

THE DISCONNECT BETWEEN DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PLANS AND
PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

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Introduction

Downtowns have served as the center of communities through their central location of retail, entertainment, civic functions and gathering place for hundreds of years. It was not until the growth of the automobile industry and development of an extensive highway system in the 1920s, along with several contributing factors since, that downtowns have experienced a steady decline in economic health. Accessibility to the suburbs along with the appealing price of abundant land attracted downtown residents further from the central core. This abandonment of the downtowns has left the heart of hundreds of communities across the country empty, unattractive and hopeless.

While numerous issues have contributed to the downfall of the downtown, the common factor for all of these issues has been the decentralization of business and people. Business decentralization has burdened downtowns with a separation between places of work and places of residence. Jobs began locating away from the central city due to cheap, expansive and available land. People were moving away from the central city for those same reasons. Exclusionary zoning prevented lower-income households from following jobs to the suburbs and resulted in a large concentration of low-income families in the downtown. An additional effect that arose from decentralization was the loss of tax base from the large amounts of households and businesses moving outside the

downtown core. The decentralization phenomenon increased the needs of infrastructure in surrounding communities and lessened the need for improved infrastructure in the downtown areas (Burayidi, 2001). Whatever effect decentralization has had on the overall economic climate of any downtown, the loss of residents and businesses has left much of America with undesirable downtowns.

The over abundant and available open land found in the suburbs attracted developers to eat up valuable farmland that once surrounded the majority of American communities. With large tracts of land available for development, suburban communities have experienced unprecedented growth in population and development. This fast paced and consuming growth has created similar looking growth patterns in every community that is commonly referred to as “sprawl.” The sprawling suburban landscape has neglected its residents of a sense of place, which ironically downtowns had previously offered. The effects of decentralization and suburban sprawl have created numerous underused and undesirable downtowns throughout the country. A movement surfaced in the latter part of the twentieth century that recognized the importance of downtowns in any sized community. The planning movement of downtown revitalization has been gaining support with increased interest from not only planners and developers but also government officials.

According to Gene Bunnell in Making Places Special: Stories of Real Places Made Better by Planning (2002) “Americans want the place they call home to be special and yearn for those places similar to the cities and countryside found in Europe, not because they are located in foreign countries but they simply are different from places in America.” Bunnell (2002) further explains that Americans are truly interested in living

and being a part of a place that is unique from other communities throughout the country. In order to create that unique character, many communities are turning to their downtowns to help define an identity that is different from other communities. With a growing interest in downtowns, communities are examining different techniques for revitalizing downtown cores.

In order to fully capture the revitalization movement, it is necessary to understand the importance of planning. Much of the suburban sprawl that is evident in most American communities can be attributed to a lack of planning or effective planning tools. “Planning has often been sporadic and undertaken in response to crises, and then forgotten about until the next crisis arises” (Bunnell, 2002). If a community truly wants to experience a comeback, communities will either have to initiate and persuade developers to invest in downtowns or the communities will have to react to eager developers ready to take on downtown as the next profitable development phase. A plan in place prior to either of these scenarios is most beneficial to fully address the community’s vision for the future of the downtown. Planning before redevelopment can help assure that the true vision for the downtown is achieved by attracting redevelopment projects that will improve the downtown and be able to prevent projects that could jeopardize the character and quality of the downtown core.

There are several approaches that communities take in initiating downtown redevelopment. Communities typically have a long-term focus for what the downtown’s want to achieve, whether it is attracting residents to live, shop, work, recreate, or meet in the downtown. Perhaps the most common approach for initiating redevelopment is through a downtown redevelopment plan that typically follows the strategic planning

approach. Like all planning documents, a downtown redevelopment plan helps set the course of action for the future of the downtown. Planning documents are most beneficial as a proactive tool that helps lay a vision and direction for growth in a community compared to a reactive tool that demands plans to react to unwanted growth and development. Sandra Goldstein (2002) suggests the importance of a strategic plan for downtowns

“Strategic planning’s major purpose is twofold: respond to multiple pressures of the outside world by having plans of action before a crisis occurs, and, fashion these plans in such a manner that the community’s vision and mission are intact and respected.” (Goldstein, 2002)

Strategic planning is a process that creates a vision and several goals for the community and then outlines the necessary steps to take to reach the goals and ultimately achieve the vision. Strategic plans are typically heavily involved in gathering community consensus through in-depth public participation sessions. This helps create a true community plan that citizens are proud and supportive of, due to the citizen’s involvement in the planning process. The strategic planning process involves identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of a community. The strategic planning process lays the foundation for the community to review the current condition of the downtown and identify the direction in which the community wants to take in the future. Based upon the outcomes, a vision is created that clearly outlines what the community wants to achieve in the future. Goals are then created that address the necessary action steps to undertake in order to achieve the goals. (Goldstein, 2002) The implementation portion of any planning document is the key element that helps outline and direct community leaders to carry out the goals of the plan. Implementation should address action steps for each goal

in order to successfully achieve each goal. To be the most effective, each action step should identify the resources needed and a responsible party to carry out the action step along with a timeline in which to complete the specific action step.

Implementation should be one of the most important sections of the plan since it is the section that spells out the steps necessary for the community to begin initiating revitalization projects. Planning documents are intended to be “living documents” that are continually used by the communities they serve. However, many planning documents often are created and then sit on the shelves in the communities they serve. This could be due to numerous reasons including the lack of importance community leaders place on the document. However, it is the fear of the planning community that planning documents are not user-friendly or do not include enough guiding information in which makes the document ineffective for community leaders to consult with. Historically, planners have neglected the implementation portion of the plans. Many plans focus more on evaluating existing conditions than creating plans and strategies for the future. The de-emphasis of implementation is further evident by the location of the implementation chapter in most planning documents. Even though the implementation chapter will most likely be the most used section of the plan after the plan is adopted, the implementation section is often placed towards the end of planning documents. While implementation is the last step in strategic planning, it is important that the implementation portion of the plan is the most extensive chapter, to leave local officials with a useful and in-depth, step-by-step plan that can be used when the planning consultant is finished with the project. Therefore, the most pertinent and useful information should be displayed in the

beginning of the planning document for easy access and to acknowledge the vision, goals and direction that the community plans on taking to succeed in achieving revitalization.

Literature Review

The following literature discussed the importance of downtowns to any community. While there is limited literature about the importance of implementation within planning documents, there is abundant literature that supports successful elements that a community can possess in order to initiate redevelopment, aside from extensive implementation strategies.

