

PLANNING ESSENTIALS

TO PLAN OR NOT TO PLAN...

- WHAT is it?
- WHY do we do it?
- WHO does it?
- HOW do you do it?
- WHAT do you do with it when you've got it?



TO PLAN OR NOT TO PLAN...

□ Plan - *Verb*

□ Definition:

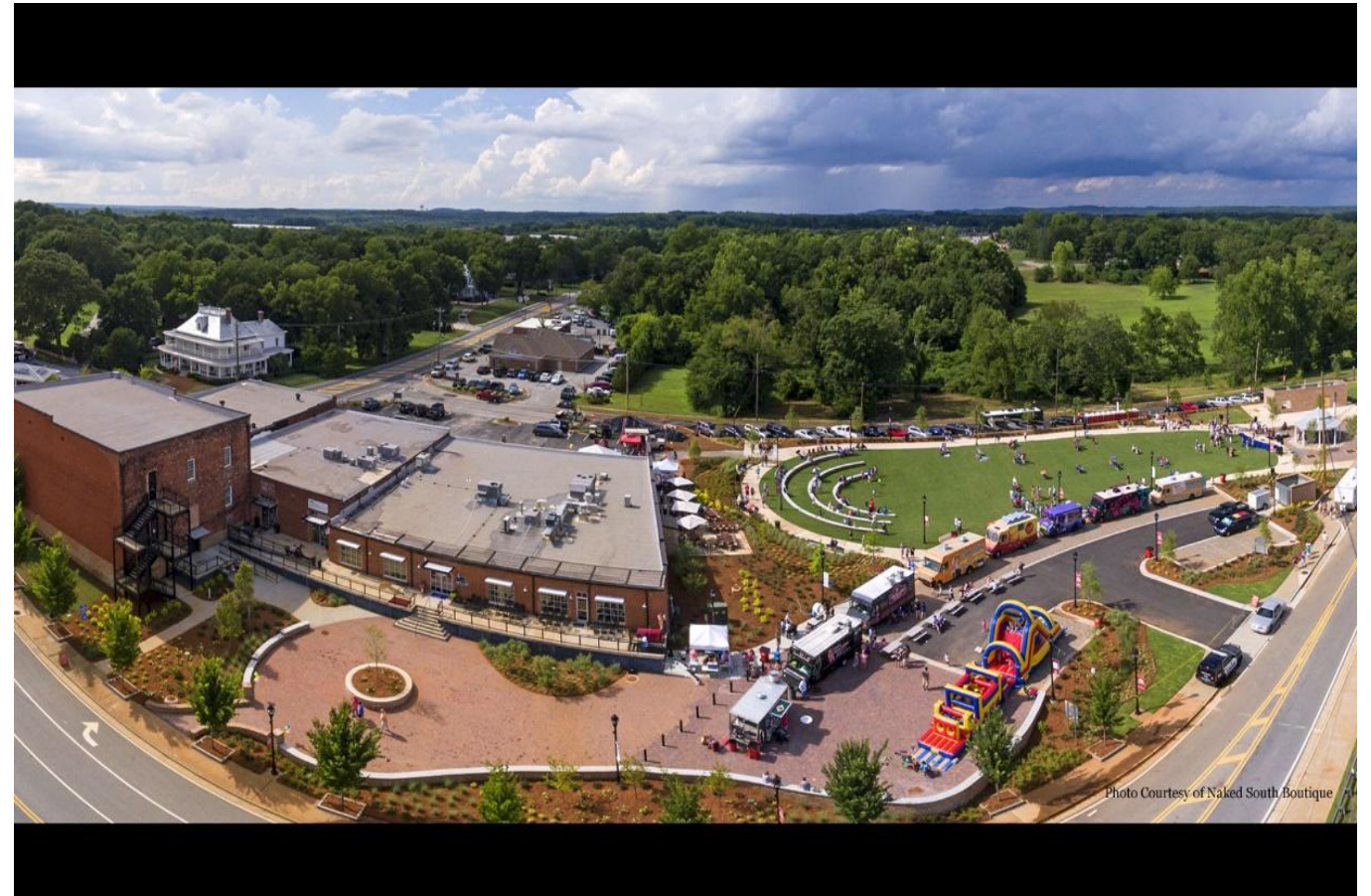
- to arrange the parts of
- to devise or project the realization or achievement of
- To think in advance about a method

