

Chapter 23.128. PLAN FLEXIBILITY AND UPDATING

23.128.010. Introduction.

23.128.020. Flexibility.

23.128.030. Updating.

23.128.010. Introduction.

There are two questions always asked when a new plan is prepared. First, how flexible will the plan be after it is adopted? Second, how will changing conditions be incorporated into the plan?

(Ord. 2002-005 §1, 2002; Ord. 2000-017 §1, 2000; PL-20, 1979)

23.128.020. Flexibility.

The answer to the first question is that all land use plans reduce the flexibility with which land may be used. That is, after all, one of the purposes of preparing a plan. However, considerable study is conducted during the preparation of the plan in order to assure that the needs and desires of the public are accommodated, natural resources and the requirements of individual property owners. In addition, the application of the plan is intended to achieve certain desired results. To accomplish these goals it will be the job of the County's elected and appointed officials, as well as professional staff, to make interpretations of the plan with the primary emphasis on the achievement of the goals rather than technicalities. However, that does not mean policies or criteria may be ignored. They are to be followed unless it can be shown they are inconsistent in this particular instance due to the unique character of the question at issue. Given this unique situation then new regulations may be adopted or exceptions not otherwise granted may be given. If all this sounds like it is rather complex and difficult that is because it is!

While the plan will answer many of the questions about development in the County situations are bound to arise where the answer is not so clear cut and the appropriate officials will have to use their best judgment based upon the goals of the people, as reflected in the plan, in making a final determination. An example would be where a commercial area is designated on the plan. As with all plans this area is shown as an area of color. No attempt is made on the map to specifically identify the exact limits of that commercial area. Guidelines are written into the plan and they must be interpreted at the time a development is proposed. The result may be that the final commercial area could be a little larger or a little smaller than originally shown, depending on interpretations made as the plan is used.

In summary, while the plan will undoubtedly reduce flexibility it will still retain the opportunity for unique situations to be interpreted in a manner most conducive to the public's general welfare, as well as allow for interpretation to occur in places where the exact boundaries for a particular use may require a final evaluation at the time of a specific development proposal. Perhaps most importantly all of this evaluation and review will occur in public view and subject to written guidelines so that the process is open and understandable to all interested persons.

(Ord. 2002-005 §1, 2002; Ord. 2000-017 §1, 2000; PL-20, 1979)

23.128.030. Updating.

A. As regards the second question, State regulations specifically require that at least every two years the County review and update its plan in order to assure that the changing character of the people and the land be reflected in appropriate goals and policies.

Usually these changes are adjustments to boundaries on the plan map or establishment of new policies. The final goals to be attained rarely change.

In order to know what changes may be necessary at the time of an update it is necessary to establish a process for the regular collection of data so that the reasons for changes may be seen. The required program would collect information on demographic changes, such as are reflected in population growth

and building construction. Also monitoring of capital improvements, like streets and sewers, would indicate trends and compliance with the plan. And, review of applications made for subdivisions, zone changes, site reviews or other administrative permits, would allow another perspective to be gained on development.

- B. The final program should seek to determine for all interested parties:
 - 1. Progress in implementing the plan;
 - 2. Adequacy of the plan to guide land use actions;
 - 3. Whether the plan continues to neglect community desires;
 - 4. If a major action or trend in small actions and/or annexations is consistent with the comprehensive plan; and,
 - 5. Whether the overall effect of changes and/or actions has reduced the pertinence of the plan.
- C. Along with the gathering of data about specific events there must also be an ongoing process of attitude surveying, citizen involvement programs, and other methods of community interaction so that County officials have an up-to-date knowledge of the public's interests and positions on topics of interest. This type of ongoing process will go far in assuring public support and plan effectiveness.
- D. Updating a comprehensive plan is a complicated and delicate task, but one that must be done if the plan is to remain an effective and equitable tool for guiding community development. The resources committed to this process will be well spent if the process is made to work correctly.
- E. Flexibility in administration and updating are both ways communities seek to assure their plans accurately reflect local conditions and allow for the best possible final result. Officials must be allowed some discretion in the making of decisions. Therefore parameters are established within which they are to work and by which their work may be appraised. Keeping these guidelines current, useful, and reflective of the people's interests is the purpose of the updating process.

(Ord. 2002-005 §1, 2002; Ord. 2000-017 §1, 2000; PL-20, 1979)