Determining the success of downtowns is an indefinable measure since there are so many unquantifiable elements that contribute to making a downtown successful or unsuccessful. In order to determine some quantifiable measure of the success of downtowns, many communities will measure the number of people that attended an event downtown or the number of buildings rehabilitated. These measurements do display that revitalization has some effect on the community, however true effectiveness of revitalization programs are still hard to determine. Michael A. Burayidi suggests that there are six measures to assess revitalization efforts in his book Downtowns: Revitalizing the Centers of Small Urban Communities. Burayidi's suggested efforts include changes in the tax base, real property investment, office space occupancy, number of businesses, population density, residential population by income and employment by classification. Data that provides this information is often not available

or is difficult to obtain, increasing the difficulty in measuring successful downtown redevelopment. Burayidi (2001) concludes that in his personal attempt in measuring the impact of downtown (re)development programs, several communities lacked support from community leaders, which puts pressure on planners to take on an educational role within the community to further gain support on the importance of downtown redevelopment from local decision makers.

Several, if not most, communities have some idea as to what direction the community is heading in the future in terms of growth, economic development, and improvements. In order to determine the community's path for the future, communities most likely have had a plan created to help outline this direction. But do plans really work? In the chapter "How Plans Work" in the book Time Standards for Urban Design, Lewis D. Hopkins (2003) classifies "plans" into five different categories; agenda, policy, vision, design or strategy.

After determining the types of "plans" created, Hopkins explores criteria to consider in determining whether plans work. Hopkins describes four broad criteria for assessing whether plans work by:

- Effect: If the plan had any affect on the decision making process
- Net Benefit: If the plan was worth making to those who desired or needed the plan
- Internal Validity (or quality): If the plan fulfilled the logic for those who wanted the plan
- External Validity (or quality): If the plan produced the outcomes it stated or suggested

Hopkins examines several planning professionals and scholars on the assessment or criteria of successful plans and concluded that several stated "it is very difficult to assess the effects of plans on outcomes and thus on measures of goal achievement." Hopkins states that one could examine the amount of projects successfully completed, which were outlined in the plan and conclude whether the plan was a success or failure. However,

there are so many other variables that go into the implementation of a plan, and in addition, so many unexpected outcomes that could come from implementation that could ultimately result in a plan being classified as unsuccessful. Hopkins finishes by stating “it is important to distinguish between lack of plans and lack of action.” Therefore Hopkins narrows his conclusion to three observable phenomena’s that can yield a persuasive argument that a plan affected decision making, actions and outcomes by evaluating:

- Was the plan used?
- Were the actions taken?
- Were the outcomes achieved?

Successful plans should not only answer positively to these questions, they should also incorporate a combination of agendas, policies, visions, design, and strategy.

There are several different approaches to downtown redevelopment, along with several different ways communities can achieve successful revitalization. Bernard J. Frieden and Lynne B. Sagalyn investigate and share how communities in different parts of the country, of different sizes, created successful solutions to revitalizing downtowns, from initiating pedestrian malls to allowing developers initiate catalyst projects to spark revitalization. Frieden and Sagalyn illustrate successful approaches with an emphasis on public-private partnerships in the book Downtown Inc. How America Rebuilds Cities. The book emphasizes projects that were successful by public-private partnerships and also where communities acted as developers. Several successful, large scale revitalization projects have been the result of public-private partnerships. Each approach has helped communities attract jobs to spark new interest in downtowns.

Managing downtown revitalization efforts has increasingly been recognized as a full time job and important enough to create an entity that can focus solely on those efforts. Leadership and management of revitalization projects or other functions

particularly related to the downtown should not solely be the responsibility of the mayor or other community leadership figures. A downtown organization, which should be an extension of the mayor's leadership, should be created to help implement the vision of the mayor and community. In David Feehan and Marvin D. Feit's book Making Business Districts Work: Leadership and Management of Downtown, Main Street, Business District, and Community Development Organizations the role of downtown management and leadership is examined. Feehan and Feit explain that leadership, management, development and financial support must be diversified to truly create successful downtowns.

Sandra Goldstein, a contributing author to Making Business Districts Work examines the importance of Strategic Plans to communities. A strategic plan helps prevent communities from reacting to problems and promotes proactive planning. The importance of achievable action plans is emphasized as a successful element of downtown revitalization and leadership. Strategic plans further emphasize the future of the community and helps create a direction in which the community desires to grow.

Communities are constantly changing and reacting to changes in the economy, which are attributed to the decline and abandonment of downtowns. Economic changes are also attributes that help revitalize downtowns. Nancy Kleniewski examines the social and economic trends that have created desolate downtowns and those similar trends that have rejuvenated downtowns in the book Cities and Society. Cities have adopted economic development strategies as a revitalization tool in response to the changing urban economies. Kleniewski also examines communities using public-private partnerships to help rejuvenate downtowns. Every community in the world is virtually

competing to attract jobs in order to maintain or increase economic vitality. This competition has forced communities to create public-private partnerships. Communities are able to secure jobs and enhance the economic climate by offering incentives for businesses to move to their community. However, Franstein discusses the burden that public-private partnerships create for the tax paying citizen.

Communities located on metropolitan fringes have been experiencing suburbanization at an extremely fast pace. Large increases in population, the consumption of valuable, vacant, agricultural land and the goods and services demanded by the new population have created several challenges for communities. Kent Robertson and Bill Ryan (2004) examine the primary challenges facing downtowns within the metropolitan fringe in the article “Downtown Development on the Metro Fringe” in the Economic Development Journal. It is important for downtowns in sprawling metropolitan regions to recognize the downtown’s unique identity in order to differentiate the community from similar communities within the metropolitan fringe. Uncovering the community’s identity will help give direction in creating the desired sense of place.

- Differentiating itself from other commercial settings
- Representing its unique heritage
- Creating downtown as a destination by supporting downtown’s multiple functions
- Making downtown pedestrian friendly
- Creating and supporting human activity
- Creating an atmosphere for people to linger
- Creating community ownership

Hypothesis

Due to the complex nature of identifying quantifiable measures in determining the success of planning documents, there seems to be limited research on whether implementation plays a key role in initiating downtown revitalization. Therefore, it was important to investigate if the extent of the implementation sections of downtown redevelopment plans affects the outcome of initiating redevelopment projects. Based on the finding literature, it was suspected that the more in-depth and extensive the implementation section of a plan was, the easier, or perhaps more productive the initiation of revitalization projects would be. It is also important to determine if there is a correlation between a “successful plan” and the implementation of projects due to the implementation section within the “successful plan.” Therefore it is important to not only determine if the implementation portion of the plan was successful but also to examine if the overall plan was successful.