□ Plan - *Noun*

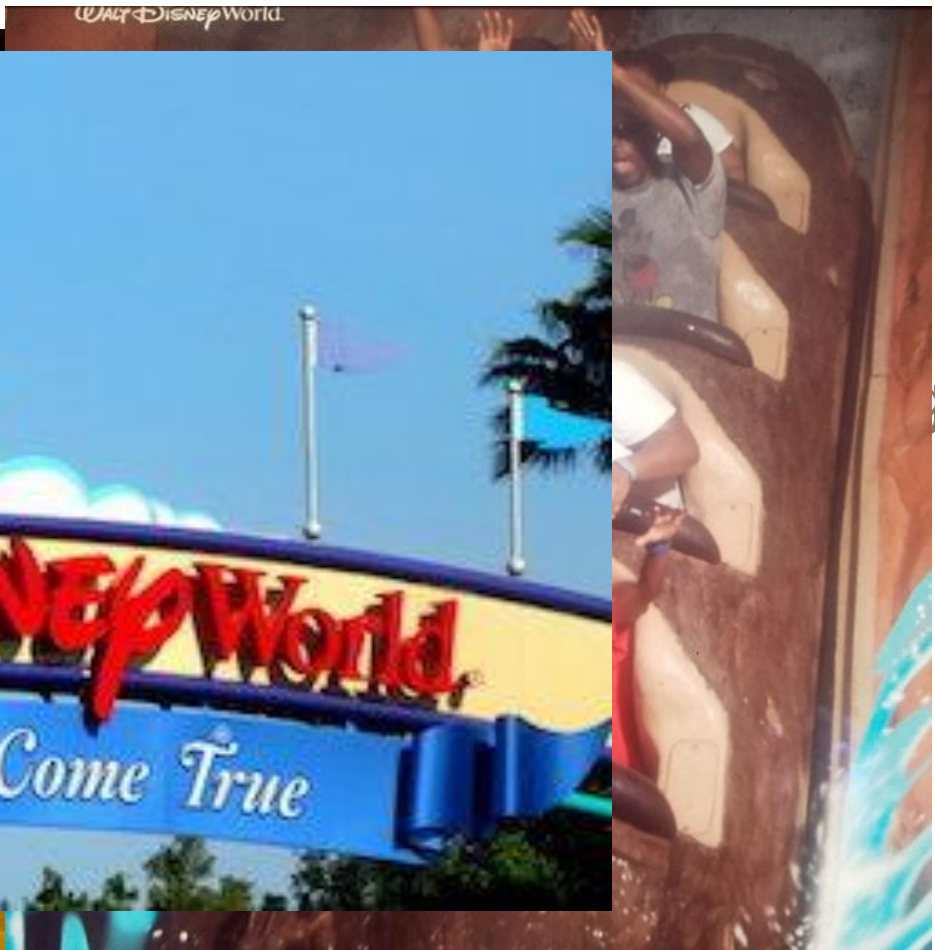
□ Definition:

- a detailed formulation of a program of action;
- a method devised for doing something or achieving an end, involving a series of actions

WHAT IS PLANNING?



WHAT IS PLANNING?



