

“Planning Attitudes” in Communities

While most communities have varying levels of support for planning as exemplified by their commitment and use of planning commissions, master plans, zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, and capital improvement programs, their goals or desired outcomes differ significantly. A basic typology of “planning attitudes”:

I. Protectionist or No Growth Communities—these communities have a narrow view of what they want their community to look like and what they want it to become. Their MP, zoning ordinances, and subdivision regulations are enforced to the letter of the law. Variances and appeals are rare. Some examples of protectionist thinking:

- ✍ Usually limit development to only single family residences
- ✍ Avoid all together or severely limit multi-family, condo, or high density development
- ✍ Often establish long periods of no growth or moratoriums on building
- ✍ Dramatically restrict or ban all together undesirable uses anywhere in the community, i.e., car dealers, body shops, fast food restaurants, junk yards, brick yards, lumber yards, and even Super Wal Marts
- ✍ Aesthetic, visual, and status are important values

II. Laissez Faire but Quality Growth Communities---these communities, for the most part, want to let the market dictate land uses and land use changes. They want a healthy economy and growth in their tax base and do not want to turn people away. Significantly, they want quality development and they enforce all codes and building regulations to insure high quality structures and landscaping but they grant variances and zoning appeals regularly. Other laissez faire thinking:

- ✍ The growth in the tax base and land values are the major goals
- ✍ Their community wants to reflect “new wave” and “new age” uses
- ✍ Mixing of land uses is acceptable and encouraged as long as of high quality
- ✍ Aesthetic considerations are secondary, economic growth is paramount

III. Controlled Development—these communities are characterized by their flexibility and willingness to compromise when new uses are proposed. They periodically re-visit their MP and major ordinances to reflect the market. They are particular about large projects of all kinds and they do considerable analysis on these projects before they go forward. Other Controlled Development thinking:

- ✍ Planning staff and recommendations are highly valued
- ✍ Analysis on all major projects is required
- ✍ Very cautious but willing to grant variances and appeals
- ✍ Take pride in their ability to change when needed
- ✍ Value historical preservation
- ✍ Stress high quality building