Methodology

To determine if it is likely that there is a correlation between downtown revitalization plans and project implementation, the success of the plan must be examined. Criteria created by Lewis D. Hopkins (2003) addressed in the chapter titled “How Plans Work” in Time Saver Standards for Urban Design, was used as a test in determining if the overall plan in each case study was successful. Each case study’s downtown revitalization plan was reviewed to determine if the plan included an agenda, policy, vision, design, and/or strategy. Each plan was then evaluated by examining whether the plan was used, if action was taken and if the outcomes of the plan were achieved. Since the strategy portion of the plan most reflects and incorporates the implementation portion of the plan, the strategy of the plan was critiqued more closely than the other elements of the plan. Review of these benchmarks helps to determine if the community’s plan was successful and if the extent of the implementation (strategy) portion of the plan influenced project implementation. While three case studies could not provide enough support to make any hard conclusions about the correlation between downtown revitalization plans and project implementation, the conclusion of the paper concludes the lessons learned from evaluating plans based on Hopkins’ (2003) criteria and other lessons learned by evaluating each plan.

In order to determine if downtown revitalization is more likely to occur if a downtown revitalization plan was in place, three communities were examined as case studies to test the generalized hypothesis. The three communities were chosen as case studies after preliminary research that included the location of the community, the size of the community, time period of the revitalization plan, and access to the revitalization plan. The three communities chosen as case studies all lie within the periphery of a major metropolitan statistical area, have populations between 50,000 and 100,000 people, have a downtown revitalization plan that has been either created or updated within the last ten years and the document is available for the public to access via the internet. The case study communities are:

- Racine, Wisconsin
- West Palm Beach, Florida
- Alpharetta, Georgia

Planning leaders that were involved in the creation of each revitalization plan were contacted and interviewed from each case study community in order to gain further insight into the implementation portion of the revitalization plan and process.

Case Study: Racine, Wisconsin

Prior to 1999, Racine was a very industrial city and the majority of industries lined the lake to take advantage of the transportation Lake Michigan offered to transporting large industrial products. Downtown Racine, lay just beyond the waterfront, never connecting to the community's largest natural amenity until the community realized that Lake Michigan was a huge economic asset to the community. This realization sparked interest in renewing the waterfront area to help improve the downtown district. In 1974, the city council approved the purchase of an abandoned industrial property along Lake Michigan and turned the previous industrial area into a waterfront park and harbor. This was a major effort from city officials to redevelop the downtown and was believed that this transformation of an abandoned industrial site and opening of the waterfront would spark further reinvestment. However, redevelopment did not take off as planned. City officials further tried to initiate redevelopment of the downtown core with two catalyst projects, Festival Park and the revitalization of the Marina; however neither project transpired (Crandall Arambula, 2005).

The City of Racine created a downtown corporation known as the Racine Downtown Corporation in 1989. As David Feehan and Marvin D. Feit (2006) state, downtown corporations are traditionally created to aid the city in additional support that

can more heavily focus on revitalization. However, Racine's original downtown corporation was merely a takeover of an existing merchants group formed 30-40 years prior. In the coming years, community leaders realized the large advantages the Downtown Corporation could provide in regards to revitalization. The Downtown Racine Corporation evolved into a downtown corporation that was focused on redevelopment and business attraction to the downtown. In 1999, the Downtown Racine Corporation (DC) initiated a redevelopment plan with the 501c3 corporations own money (Crandall Arambula, 2005). Feehan and Feit (2006) further discuss that prior to the popularization of downtown organizations most communities relied on chamber of commerce organizations or committees to promote revitalization efforts. When revitalization efforts become more mainstream and enabling legislation for tax increment financing existed, downtown organizations were beginning to form in order to "move past being a cheerleader/advocate/convener and taking on more direct catalytic character" (Crandall Arambula, 2005) to downtown revitalization efforts. One of the first initiatives the newly organized and restructured Racine Downtown Corporation embarked upon was the creation of the first downtown plan.

My experience has been that it is critical to have a comprehensive plan that your Downtown organization was actively involved in developing, preferably in partnership with the City, before jumping into case-by-case zoning, land use and...urban design issues. (Goldstein, 2006)

In 1999 the Downtown Corporation, with support from the City of Racine, hired the nationally recognized downtown revitalization consulting firm of Crandall Arambula to develop the first downtown plan. The 1999 Downtown Racine Plan's key focus was to attract private investment into downtown projects that would then create a live, work,

play atmosphere. Similar to Kent Robertson's (2004) key elements that define a strong downtown's sense of place in the article "Downtown Development on the Metro Fringe," the major guiding principles outlined in Racine's 1999 plan included:

- Utilizing special downtown natural resources and features
- Preserving the historic built environment
- Utilizing existing assets
- Develop a pedestrian-friendly downtown
- Increase residential development
- Promote business development
- Increase office development
- Identify catalyst projects
- Develop community census
- Meet and exceed established goals and expectations (Crandall Arambula, 2005)

The 1999 Downtown Racine Plan found strong political support and was officially adopted by Racine's Common Council as the official document for revitalizing downtown Racine. The 1999 plan also included Design Guidelines that were also adopted by the Common Council to ensure further influence on the outcome of redevelopment projects that would enhance the downtown core to the standards put forth by the redevelopment plan. The combination of the Design Guidelines as the "policy" and the downtown plan as the "strategy" further emphasizes Lewis D. Hopkin's theory that plans must be a series of differentiating elements such as agendas, visions, design, and strategy. (Hopkins, 2003)

With political support and a newfound enthusiasm brought to the community with the 1999 Downtown Racine Plan, projects and major redevelopment efforts started to take place. Within an unexpectedly short period of time, the majority of goals and objectives outlined in the 1999 plan were fast being accomplished. The downtown has seen more than \$250 million worth of investments just from projects and goals outlined

in the downtown plan. With the fast momentum of development and completion of the goals and objectives, the Downtown Corporation determined that a new downtown plan that had the same founding principles and built upon the 1999 plan would be needed around 2005. The Downtown Corporation decided to hire the same consulting firm, Crandall Arambula for \$550,000, a rather large amount of money for a second revitalization plan for a relatively small community. The Downtown Corporation believed that the large investment in creating the planning document and re-hiring the original consultants would further ensure that the 2005 document would be an equally effective document.