- ❖
- ❖
- ❖
- ❖
- ❖
- ❖
- ❖

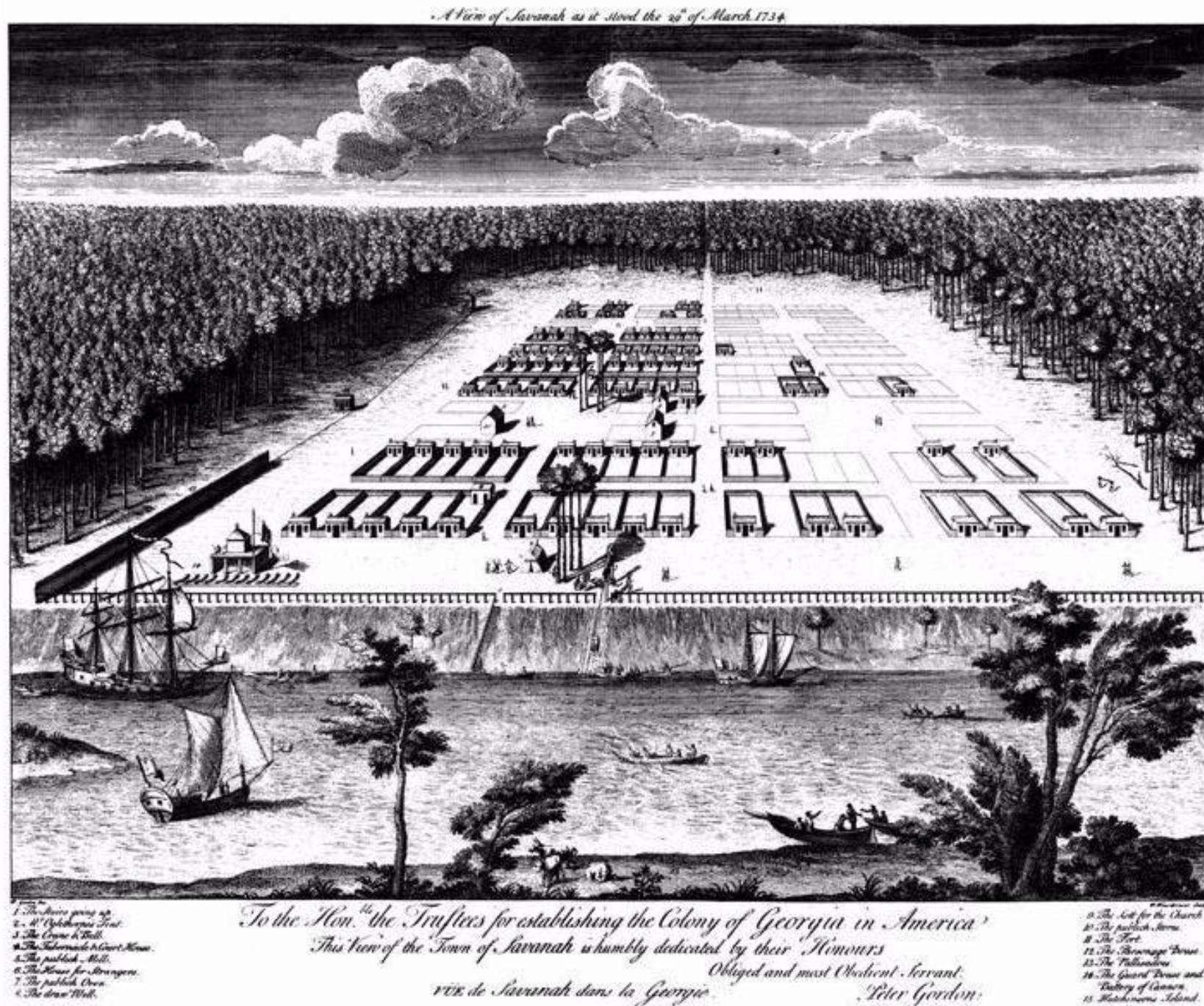
PLANNING HAS ALWAYS BEEN...

