN street and block settings are often not available as new builds in the metro area.
Charrettes

- Charrettes permit broad public participation, public and often developer approval in a much shortened time frame
- Recommend using facilitators trained through the National Charrette Institute
Charrette

The charrette is a multi-day, collaborative planning event that harnesses the talents and energies of all affected parties to create and support a feasible plan that represents transformative community change.
Vision-based Planning Process Linked to Implementation

• See Module 5 of Placemaking Curriculum for details
Charrette Feedback Loops
Charrettes Provide Many Opportunities for Participation

- In charrette, everyone interested helps out in a team effort that incorporates their unique contribution
- Professionals provide design and strategic input
- Community members provide local information, feedback, and critique
Design (or Visual) Driven Process

• Visual alternatives is a key component
  − Representation of ideas
  − Develop best ideas graphically

• Stakeholders involved at key times
Visioning Process

- Charrette results in extensive visual images
“Consensus Vision” is Outcome of the Charrette
Strengths of a Charrette

• Explores all aspects of project concurrently
• Reduces rework
• Shortens project timeline
• Involves the public in a collaborative process
• Generates support
• Produces a feasible plan
Form-Based Codes

• Form-Based Codes created with broad public consensus allow more development to be approved “by right”

• Form based codes are easier to use
  • Graphical
  • Prescriptive
  • Created with broad public support
  • Quicker administrative approvals

• Recommend preparation by persons trained by the Form-Based Code Institute (FBCI)
Definition of Form-Based Code

• A form-based code (FBC) is a means of regulating development to achieve a specific urban form.

• Create a predictable public realm by controlling physical form primarily, with a lesser focus on land use, through municipal regulations.
Characteristics of Form-Based Codes Per FBCI

- Are drafted to **implement a community plan** based on time-tested forms of urbanism.
- The regulations and standards are presented in both words and clearly drawn **diagrams and other visuals**.
- Are keyed to a **regulating plan** that designates the **appropriate form and scale** (and therefore, character) of development, rather than only distinctions in land use types.

- Key Components of a FBC follow:
Regulating Plan

• Essentially same as the Zoning Plan/Zoning Map for the Form-Based Code (FBC) with additional elements
• Provides concept/content of standards for each parcel – and how it relates to the street and adjoining parcels
• Coding by street frontage, district, or transect
• Variety of different ways to create it
Sample Regulating Plan/Map

Frontage-Based Code

• Focus on the Street and the Street Frontage to Identify the different “districts”

Formbasedcodes.org, Farmers Station Texas
Public Space Standards

- Civic Space Standards

King County, Washington, Form-Based Code Pilot Project
Street and Block Standards

King County, Washington, Form-Based Code Pilot Project
Building Form Standards

8.5 units per acre, single family house, 50x100 lot; PlaceMakers

18 units per acre, townhouse; PlaceMakers

36 units per acre, apartments / flats; PlaceMakers
Building Form Standards

Height

*An awning, balcony, or colonnade/arcade is required - See Section 3.01.03 EE 2.g(8) for requirements

Residential uses may not be placed in the 1st story
Building Height to Street Width Ratio

Manistee downtown: Schindler
Consolidated Plan & Development Approval Processes

- Comparison of Conventional Planning/Regulatory Process to
- Form Planning/Coding Process
Conventional Planning / Regulatory Process

Form Planning / Coding Process
Up Close: Conventional Planning / Regulatory Process, 1st Half

- Planning to Plan
- Gather and Analyze Data
- Identify Issues
- Develop Vision
- Goals & Objectives
- Develop Alternatives
- Select and Develop Preferred Plan
- Adopt Plan

Government Involvement

- Planning to Plan
- Gather and Analyze Data
- Identify Issues

Citizen Engagement

- Public Forum

Planning Commission Role

- Public Forum

Prepare | Analyze | Decide | Adopt

Resource Commitment

- 6 Months
- 1 year

$ $ $ $ $ $ $ $ $ $ $ $

- Intensity of Government Involvement
  - Code Audit
  - Planning Commission Approval
  - Zoning Amendment Adoption

- Opportunity for Citizen Engagement
  - Public Forum
  - Public Forum

- Planning Commission Role
  - Prepare
  - Analyze / Decide
  - Site Plan Review
  - Special Uses
  - Appeals

- Resource Commitment
  - $ $ $ $ $ $ $ $ 

- Timeline
  - 1.5 Years
  - 2 Years

- Implement New Permitting Process
  - Public Meetings

Up Close: Form Planning / Coding Process

- **Intensity of Government Involvement**
  - Gather and Analyze Data
  - Market Analysis
  - Identify Issues & Create Focus Groups
  - Develop Alternatives
  - By-Right Admin Review
  - Charrette
  - Gather and Analyze Data

- **Opportunity for Citizen Engagement**
  - Identify and Engage Community Stakeholders
  - Identify Remaining Issues
  - Workshop with P&Z and City Commission
  - Develop Alternatives
  - Adoption by P&Z Board
  - Charrette

- **Planning Commission Role**
  - Introduce Revised Elements
  - City Commission hearings and adoption
  - By-Right Admin Review

- **Resource Commitment**
  - Public Forum
  - Public Forum
  - Public Forum
  - Public Forum

- **Board of Review / Appeal**
  - City Commission hearings and adoption

- **Prepare**
  - 6 Months

- **Analyze / Decide**
  - 1 year

- **Adopt**
  - 1.5 Years
Questions From the Audience

• Please identify your name and the community you are from.

• Thanks!

For more information visit: www.MIplace.org
Questions For the Audience

• Six questions follow.
• Please raise your hands in response to the option that best fits your opinion on each question.
Question 1

- Do you think there would be stronger stakeholder buy-in to a new Master Plan if a Charrette-based process were used instead of a more traditional process?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Don’t know
Question 2

• Do you think there would be stronger stakeholder buy-in to a new Form-Based Code than to a more traditional Zoning Ordinance?
  • Yes
  • No
  • Don’t know
Question 3

• Do you think a Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance project can be combined into one process?
  • Yes
  • No
  • Don’t Know
Question 4

• If a Form-Based Master Plan/Code provides enough detail, do you think a municipal entitlement/permitting process can be conducted with by-right / administrative review?
  • Yes
  • No
  • Don’t Know
Question 5

- Do you think the consolidated process described above will result in higher quality development in your community?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Don’t Know
Question 6

• Do you think the streamlined Plan and Development Review process described above will be better received by developers in your community?
  • Yes
  • No
  • Don’t know
  • Why?
Thank You!

• Enjoy the rest of your conference in beautiful Marquette!!!

• Jim Tischler, tischlerj@Michigan.gov
• Mark Wyckoff, Wyckoff@msu.edu