It was important for the community and the Downtown Corporation that the 2005 plan would both incorporate and elaborate on the 1999 guiding principles. However, the new document would need to address additional objectives in the 2005 plan and address new goals to ensure the plan would grow and achieve further revitalization achievement.

The challenges of the 2005 plan needed to address:

- Recognizing that more needs to be done to strengthen the heart of Racine and maintain downtown revitalization momentum
- Provide a clear vision for new opportunity areas adjacent to the heart of the downtown core
- Position downtown Racine for additional new development in the 21st century
- Identify a menu for strategic public investments to spur private development
- Refine and update design guidelines, codes and design standards to ensure quality development occurs within the downtown (Crandall Arambula, 2005)

The success of the original 1999 plan can be attributed to the founding principal goals which the plan was based. Since there was a relatively short time between the original 1999 plan and the 2005 update, many of the original driving principles for redevelopment of downtown Racine stayed the same. The City wanted to ensure that in

order to increase the existing upward momentum of redevelopment efforts; a whole new plan was not being formulated since the previous plan was such a huge success.

The 2005 Downtown Racine Plan was adopted May 10, 2005. Since the adoption of the plan, the community has continued to see redevelopment projects in the downtown district. One of the most beneficial and successful guiding principals outlined in both plans was recognizing catalyst projects by “identifying key projects and actions, and establish a program and process for success that would focus and promote growth throughout the downtown.” (Crandall Arambula, 2005) This guiding principle laid the framework and contributed to a detailed and powerful implementation strategy in each of the plans. The Downtown Racine Corporation attributed the majority of the success from both plans was due to a strong implementation chapter of the plan. Crandall Arambula, along with community input and the direction of the Development Corporation provided an “ambitious strategy for growing and strengthening downtown,” (Crandall Arambula, 2005) The plan prescribed a realistic and timely strategy for positive change unlike previous plans and visions that had been created in the past. The implementation strategy for the 2005 plan was founded on “the principle that public dollars must be spent on projects that will leverage significant private investment and spark widespread and sustainable reinvestment in the downtown. The implementation strategy included five actions:” (Crandall Arambula, 2005)

1. Organization
2. Retail Revitalization Strategy
3. Catalyst and Other Projects
4. Policies, Regulations and Guidelines
5. Implementation Schedule

The structure of the implementation section of the 2005 Downtown Plan first addresses organization. The plan states that since the “Downtown Racine Corporation had successfully addressed the issues of revitalization during the past decade, no major overhaul to the existing system” (Crandall Arambula, 2005) was needed. However the plan did state that key entities may need to take on new responsibilities. The organization portion of the Implementation section of the plan outlines key elements that need to be taken on by the major leadership stakeholders driving the downtowns revitalization efforts; the City of Racine, Downtown Racine Corporation and property owners. Several specific responsibilities were outlined that each entity should undertake in order to further the revitalization efforts in Racine and to implement the projects outlined in the plan.

The City of Racine should

develop and implement Urban Renewal activities, such as attracting developers, assisting in-site assembly, review and approve development plans, construct public infrastructure and amenities, provide public parking downtown with demand buildup, administer loan and grant programs for revitalization projects and participate in retail recruitment outreach and marketing programs. (Crandall Arambula, 2005)

The plan outlines additional responsibilities for the Downtown Racine Corporation to carry out in addition to their existing efforts put forth throughout the past ten years. The plan outlines that the Downtown Corporation should

provide an education curriculum for downtown businesses in areas of advertising, customer service, marketing and visual merchandising, provide information on available small business loan and grant programs, develop information on the downtown area with specific information on retail buildings and spaces, and participate in retail recruitment outreach and marketing programs. (Crandall Arambula, 2005)

The organization portion of the Implementation section further outlined initiatives for property owners which included “focusing on building renovations and tenant upgrades

by taking advantage of available loan and grant programs, continue to support the implementation of the Downtown Plan, provide information required to create an effective leasing brochure for the downtown and participate in retail recruitment outreach and marketing programs.” (Crandall Arambula, 2005)

The retail revitalization portion of the implementation section of the plan refers readers to the *Downtown Racine Retail and Entertainment Strategy* report prepared by Economic Research Associates. This document addresses existing conditions affecting retail success, strategies for recruitment of retail anchors and smaller storefront tenants, and tactical approaches to retail implementation. The Retail Revitalization Strategy portion of this Implementation section outlines a few of the major actions recommended in the retail and entertainment report.

Devin Sutherland, the Executive Director of the Development Racine Corporation stated that while the five implementation actions together generated the majority of changes and redevelopment from this plan, it was the Catalyst and Other Projects that brought upon most redevelopment efforts. Identification of catalyst projects were developed through community meetings and input. The Development Corporation proposed that there seemed to be more community input through the planning process for the 1999 plan compared to the 2005 plan. Six public meetings were held throughout the planning process for the 2005 plan and community consensus was gained in areas of improvements needed throughout the downtown district; transportation and movement issues; concepts for Main Street retail, anchor developments, housing and employment; and identifying key catalyst projects. Eighteen catalyst projects were identified through evaluation of community, retail and development needs. Those eighteen catalyst projects

were identified as being “important to creating sustained and widespread downtown revitalization and can be maintained by strategic, public investment that will, in turn, lead to private investment.” (Crandall Arambula, 2005) In order to be classified as a catalyst projects, projects needed to meet the following strict requirements:

- Be located strategically to spark the greatest amount of new development and renovation
- Result in a return on investment of at least six private dollars of development for every one public dollar spent – a six to one ratio. (Crandall Arambula, 2005)

Each major catalyst project was described by the location of the proposed project and details of the project throughout this portion of the Implementation section. An implementation schedule for the top priority catalyst projects was provided in this section outlining the year each project should begin.

The Development Corporation believed that the consulting group “did a good job of incorporating, not only, the public but also city officials and educating them on the jobs that each of them would need to help in accomplishing in order to further carry out the revitalization efforts.” (Crandall Arambula, 2005) The portion of the implementation section that focused on catalyst projects that were identified as necessary to start in order to further revitalization efforts did not address elements such as action steps, responsible parties, resources or a timeline for each element of each catalyst project in the actual Downtown Racine Plan document.

The downtown Development Corporation believed that the addition of the design guidelines and standards were additional elements to the Downtown plan that helped ensure the official adoption of the plan by the local political leadership. Much of the local

leadership support has come in the form of incorporating catalyst projects into the City Improvement Plan along with the adoption of a design review process.