History is full of planned communities

- Greek/Roman
- Law of the Indies
- Colonial America

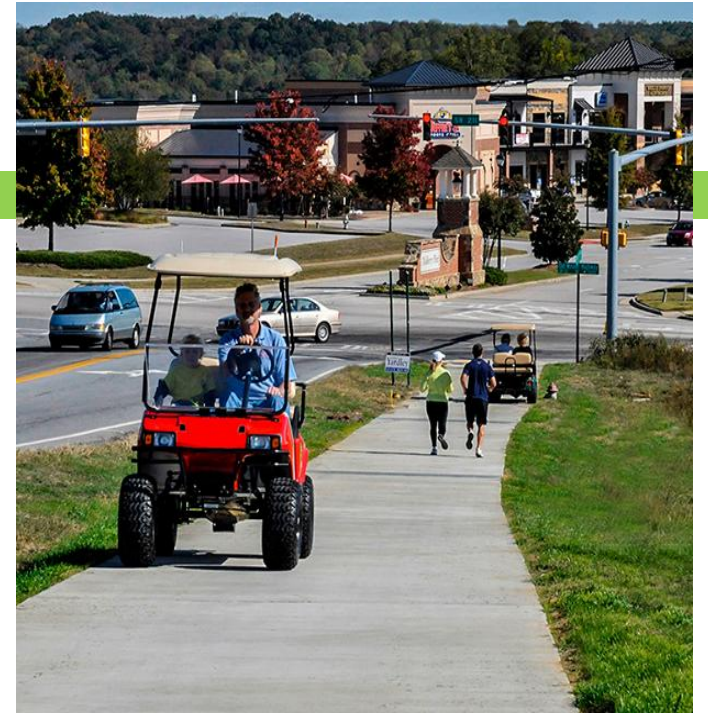


Georgia's first planned community: Savannah 1733



WHY PLAN?

- Planning for YOUR Community:
 - Helps protect property rights
 - Certainty is good for economic development
 - Helps maintain and improve your quality of life
 - Protect public investments: It's your money, after all



WHO PLANS?

- EVERYONE – the plan should involve the entire community
- Elected Officials
- Local Government Staff
- Consultants, Developers
- Appointed Officials
- Regional Commissions
- State of Georgia



WHAT COMMUNITY PLANS DO

Predict future population, housing, and employment trends

Don't you want to know how many houses you will need? New jobs?

Protect and preserve future land needs

Don't you want to make sure you have enough land available to grow?

Assure adequate public facilities and services

Don't you want to have enough water for the community?

Protect existing and future public investment

Don't you want to save money by continuing to use what you already have paid for?

