

## PLAN INITIATION AND ADOPTION

The Planning Act has a very specific set of steps for starting to prepare a plan, or plan amendment, and its ultimate adoption. The process is lineal, with each step in order, and the one step completed before the next step is started. There are no shortcuts, or exceptions. Actually one of the best ways to provide someone who is opposed to some part of the plan all that they need to prevail in court is to mess up with the starting to plan and plan adoption process. The process is not hard or complicated, but each step needs to be done in order and in detail, as well as saving and filing documentation that the steps were done.

The legal process, or steps, to adopt (or amend) a master plan follow in brief:

1. Start with the decision to create a new plan or amend an existing one (instead of determining the existing plan is satisfactory as is).
2. Coordination with other governments: sending out a “starting to plan” notice to adjacent governments, the county, the state regional planning agency and others
3. (Optional) Meeting with other agencies, adjacent governments, etc.
4. Preparation of background studies, etc. (This step is one of the longer ones in the process.)
5. (Optional) Stakeholder and public involvement for starting work on development of the plan and starting to prepare goals, objectives, policies, strategies. (This step is one of the longer ones in the process.)
6. Planning commission acts to submit draft of the plan to the legislative body.
7. Legislative body acts to approve distribution of the proposed plan (go to step 8), or not (go back to step 5 or 6).
8. Planning commission sends draft plan to adjacent governments, the county, the state regional planning agency and others.
9. Adjacent governments and others have 63 days (42 days if a plan amendment) to review and comment on the draft plan.
10. (Optional) Planning commission prepares a response to comments received.
11. Planning commission prepares the next draft of the plan.
12. Planning commission adopts resolution to hold a public hearing on the draft plan.
13. Send out notices for public hearing on the draft plan.

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14. Planning commission holds the public hearing.
15. (Optional) Planning commission prepares a response to comments from the public hearing.
16. Planning commission prepares the next draft of the plan.
17. Planning commission adopts a resolution to adopt the plan, or if the legislative body reserved the right to adopt the plan, planning commission adopts a resolution recommending to the legislative body adoption of the plan.
18. Legislative body votes to adopt the plan (go to step 19), or not (go back to step 16).
19. Planning commission sends copy of the master plan notice to adjacent governments, the county, the state regional planning agency and others.

(See *Land Use Series*: “Checklist #1G; Adoption of a Plan in Michigan” and *Land Use Series*: “Checklist #1I; Adoption of an Amendment to a Plan,” both at [www.lu.msue.msu.edu](http://www.lu.msue.msu.edu).)

A shorter process for adopting a subarea plan skips steps 7 to 11 above.