When evaluating Racine's Downtown Plan with Lewis D. Hopkins' (2003) criteria for successful plans, Racine's plan does indeed incorporate elements of the five necessary components required to make a plan work.

- Agenda - Racine's mayor and city council have incorporated several of the revitalization plans into the City Improvement Plan since the adoption of the 2005 Downtown Plan.
- Policy - Racine recognized that one of the most integral components of the plan was the adoption of Design Guidelines in order to ensure achievement in the goals set forth by the vision and strategies.
- Vision - The Downtown Corporation has and continues to lead a large education movement through public meetings and an extensive marketing campaign. Both of these elements help ensure the downtown vision thrives and continually gains support from residents.
- Design - The Downtown Plan divides revitalization projects into catalyst projects and ranks them by order of importance. The outline of the catalyst projects could be a form of design, however this element is the one element that the Racine Plan lacks.
- Strategy - There is an extensive list of catalyst projects ranked by order of importance in the implementation portion of the plan. While there has been great success from the previous and present plans in implementing projects, the plan lacks full guidance in identifying timelines, resources and action steps necessary to fulfill in order to accomplish the catalysis project.

Reviewing Racine's plan in regards to Hopkin's three additional criteria that are equally as important when considering a plan successful, Racine's plan seems to pass the test.

The Plan was greatly used by local officials, which is evident in incorporating key catalyst projects into the City's Capital Improvement Plan. This action alone could be an example of the community fulfilling Hopkin's (2003) other two criteria since action was taken on initiating projects by putting in the Capital Improvement Plan to ensure funding was available. Since funding was available for projects outlined in the Capital Improvement Plan, projects were implemented and outcomes achieved. Since Racine

needed an update to their original Downtown Plan in a relatively short amount of time also contributes that the plan produced outcomes.

Case Study: West Palm Beach, Florida

Since the adoption of the initial Downtown Master Plan in 1995, the city has experienced profound changes in the atmosphere and building character of the downtown through new development and building mass that was approved through the implementation of Form Based Codes. The retail market began to turn around in the downtown and large developments were occupying more and more space in the downtown district. New development was increasing more each year, and with new development came new conflicts and challenges.

The planning process that resulted in the new downtown redevelopment involved three documents that were created to work together and build upon one another. The first document was the Master Plan Update which is the broadest document and outlines the overall vision for downtown West Palm Beach. The second document created was the City Comprehensive Plan that really devolves into the action steps broken out by districts for achieving the vision stated in the Master Plan Update. The third document created was the Zoning and Land Use Plan which incorporates incentive programs and is a useful manual for developers since it thoroughly addressed and outlines the needs, desires and wants for the buildings, streetscapes and the overall area of the downtown. (Zyscovich, 2007)

The first Master Plan, along with a Comprehensive Plan, and Land Use Codes (incorporated into the zoning) was initiated and passed in 1995. The plan was one of the first downtown master plans in the nation to focus on Form Based Code. The 1995 Master Plan was produced in response to the suburban flight trend surrounding the West Palm Beach area. Leadership throughout the community took notice and became concerned about the trend that was turning its back on the downtown core. In 1995, community leaders knew that an innovative Master Plan would be the initial step in reinvigorating downtown West Palm Beach. West Palm Beach community leaders further believed that creating a Master Plan in conjunction with Form Based Codes would be the ultimate planning tool in order to experience revitalization as the community envisioned.

Since the 1995 Master Plan, West Palm Beach has experienced a movement of residents, businesses and employers moving back to the downtown. The new found interest in the downtown was attributed to the 1995 Master Plan since there was such a strong emphasis being put on the creation of a plan that ensured downtown West Palm Beach would once again be thriving. The Plan identified the key amenities that the downtown should possess to attract development and interest to the downtown. These key amenities the Plan focused on were; the allure and notability of Palm Beach; the West Palm Beach Airport; and the Atlantic Ocean, all within close proximity to downtown West Palm Beach. The development of these amenities helped bring a newfound liveliness and importance back to the downtown. (Zyscovich, 2007)

While the 1995 Master Plan achieved many great accomplishments in downtown revitalization, there were unforeseen elements of the plan that eventually created a

problem for the downtown; architectural character. Since the 1995 plan focused so much on Form Based Codes, developers began putting up large box buildings on every space available without any consideration to streetscape, setbacks, parks or the general liveliness of the downtown. The Form Based Code portion of the plan was really intended for single parcel development. However, developers began developing multiple parcel developments that ultimately created a box of materials along streets without any consideration for street life.

A major retail development, City Place, was being built in downtown West Palm Beach simultaneously as the 1995 Master Plan was being drafted. The developer who initiated City Place fell into financial trouble shortly after the project began, so the city bought the land and continued development of the project. City Place was one of original outdoor malls and focused primarily on retail shops found in traditional indoor shopping malls while creating an urban, outdoor retail setting. The development incorporated some residential and office space. The success of City Place in both location and in attracting tourists to the area prompted the City to build the Palm Beach County Convention Center adjacent to City Place. Both the convention center and City Place are two major projects credited to bringing more people downtown and ultimately creating more interest in downtown West Palm Beach. (Zyscovich, 2007)

Community leaders and West Palm Beach citizens viewed the 1995 Master Plan differently, according to West Palm Beach Senior Planner, Matthew Flis. Planners and community leaders contribute the growth and turnaround of downtown West Palm Beach to the 1995 Master Plan. However, Flis stated since the City Place project was constructed simultaneously as the 1995 Master Plan was being produced, many West

Palm Beach citizens felt that the 1995 Master Plan was a reactive measure to revitalization.

The original 1995 Downtown Plan was successful in many areas and helped renew a lost interest in downtown West Palm Beach. However, some elements of the plan eventually created unforeseen issues. The major elements of the plan that ended up creating additional problems in the revitalization effort were the lack of architectural design guidelines for each downtown district and the neglect in addressing how building mass affects street life. The creation of City Place and the addition of the Convention Center eventually created some problems for the downtown by pulling people towards the south end of downtown for retail needs, which ultimately left the existing and relatively thriving retail corridor of Clematis Street neglected. These elements drove West Palm Beach officials to update the Downtown Master Plan in 2007. The Downtown Master Plan Update (DMP Update) “created a new vision for the downtown based on lessons learned from the original 1994 Downtown Master Plan and to reflect current development potentials.” (Zyscovich, 2007) Since the original Downtown Master Plan was comprised of three documents, the Master Plan, Comprehensive Plan and Form Based Codes, each of these documents had to be updated to reflect the new downtown plan in 2007.