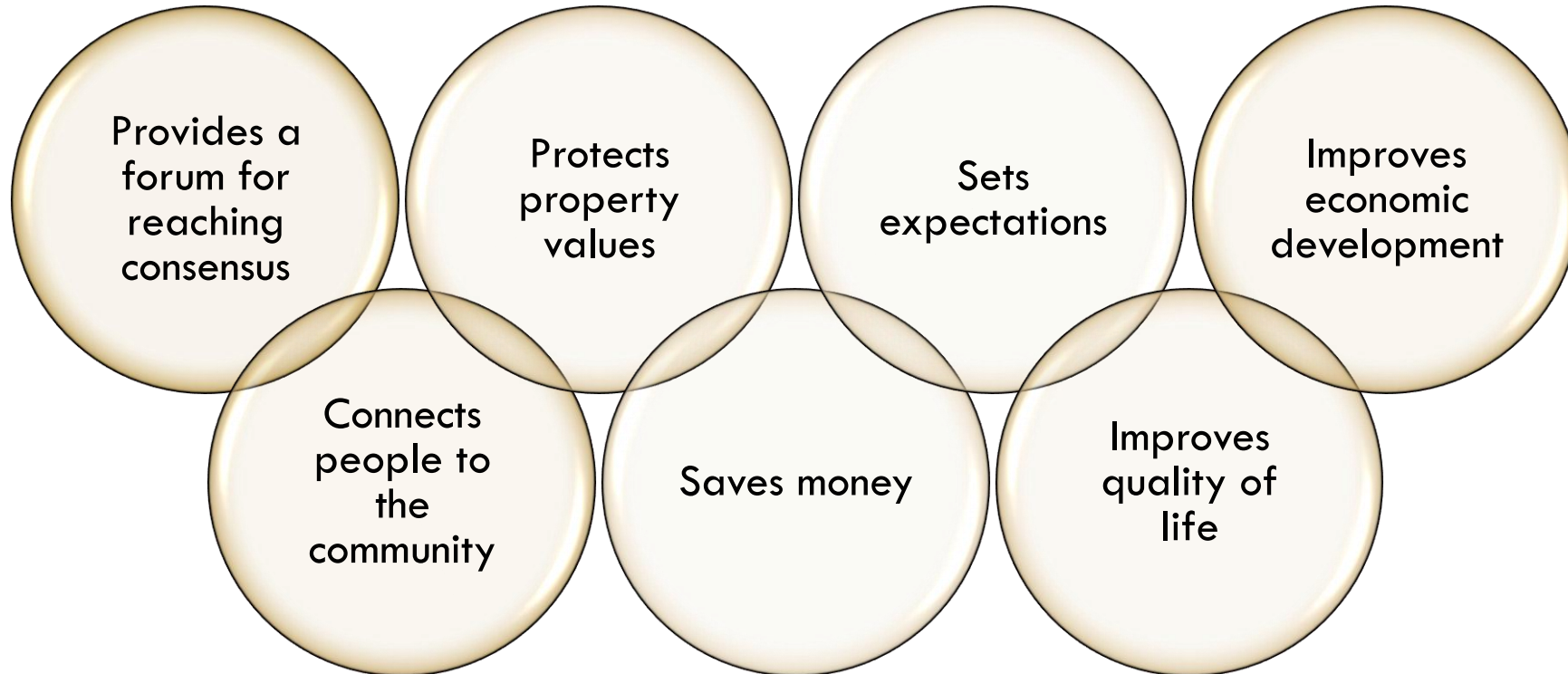
Protect environment

Don't you want to make sure your natural and historic resources are protected?

Reflect community values

Don't you want your community to be what YOU want it to be?

BENEFITS OF PLANNING



IT ISN'T JUST DCA

USDA
Natural Resources Conservation Service
United States Department of Agriculture

[Topics](#) [Programs](#) [Newsroom](#) [Blog](#) [Contact Us](#)



5 Steps to Assistance

How to Get Assistance from NRCS for Farms, Ranches and Forests

- 1 PLANNING**
Visit your local NRCS field office to discuss your goals and work with staff on a conservation plan.
- 2 APPLICATION**
With the help of NRCS, complete an application for financial assistance programs.
- 3 ELIGIBILITY**
As part of applying, we'll file paperwork to ensure you're eligible for assistance.
- 4 RANKING**
NRCS ranks applications according to local resource concerns.
- 5 IMPLEMENTING**
Put conservation to work by signing a contract and implementing conservation practices.

IF WE DON'T PLAN!

