PLAN IMPLEMENTATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Perils and Prospects

2018 GPA Fall Conference
The Problem Statement

“There is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things.”

A Quick Answer

“The world moves into the future as a result of decisions, not as a result of plans. Plans are significant only insofar as they affect decisions. Planning may be defined in such a way that it is part of the decision-making process; but if it is not it is a bag of wind, a piece of paper or worthless diagram.”

-Kenneth E. Boulding
What is Implementation About?

Overcoming inertia
Implementation Issues - Politics

- Slow decision making
- Ward politics/ in-fighting
- Special interest groups
- Lack of equity/ environmental justice
- Lack of popular support - making changes and spending money is always hard to sell voters
What is Implementation About?

Doing Wheel Stands When Necessary
Implementation Issues

Community Organization

- Overcoming grassroots resistance - people are wary of changes, especially if they cost money
- Organization – finding a CHAMPION and building a support system for follow through
What is Implementation About?

Hard work - heavy lifting - all uphill
Implementation Issues

- Property acquisition – not easy to use eminent domain anymore, what are the alternatives?
- Regulatory environment - state/federal approvals even if there is no state/federal money
- Timing – getting the money and the political will together at the same time
What is Implementation About?

Clearing a pathway
Common Implementation Barriers

- Fuzzy description of objective and outcome
- No stakeholders identified
- Too costly (?)
- No funding sources
- Death by 1,000 cuts
- Bad timing
- Clumsy/ no roll-out plan
Ingredients of Implementation Success

- A clear message – related to public interests
- Leadership – need a Champion
- Accountability / Transparency
- Promotion / public engagement
- Sound legal foundation for your action plan
Lots of Stakeholders/ Friends and Foes

- City Council/ County Board of Commissioners
- Other Departments: Community Development, Transportation, Parks & Recreation, Public Works, Water & Sewer, Airport, etc.
- Boards and Authorities: Schools, CIDs, TADs, DDAs
- Planning Commission, Urban Design Commission
- Neighborhood planning organizations
- State Agencies: GDOT, GEFA, DCA, EPD, etc.
- NGOs – Universities, Hospitals, Churches, etc.
- Real Estate community
- Neighborhood organizations

What is their motivation? Track record?
Find the Common Ground

Flexible Zoning

Focus on Activity Centers

Mixed-Use Community

Walkable Community

Consumer / Residents

Producer / Builder

Government / Community

Other / Special Interests
Putting the Technical Pieces Together

Mixed Use Development

Mixed Income Housing

Transportation Options

Connectivity/Walkability

The Plan
What is Implementation About?

Finding the Money
Federal and state support is gone.
Local governments are searching for ways to raise revenues without raising property tax millage: SPLOSTs, CIDs, TADs, Impact Fees
Project lists are subject to behind the scenes politics
Public private partnerships are good in theory – what’s in it for the private sector partner?
Foundation grants -private foundations sometimes come to the rescue, but that is subject to control by special interests (PATH, Arthur Blank, Woodruff Foundation)
Local governments need people who know where to find the money. Will that be you?
Implementation Barriers

External events and the Unknown

- Foreseeable: Elections
- Unforeseeable: Newsworthy events – media coverage changes public opinion
- Recession!
If all else fails... wait for a CRISIS

Timing is EVERYTHING!

Never let a good CRISIS go to waste
What You Wish You Could Do

Declaring Victory and Transferring Ownership
What You Have to Do

- Explain the true cost of “No Action”
- Do Stakeholder Analysis
- Involve active, vocal, and well-positioned stakeholders
- Get commitment of (or create) an accountable lead organization and a Champion
- Find a dedicated source of funding
- Map the “Action Channels”
Mapping Action Channels

**EXTERNAL EVENTS**
- Weather
- Political Cycles
- Staff Changes

**PUBLIC SECTOR CHANNELS**
- Federal Agencies
- State Agencies
- Local Agencies

**PRIVATE SECTOR CHANNEL**
- Banks/Bond Agencies
- Real Estate/Insurance
- Property owners

**ADOPITION**
- Stakeholders
- Media
- Politics

**IMPLEMENTATION**
- Completed
The Livable Centers Initiative Program

Goals

- Providing access to a variety of travel modes including transit, roadways, walking and biking
- Encouraging mixed-income residential neighborhoods, employment, shopping and recreation options
- Developing an outreach process that promotes the involvement of all stakeholders
The Livable Centers Initiative Program

Programmatic Elements

- Mixed Use Development
- Affordable Housing
- Connectivity of streets
- Walkability
- Transit
- Public Engagement
Breaking the Plan into its Parts

- **The Plan**

  - **Private Sector Actions**
    - Financing
    - Land Assembly
    - DRI Application
    - Rezoning Application

  - **Public Sector Actions**
    - Plan Amendment
    - Streetscape projects
    - Trail projects
    - Transit projects
    - Road Improvement projects
    - Financial Incentives

  - **ENTITLEMENT**
    - Rezoning
    - Plan Review
    - Permitting
## Map Public Sector Implementation Strategy

### Action Planning Matrix

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>Lead Agency/Responsibility</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Likely Cost</th>
<th>Funding Sources</th>
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Map Private Sector Implementation Path
Can you streamline the Entitlement?

Here’s where your third Plan Review comes!
Pay Attention to the Details

- How the customer explained it
- How the Project Leader understood it
- How the Analyst designed it
- How the Programmer wrote it
- How the Business Consultant described it
- How the project was documented
- What operations installed
- How the customer was billed
- How it was supported
- What the customer really needed
Issues that Make Entitlements Difficult

- Vertically Mixed Use Development
- Density limits from max, building height and parking ratios
- Tree protection
- Buffers/ landscaping strips between properties
- Stream buffers
- Stormwater and drainage
- Parking requirements
- Existing non-conformities
Some Examples from Practice

Jeff Rader, FAICP
Presiding Officer, DeKalb County Board of Commissioners
SOME EXAMPLES FROM PRACTICE

Medline LCI
From Concept to Implementation

Jeff Rader, FAICP
Presiding Officer, DeKalb County
Board of Commissioners
Medline LCI Study Area
The North Decatur/Suburban Plaza District was Typical Suburban Strip
Property Ownership Patterns Were the Legacy of Former Land Uses
The Medline LCI Plan is an Elegant Expression of Community Vision and Goals
Thought was Given to Staged Implementation
But Project Imperatives and Property Rights Considerations Shaped Outcomes
Next Steps??
Questions?  Comments!