The majority of the Downtown Master Plan Update focuses on correcting the problem of large masses of buildings neglecting street life, which was a result from the original plan. “The way development relates to the street can reinforce or weaken the clarity with which the city center’s inherent structure can be expressed.” (Paumier, 2004) In order to address the disconnect between new development and street life, the DMP

Update created separate districts within the downtown and “encouraged building variation through a combination of design strategies differing depending on their location to Downtown.” (Zyscovich, 2007) The DMP Update focuses heavily on street elements ensuring that street life is once again captured throughout the downtown instead of focusing on the buildings. The Downtown Master Plan Update was adopted by the City Commission and incorporated into the City’s Comprehensive Plan (the second document of the original Master Plan document). The City also created new zoning regulations and design guidelines to reflect the elements of the DMP Update (the third document of the original Master Plan documents).

Showpieces, such as a shopping mall, new office towers, a convention center, a hotel...were common developments in the last third of the twentieth century, a trophy collection that mayors want. The showpieces are useful as well as trendy. They help a city keep up with its competitors while also meeting some local need such as getting rid of an eyesore, saving a landmark, or creating a civic symbol. Although the projects rarely result from systematic forethought, they often fit together surprisingly well. Most serve a common function: restoring downtown as a center of economic activity. (Frieden and Sagalyn, 1989)

City Place could be classified as a “showpiece” development that successfully attracted people back to downtown West Palm Beach as the major retail hub of the City.

However, before City Place, there was already an existing retail center in downtown West Palm Beach, Clematis Street, the historical Main Street of the city. Clematis Street had always been the retail hub with large retail stores occupying storefronts along the street with national up-scale tenants. Once City Place was built, those large retailers moved to City Place for more space. The loss of the major retailers created an unanticipated loss of foot traffic along Clematis Street. However the previous and current mayors have had a strong focus on rejuvenating Clematis Street. Therefore the

second focus of the DMP Update was the redevelopment of the Clematis Street retail Corridor, which in the plan is incorporated into the Quadrille Business District that encompasses Clematis Street, City Place and the waterfront. Several principles in the DMP Update address using redevelopment to create an employment base. This principle outlines that “the Master Plan needs to promote office development within the Quadrille Business District to become a catalyst that links the two primary retail nodes, Clematis Street and City Place.” (Zyscovich, 2007) The success of this principle is believed to occur through a variety of ground floor uses including retail, galleries and personal services which will help connect City Place and Clematis Street and eventually radiate out into the surrounding neighborhoods. The major Principles in the DMP Update that focus on rejuvenating Clematis Street include: (Zyscovich, 2007)

- Principle 4: Use redevelopment to create an employment base.
- Principle 7: Establish connectivity throughout the city.
- Principle 8: Develop a retail strategy for the Downtown.
- Principle 9: Develop a cultural strategy for Downtown.

These principles emphasize the importance of expanding and incorporating retail areas into other areas of downtown West Palm Beach, rather than relying solely upon City Place. The principles also focused on reconnecting the two retail centers of City Place and Clematis Street, market niche’s for both retail areas would eliminate competition between the two.

“The foundation of this Master Plan Update is articulated in Action Items.” (Zyscovich, 2007) The Action Item chapter of the Master Plan Update is broken down by key elements that are addressed separately in each district to ultimately create a thriving downtown. The Action Items section of the Plan further breaks down the

Principles addressed earlier in the plan and explains the intent and rationale of each Action Item. The District's chapter in the plan "provides a more specific approach to improving the Downtown by developing specific recommendations for each district in order to reflect the distinctly different characteristics of each district." (Zyscovich, 2007)

The Quadrille District "is the key element of the entire Master Plan because it will address the two most significant issues in the Downtown:

1. The disconnect between the two main retail centers of Clematis Street and City Place
2. The need for a significant corporate center to make the Downtown a viable urban center. (Zyscovich, 2007)

The plan outlines the importance of this Quadrille District in revitalizing downtown West Palm Beach, however the additional components of the District section further address the architectural and design guidelines that must be placed in order to gain rejuvenation in the district rather than strategies to attract employment to the area.

The Downtown Master Plan Update addresses architectural guidelines and the City attributes the success of actual business attraction to the downtown to the original Downtown Master Plan. The success of West Palm Beach's redevelopment efforts is attributed to the original plan and what the expectations from the document along with a large focus on the community and stakeholders working together to focus on the downtown. The City always and still has strong political support for creating and maintaining an attractive and vibrant downtown.

From the initiation of creating a downtown redevelopment plan in 1994, West Palm Beach recognized the importance of creating multiple documents, reinforcing Lewis D. Hopkins (2003) theory that successful plans incorporate several different types

of plans. West Palm Beach initially created a Downtown Master Plan, Comprehensive Plan and zoning document that also addressed Form Based Codes. Each of those documents were updated through the planning process of updating the Master Plan.

- Agenda - While the original Master Plan and the updated Master Plan both had action items and the city initiated revitalization projects, the plans did not reflect agenda items.
- Policy - West Palm Beach recognized the importance of incorporating zoning into the planning process for downtown. They also recognized that Form Based Codes were important to implement to fully achieve their vision for the look and feel of the downtown.
- Vision - Both downtown plans created visions throughout the planning process. Perhaps even more vision was incorporated in this plan than average plans due to the additional Comprehensive Plan and zoning codes. However, it could be argued that the vision lacked in some regards since the updated Master Plan had to correct the shortcomings of the original Master Plan and building mass.
- Design - The Form Based Codes are a prime example, while not traditional, of a design element in the plan. They take the master plan elements and start to configure how buildings and streetscapes should look in order to achieve the master plan visions.
- Strategy - Each downtown master plan did initiate redevelopment projects. However, the implementation portion of the plans, specifically the Updated Master Plan, were very broad in their descriptions. The broad implementation plans could be a result in the overwhelming number of action items identified for the eight different downtown districts.
(Zyscovich, 2007)

Even though there were several plans involved in the initial planning process and updated planning process, all three documents including the Master Plan, Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Codes were used. Since each of the three documents relied so heavily on one another, perhaps this forced each of these documents to be used more than typical, stand-alone documents. The general public may view that the plans were not used very much, however, planners, the downtown corporation and city officials did feel the plan was used often.