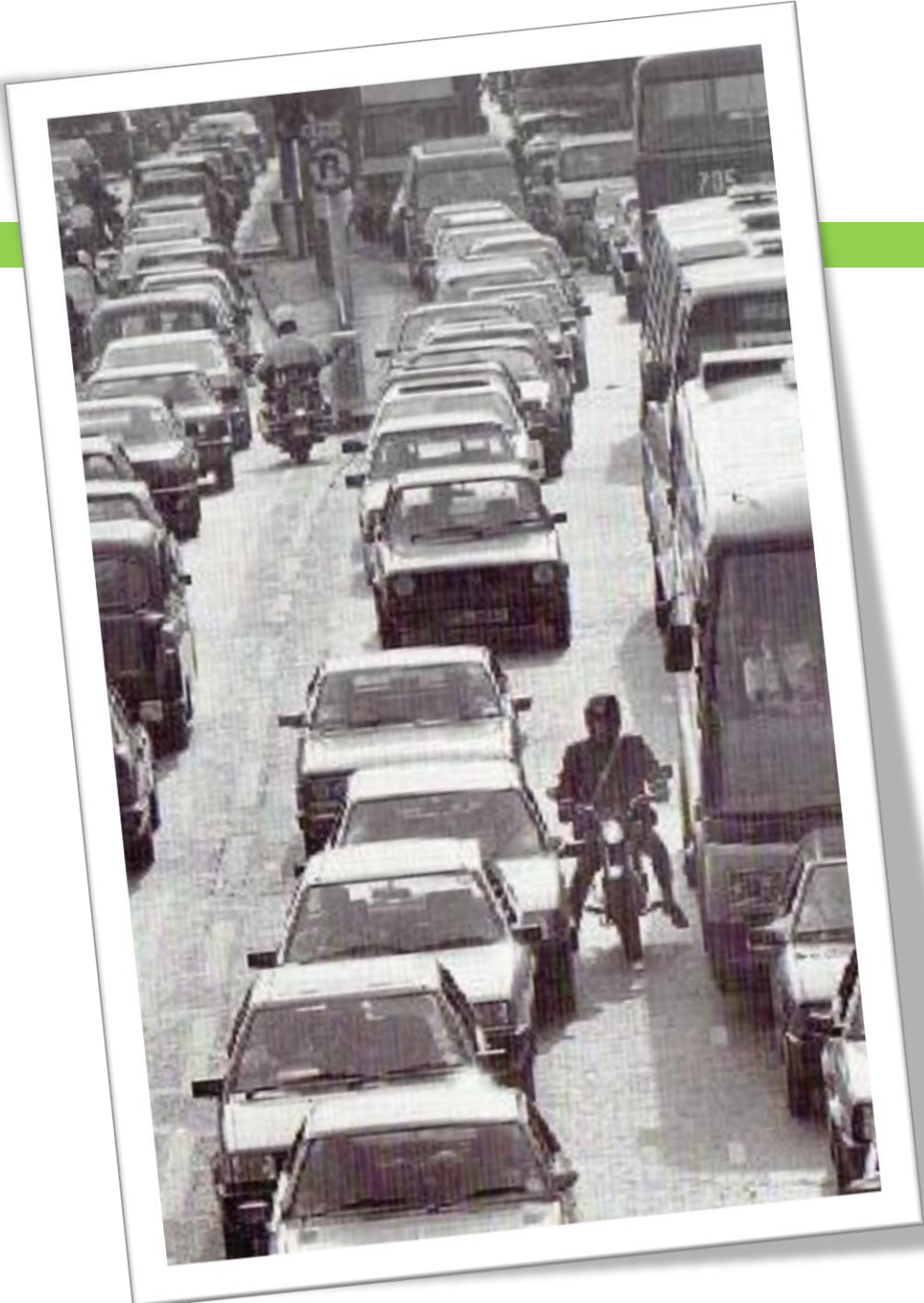
Social Costs

Economic
Costs

Environmental
Costs

Health Costs

IF WE DON'T PLAN!



HOW WE DO IT IN GEORGIA

Georgia Planning Act is the foundation for community planning across the State

1st
passed
in 1989

DCA
administer
s the Local
Planning
Rules

Rules
revised
several
times

Provides
eligibility
for state
funds,
QLG

GEORGIA PLANNING ACT, 1989



Qualified Local
Government
Status

Local Planning
Requirements

Local Comprehensive Plans

- Help develop & support policies
- Direct capital improvements
- Help set the budget
- Evaluate future development
- See the future
- Set the future
- Guide economic growth
- Guide land development
- Celebrate the community
- Improve community health
- Address housing issues
- Upgrade local infrastructure
- Gives the public a voice
- Represents everybody
- See opportunities not just issues
- Provide solutions

LOCAL PLANNING TOOLS

- Future Development Map in comp plan
- Zoning Ordinance and Map
- Unified Development Code
- Special ordinances for trees, signs, etc.
- Design Guidelines (historic districts, etc.)
- May be others specific to your local government

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT MAP



Provides outline
for how the
jurisdiction wants
to grow

Map should be
realistic image of
future

Zoning ordinance

Zoning Map

Records of
Decisions


District
Requirements

Site Design

What exactly is zoning?

- Zoning is the government's ability to regulate private property through use of the police powers – the public health, safety, morals and general welfare- the local government's ability to regulate what goes where.
- It's really important to remember that your zoning ordinance must include an accurate map. If you don't have a zoning map then you don't have a valid ordinance. The map has to be a part of your zoning code.

