



*A Chapter of the American Planning Association*

## Neighborhood and Collaborative Planning Policy Guide

Neighborhoods should be diverse, dynamic, social and economic entities with unique characteristics which are recognized by residents of both the neighborhood and community at large. Neighborhoods are the building blocks of overall community development. Neighborhood planning needs to go beyond addressing the physical conditions of the area and also examine issues of social equity. Neighborhood collaborative planning requires understanding of the economic, social and physical characteristics in order to maintain both the sense of place and sense of community. The best neighborhood plans are developed by informed residents collaborating with decision-makers, service providers, and business leaders in a process designed and facilitated by neighborhood planners. Coordinated planning efforts can enhance and protect property values within the neighborhood.

1. The Michigan Association of Planning believes comprehensive plans provide the framework for neighborhood planning and should be done within the context of a community-wide plan.
2. The Michigan Association of Planning encourages local government to establish community-wide goals and criteria for approving neighborhood plans. These goals and criteria should be developed with the participation and support of the neighborhoods, and should address the issues of neighborhood boundaries and how neighborhood organizations are recognized.
3. Planners and local governments must ensure compatibility of neighborhood plans with the local master plan, zoning ordinance, Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), the recreation plan, and other regulations.
4. The Michigan Association of Planning supports the following position: Where there are identifiable neighborhoods, a jurisdiction's comprehensive plan should reflect neighborhood plans and neighborhood plans should support the broader needs of the community and region. The neighborhood should be seen as a basic area for needs assessment, provision and improvement.

5. The Michigan Association of Planning believes that planning decisions should be directed to the most appropriate level. Planning decisions that have limited impact on the community as a whole should be made by, or on the basis of, advice given by those neighborhood groups primarily affected.
6. The Michigan Association of Planning encourages local governments to support neighborhood based coalitions that assist in the development of individual neighborhood organizations, articulate neighborhood views on community wide issues, and facilitate coordination in the planning process.
7. The Michigan Association of Planning encourages professional planners to engage in advocacy planning for neighborhoods and sees this as a legitimate role for professional planners, both publicly and privately employed.
8. The Michigan Association of Planning encourages the Federal and State government to allocate funding and develop new programs based on the following considerations:
  - a. Emphasize a long term, staged improvement of neighborhoods in their entirety, in accordance with their needs as expressed through the community's adopted comprehensive plan.
  - b. Give priority to the revitalization of neighborhoods experiencing deterioration and declining conditions with an eye to preventing deterioration of at risk neighborhoods to provide resources accordingly.
  - c. Permit the greatest flexibility in the use of funds and encourage innovative and locally-tailored solutions.
  - d. Provide multi-year funding with incentives for performance of stated goals.
  - e. The inclusion of housing in the neighborhood's overall development plan
  - f. Require that housing authorities and non-profit agencies comply with neighborhood plans, adopted in conformance with this policy, as a condition of receiving federal funds.
9. The Michigan Association of Planning believes the Department of Housing and Urban Development at the federal level and Department of Labor and Economic Growth at the state level should work closely with legislative bodies and executive agencies to ensure that program design and delivery of all neighborhood related resources – human service, transportation, economic development and so on – are coordinated in their application at the neighborhood level.
10. The Michigan Association of Planning encourages the state to develop programs and provide technical and financial support to local governments for neighborhood planning and commit resources according to the recommendations of municipally approved neighborhood plans.

11. The Michigan Association of Planning supports the adoption of legislation that focuses resources in communities and defines neighborhood planning as a legitimate municipal function.
  
12. The Michigan Association of Planning encourages local governments to coordinate the resources of the community according to approved neighborhood plans.