West Palm Beach has long been a case study in the professional planning world as a primary example of reinvigorating the downtown. Over twenty years, the downtown has experienced extreme success in attracting people, businesses and residents to the downtown. Actions were taken due to both downtown plans. Since City Place was initiated at the same time as the first downtown plan, some revitalization success could be attributed to the success of the City Place project. Yet, since there are no definite tools in determining how much revitalization has occurred and the reason for that revitalization, as Burayidi explains in Downtowns: Revitalizing the Centers of Small Urban Communities. Regardless of what the exact element initiated redevelopment, the outcomes that the original Master Plan initiated were achieved and Form Based Codes were implemented. However, unforeseen problems with the way the Form Based Codes were written prompted the City to update the Master Plan and Form Based Codes to correct the problem. While the problem was unforeseen at the time the Form Based Codes were written, it can be argued that the Form Based Code element of the original plan was unsuccessful since the unwanted results came from elements not addressed from the Form Based Codes. Yet, all plans have the capability of generating unforeseen problems in the future and should not be the only element that could classify a plan as unsuccessful.

Case Study: Alpharetta, Georgia

Alpharetta, Georgia is one of the fastest growing communities in the country due to its proximity in the periphery of the Atlanta Metropolitan Statistical Area and the quality of life offered to residents. Alpharetta initiated a downtown master plan in 1994. That plan created a 10 year vision for the downtown and essentially expired in 2004. The city recognized the importance of having a downtown plan and initiated the latest downtown plan called the Alpharetta Downtown Master Plan. This plan is currently being used to help further develop downtown Alpharetta. Since Alpharetta has experienced extreme growth in the past ten years, this new downtown plan focuses on planning for growth and new development in the downtown area and adjacent areas of the community. (Sizemore Group, 2003)

Alpharetta has been lucky enough throughout the years to have a historical downtown focused around a main retail corridor that has historically produced life into the historical downtown. In recent years, an overwhelming amount of big-box and convenience retail centers have developed outside the downtown core, forcing the historic downtown to compete with both large, mainstream retail and convenience retail. The community views these large scale convenience retail stores as additional attractions for new comers to Alpharetta, yet they also feel that these new residents to the

community also want a lively, quaint downtown district. While the historical downtown does exist in form, there were and are initiatives needed to create a successful downtown. The 2003 Alpharetta Downtown Master Plan laid out a plan for the downtown to “evolve into a live, work, play, stay (self sustaining) community.” (Sizemore Group, 2003)

Exurban towns are at a crossroads. They once were unquestionably the center of most economic, social, and civic activities for the town and the surrounding rural countryside. Now they face numerous challenges...centered on the increasing competition with national and regional chain stores and restaurants that inevitably follow their outward migrating customer base and locate outside of the downtown along with the increasing proximity of even larger shopping and eating options located in outer ring suburbs. The key for an exurban downtown to prosper is to clearly understand the importance of its sense of place assets and potential and how it can take advantage of the rapidly challenging regional marketplace. (Robertson and Ryan, 2004)

Alpharetta’s major goal for this plan was to identify a compelling identity and generate enough activity downtown to draw existing residents along as well as visitors both day and night.

The major challenge for Alpharetta’s downtown is the competition from surrounding communities, which offer a number of choices and alternatives for local residents. Therefore a relatively in-depth market analysis was performed prior to creating the Master Plan in order to see where the downtown market niche stood, or if a downtown niche even existed. The market research determined that “in order for retail establishments in the downtown district to thrive, Alpharetta’s downtown needs to revitalize into a destination of choice as opposed to convenience shopping.” (Sizemore Group, 2003) The physical master plan that resulted from the market analysis and planning process incorporated a mix of retail, residential and entertainment possibilities to cater to a diverse population. Key aspects to the master plan that were created to help

transform the community into a more thriving downtown district included: (Sizemore Group, 2003)

- Create a “green city” comprising of multiple parks, fountains and tree lined streets interconnecting different districts throughout the downtown area.
- Creating a more walkable environment through mixed use development to help attract the large employment base that exists in Alpharetta yet live somewhere else.
- Planning for future abandoned properties such as a 40 acre school campus in the downtown area.
- Creating district districts within the downtown area that have differentiating architectural character but allows for common themes amongst the districts.

The Master Plan incorporated an Implementation and Recommendations summary to address the implementation of the various components of the Master Plan. The major implementation components included: (Sizemore Group, 2003)

- Utilizing the Alpharetta Development Authority to further study and promote redevelopment opportunities in the downtown area and coordinate these efforts with other entities in the community
- Gaining development rights to the 40 acres of available land in the downtown with the relocation of Milton High School and begin to form a feasibility study
- Initiating a City Hall site feasibility to identify departments that could be relocated
- Updating prior detailed parking feasibility for additional municipal and private parking lots
- Initiating a potential historic district to ensure historic resources within the downtown are protected
- Tailoring City Design Standards for each district created in the Master Plan
- Creating a Downtown Arts Council
- Creating a Green Space and Trail System Program to fully realize the components necessary in creating a “green city”
- Conducting detailed technical feasibility for proposed transportation improvements
- Initiating the development and replacement facility of a future library site
- Considering the hire of an executive architect to assist the City in executing the Master Plan.

Each of these implementation strategies was given a relative time frame ranging from the “end of 2003” to “urgency depends on the strength of desire to prevent demolition.” (Sizemore Group, 2003) Each of these strategies was outlined in the beginning of the document in the Executive Summary to stress the importance of these components of the Master Plan. A Short Term Schedule of Action was also given within the Executive Summary to outline projects that were necessary to begin implementing immediately to initiate revitalization efforts. The short-term schedule outlined the strategies to begin implementation within one-year-and-a-half time frame.

The plan did include a short-term schedule to guide community officials in the immediate implementation phase of the Master Plan, with a schedule outlining strategies to implement within the first couple of years. However, the plan did not extend the schedule to cover projects to implement or carry out for the entire ten years that the plan will be used. The initial step outlined to be taken by the community to start revitalization efforts was the development of an incentive-zoning program to help motivate developers to invest in the downtown.

“Used wisely, incentive zoning provides a mechanism for promoting private sector cooperation in creating desirable public amenities and improvements such as plazas and parks.” (Paumier, 2004) Alpharetta’s zoning incentive program began approximately one year after the adoption of the Master Plan and is acknowledged as a great initiation tool in the revitalization effort. This program has helped start kick revitalization efforts is an optional program that gives developers the ability to build more square footage than they could under conventional zoning if they meet certain requirements related to use, function, and architectural character. The city planners and

Community Development staff initiated the program and is in charge of carrying out and administering the program. Since the initiation of this program, there has been a large increase in interest from developers developing in downtown Alpharetta. All new downtown development projects currently underway are being built under this incentive program. The zoning incentive tool is a primary planning tool that has emerged from the Master Plan and has helped achieve new interest in the downtown and has further initiated the creation and adoption of the City of Alpharetta Downtown Overlay District.

