

Let's Do Some Planning

**A Guide for Working with Groups to
Accomplish Bottom-up Planning**

Garry Cooper

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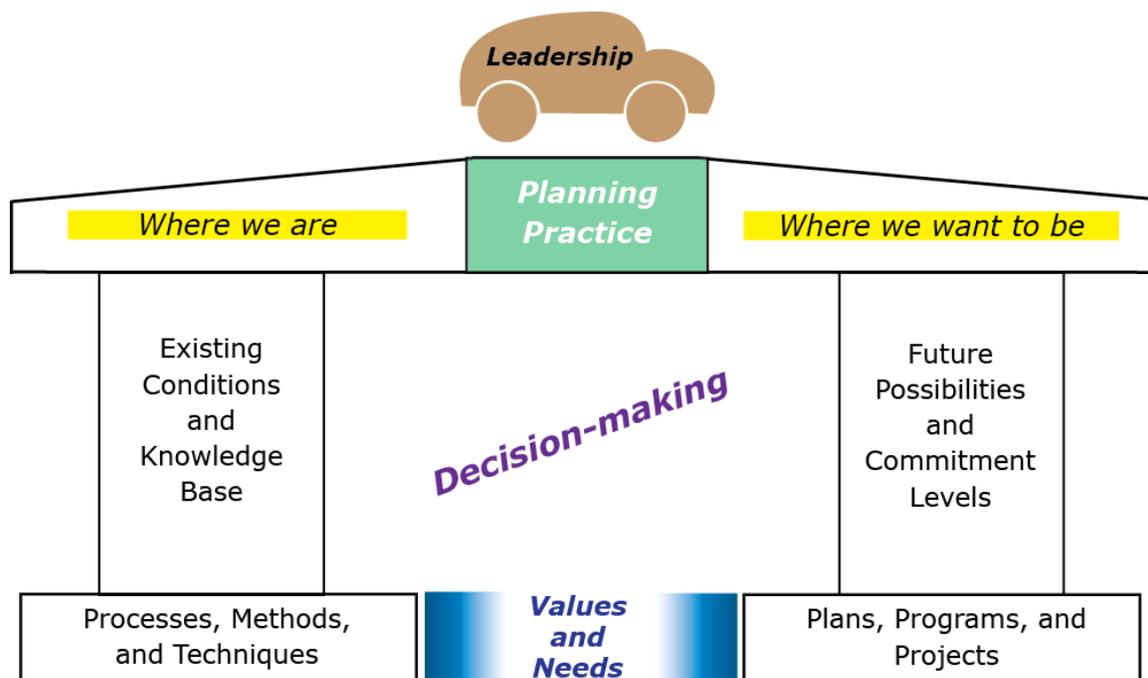
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Preface

Why do some communities grow and change in a positive manner, yet others do not? A major reason is the decision *to plan* or *not to plan*.

It's an axiom that special places – and great communities – don't happen by accident. In addition, there is a nexus between this axiom and the level of *commitment* to planning and also the *practice* of planning within communities, both of which vary considerably from one community to another.

Although most communities will acknowledge the value and need to plan, community residents will typically agree that the art and science of accomplishing community-level planning can easily fall short of desires, or become bogged down with competing values, needs, and politics. Bridging this decision-making gap is a challenge that involves leadership, developing an understanding of place, technical skills, and consensus-building processes.



The purpose of this book is to help bridge the decision-making gap. It includes a journey – involving working with groups – that highlights the integration of fundamental planning concepts with useful group process design options. My hope is that this will be a valuable experience for readers and also contribute to the concept of creating sustainable communities.

There are many ways to plan, and the process design options that this book describes are appropriate for communities of all sizes. They are particularly appropriate for small communities where resources – and the knowledge base for planning – may be in short supply. In addition to community applications, several concepts and process design options (described in following chapters) are also appropriate for businesses and non-profit organizations.

The organization of the book consists of four parts. Part 1 explores framework considerations for *getting organized* and started – deciding *what* to do; Part 2 describes the *act of planning* – determining *how* to do it; Part 3 addresses the *transition steps* – turning good ideas into *action*; and Part 4 offers closing thoughts on both the *art* and the *science* of planning – a *reflection* on the planning journey.

– Garry V. Cooper, FAICP
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