Special ordinances



Sign Ordinance –
first amendment
issues, must not
be content based



Tree Ordinance –
environmental
and aesthetic
issues

WHO PLANS?

□ On the local level:

Elected Officials:
State, County,
City

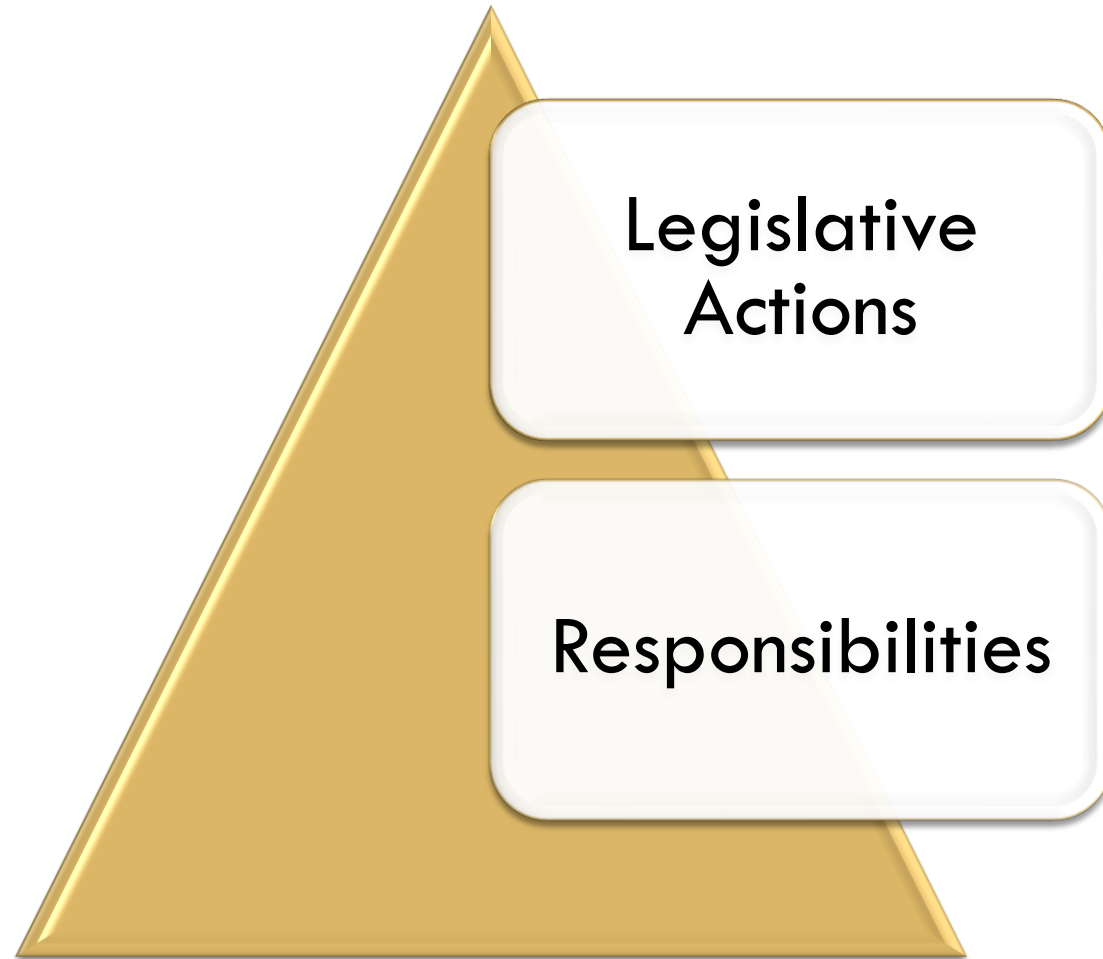
Appointed
Boards and
Commissions

Planning Staff

Development
Community

Public

ELECTED OFFICIALS



ACTIONS

□ Legislative

- By the elected officials, NOT the planning commission or staff

- Such things as:

- Adopting the zoning ordinance

- Adoption of amendments to the ordinance that change the text

- Rezoning of property

- Special use permits

□ Administrative

- Anything else

RESPONSIBILITIES

Set plan in motion

**Create a capable
board**

Establish policy

**Change
policies/ordinances**

**Give sense of
direction**

**Make final
decisions**

APPOINTED BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS



Planning
Commission

Zoning Board of
Appeals

Design Review
Boards (Historic
Preservation,
etc.)