The Master Plan is viewed by the Community Development Department as a proactive planning tool since new private sector development has been initiated after the Master Plan was adopted. According to Alpharetta's Director of Community Development, Diana Wheeler, there have been several other projects throughout the community and downtown that reinforce that the Master Plan has helped with revitalization efforts.

The City of Alpharetta did have the vision to initiate a downtown plan. Since the downtown plan was created for a downtown that was experiencing recent decline due to new suburban retail centers, therefore the Alpharetta Downtown Master Plan was a reactionary planning tool. The Master Plan did incorporate a few of the elements Lewis D. Hopkins (2003) deemed necessary to include in successful plans.

- Agenda - The Alpharetta Plan did incorporate action items with a distinct timeline to initiate and complete primary revitalization projects. Placing the section at the front of the Executive Summary further emphasized the importance of the action items. The Executive Summary in itself acts similar to an agenda.
- Policy - There were some elements of policy incorporated into the Alpharetta Downtown Master Plan. The zoning incentive program is a prime example of a policy element within a planning document.

- Vision - Through community workshops and public participation opportunities, a vision for the downtown was created for the Master Plan.
- Design - A master site plan was created for the Downtown Master Plan. However the master plan served more as a supplemental visual for the vision portion of the plan than a stand-alone design document.
- Strategy - The implementation portion outlined in the Master Plan and Executive Summary provided in-depth ideas as to what resources would be needed for each project, identifying responsible parties for each project to ensure implementation. Perhaps the most important strategy element was a precise timeline that should be followed for each initial project.

According to the Community Development Director, Diana Wheeler, the Plan is being used. In most instances where communities have an Executive Summary in addition to the action Master Plan document, the Executive Summary acts as the “living document” and the full Master Plan acts as a supporting document. Action has been initiated in attracting developers downtown to build projects. The zoning incentive program has been a great tool to help initiate developers to build downtown. It is relatively early, since the Plan was adopted to determine if the plan has produced many outcomes. However, there currently are new projects being built downtown which could be a testament to the Downtown Master Plan.

Conclusion

The extent of the implementation sections of downtown redevelopment plans and the affects those sections have on the outcome of initiating redevelopment projects was examined in three case studies. It was suspected that the more in-depth and extensive the implementation section of a plan was, the easier, or perhaps more productive the initiation of revitalization projects would be. To further determine the success of the implementation portion of the plan, the overall “success” of the planning document was examined in order to determine a correlation between plans deemed “successful” and the more in-depth the implementation sections would be.

Each case study’s downtown plan was reviewed and evaluated based on the criteria created by Lewis D. Hopkins (2003) outlined in the chapter titled “How Plans Work” in the Time Saver Standards for Urban Design book. Each case study’s downtown revitalization plan was reviewed to determine if the plan included an agenda, policy, vision, design, and/or strategy. Each plan was then evaluated by examining if the plan was used, if action was taken and if the outcomes of the plan were achieved. Since the strategy portion of the plan most reflects and incorporates the implementation portion of the plan, the strategy of the plan was critiqued more closely than the other elements of the plan. Review of these benchmarks then helped determine if the community’s plan

was successful and if the extent of the implementation (strategy) portion of the plan influenced project implementation.

After examining each case study's downtown plan based on Hopkins (2003) criteria, each plan would be considered successful since each plan incorporated several components necessary in creating a successful plan. Each plan incorporated different combinations of an agenda, policy, vision, design or strategy. Since visions and strategies are key components to the strategic planning process, every plan incorporated both of these elements into the downtown plan. Since strategy is most correlated with implementation within the strategic planning process, each plan did incorporate an implementation section within each community's downtown plan.

While individual components of each community's implementation section of the plan was evaluated, the success of the implementation section of each plan was evaluated more by the success of the entire planning document by determining if the plan was used, actions were taken and outcomes achieved. Again, each plan would be considered successful since local community officials used each plan and the evidence that most plans were updating their previous downtown plans. Each plan resulted in action being taken. However the taken action differed among each case study community. Racine, Wisconsin initiated revitalization through the creation of a downtown corporation. West Palm Beach, Florida initiated revitalization through the development of large scale projects and Form Based Codes. Alpharetta, Georgia initiated revitalization through an incentive-based zoning program. Through each of the approaches the different community took in initiating revitalization, outcomes were achieved. Each case study's

downtown has experienced increase in development and therefore an increase in people visiting, shopping and working in the downtown.

While three case studies can not provide enough support to make any hard conclusions about the correlation between downtown revitalization plans and project implementation, there were three important lessons gathered from reviewing literature and the three case studies. The first lesson was that “determining the success of downtowns is really an indefinable measure since there are so many unquantifiable elements that contribute to making a downtown successful or unsuccessful” as Michael A. Burayidi states. There are so many variables that go into creating a downtown plan and an equal number of variables exist for communities to implement the plan. Each community is different and therefore each plan is different, which ultimately results in different approaches and different successes. Since each community is a unique variable, it is impossible to compare plans to one another in order to determine if a plan is “successful.”

The second lesson gathered from the literature and case studies is that it is up to the community, and ultimately community leaders to carry out the actions in the plan. In order for community leaders to have support in their actions, public participation is key throughout the planning process to ensure that support. While planners ultimately create the planning document, it is a powerful tool left in the hands of community leaders to use. Based on Hopkins (2003) criteria for determining a successful plan based on if the plan is used, if action is taken or if outcomes are achieved, each of these criteria's is ultimately left for community leaders to determine if the plan will be used, action will be taken or outcomes achieved.

The last lesson learned through the literature and case studies was that it is the role of the planner to educate the importance of implementation in communities. Planner's roles differ greatly amongst communities, however it should be their goal to educate the public and community leaders the importance of planning documents and the guidance these documents provide. Each of the case study's implementation strategies were greatly different, however each community witnessed results. Perhaps entire planning documents are the key implementation strategy rather than an extensive implementation section of the plan. Whether the community's plan has an extensive implementation plan or not, it is up to the planner to guide the community through the public and community leaders towards the vision set forth by the planning document.

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