Community
Councils or
Neighborhood
Planning Units

PLANNING COMMISSION AUTHORIZATION



Contained in your ordinance- Administration (the commission as well as the elected body and staff)

- Planning Commission

- Creation, Appointment, Terms

- Organization, Rules, Staff

- Functions and Duties

- Also, the role and responsibilities of the elected body

- All procedures and standards

PLANNING COMMISSION

QUALIFICATIONS

Be a resident

Willingness and dedication

Interest in community planning

Desire to assist in implementation

Willingness to encourage and accept input

Ability to maintain an objective approach

PLANNING COMMISSION

DUTIES

General Plans

Specific Plans

Zoning and Subdivision Maps

Individual Project Approvals

Report on Capital Improvement
Plans

Coordinate Local Planning Efforts

Consider Land Acquisitions

Special Studies

PLANNING COMMISSION

ROLES

- Prepare comprehensive plan
- Implement plan with local government
- Advise on planning
- Work within established policies/codes
- Recommend changes to policies/codes

PLANNING COMMISSION

FIVE FUNCTIONS OF PLANNING COMMISSION

Remember what the purpose of “zoning” really is

Carry out development review process within the legal framework and requirements of state and local law

Effectively deal with the local political will

Act as an arbiter between government staff, applicant, citizens, land owners, and other parties

Review projects in view of standards and technical criteria which are applicable

PLANNING COMMISSION

Learn
meeting
procedures
(Robert's
Rules of
Order)

Stay
informed

Keep
communication
open

Be an
effective
leader

Follow the
law

BEING EFFECTIVE

PLANNING COMMISSION

FOLLOWING THE LAW - ASK THESE QUESTIONS

- Is the proposal consistent with the Comp Plan?
- Does it meet all applicable zoning and subdivision requirements?
- Are environmental impacts reduced or eliminated by conditions or are there overriding considerations?
- Is decision supported by findings of fact based on substantial evidence in the record?
- Anything else?

MEETING BASICS



- ❑ Will of majority of commissioners must be carried out
- ❑ Every attendee of meeting has right equal to every other attendee
- ❑ Only one topic will be considered at a time
- ❑ Follow adopted procedures
- ❑ Follow your adopted agenda
- ❑ Comments always directed to the chair
- ❑ All deliberations done in the open
- ❑ All decisions given in the open

AGENDA



Introduction of reports/documents

Approval of minutes

Old business

New business

Other business

Adjournment

ACTIONS: What are your choices?

Approve



Approve with
Conditions



Deny



Postpone



LOCAL STAFF RESPONSIBILTIES

Administer code

Provide full and accurate information and background to applicant, developers, boards, commissions, and landowners

Reports/recommendations based on fact (plan/code)

Administrative permits

DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

Acts as agents for property owners or neighborhood

Professional wisdom and experience

WHO IS THE DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY?

Real estate
agents/brokers

Land
developers/speculators

Residential and
commercial builders

Apartment developers
and landlords

Lawyers

Engineers, architects,
surveyors

Bankers

Consultants

Trade groups/special
interest groups

THE PUBLIC



Plans belong to the community



Publishing hearing agenda in various media outlets is good tool



Handouts and visuals can help individuals understand in process



FINAL WORDS



Plans are a guide. Codes and ordinances are law.

Staff, boards, and commissions must be: objective, consistent, rely on laws, codes, plans, and facts.

Plans (and codes and laws) are living documents and must evolve with change in conditions.

Implementation and enforcement are important.

Focus must be sustained by staff and elected officials.



Georgia[®] Department of



Community Affairs