

PLANNING ADMINISTRATION

This Master Plan is a guide for orderly community development. Its purpose is to guide and control the use and development of land so that the maximum social and economic benefits may accrue to the people of the city. In simple terms, planning is organized foresight, plus corrective hindsight.

Preceding pages of this Master Plan have presented plans for improving the street system, the Central Business District, the creation of a Civic Center, Urban Redevelopment and Renewal Plans, a Community Facilities Plan, and a Land Development Plan. An action program is necessary to carry out these planning proposals. The action program includes the following:

- A Zoning Ordinance — up to date and enforced
- A Workable Program for Urban Renewal
- A Capital Improvement Program
- A Building Code
- A Housing Code
- Subdivision Regulations
- An Official Map

Zoning Ordinance — A Zoning Ordinance, adopted in 1924, served the city for over a quarter of a century. A new Zoning Ordinance was adopted on December 29, 1951. This ordinance was based upon a field survey and mapping of the existing land use of each lot in the city in 1947. The ordinance now provides for 5 residence districts, 2 business and commercial districts, and 2 industrial districts. The zoning districts are shown in detail on seven separate maps, and on one general plan of the entire city. Regulations pertaining to lot area, yard requirements, building height and building bulk are provided for the various zoning districts and off-street parking standards are prescribed. The Building Inspector is the enforcing officer. A new land use survey was made in 1959 and 1960, and the Zoning Plan should be restudied in the light of new data now available.

Subdivision Regulations — Subdivision Regulations have been prepared by the City Planning Board. These regulations describe the procedure for subdivision review and approval, and requirements regarding streets, blocks, and lots which a developer must fulfill in regard to street and utility construction. These regulations have been presented to the Common Council for approval.

Building Code — A Building Code was adopted by the Common Council on December 18, 1929. This code included an Electrical Code. The State Building Code was adopted in 1958 to supersede the original City Building Code.

Housing Code — A Housing Code was adopted in 1959 to establish minimum standards for occupancy of existing or new residential structures. The Housing Code is patterned after the new model State Housing Code.

Official Map — An Official Map was adopted in 1949. This map is at the scale of 1 inch equals 200 feet and shows the street system as it existed at that time. It has been amended on only a few occasions.

Capital Improvement Program — A Capital Improvement Program showing the revenues and expenditures; bond amortization requirements; and city, school and county, tax rates is being prepared. The Capital Improvement Program will also include a list of improvements which will be necessary during the next six years and the estimated cost and scheduling of these improvements.

Workable Program — A Workable Program for Urban Renewal has been prepared. This Workable Program was approved and certified by the Urban Renewal Administration in 1959. It is now being reviewed and revised to show the progress which has been achieved under the Workable Program for the prevention and elimination of slums and blight.

Periodic Plan Review — A Master Plan should not be considered a permanent guide which will not be altered. Instead, the Master Plan should be reviewed periodically and adjusted to meet the changing requirements of the city if it is to achieve its purpose as a guide for orderly long range development.

Review of the Master Plan and revisions should be based upon experience which is gained through the administration of the planning program. The city can achieve its goal only through following a long range program of development which is supported by city officials and has strong citizen support.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The chief value of a Master Plan is to guide private and public development in an orderly manner.

Master Plan tools for guiding the development and use of private property include zoning and subdivision regulations, the building code and the Urban Renewal Plan.

Master Plan tools for guiding the development and use of public property include the Thoroughfare Plan, the Community Facilities Plan, the Civic Center Plan, and the Capital Improvement Program.

The Capital Improvement Program puts a price tag on the improvements which the City needs and wants, and presents project priorities and a schedule of financing. The program thus constitutes a bridge between the improvements and services which the City must provide at some early date and the long-range Master Plan.

Utica's municipal financial outlook cannot be viewed in an optimistic manner. The bonded debt of the City has increased from a low of \$2,502,000 in 1952 to \$10,941,632 at the present time. The combined tax rate on Utica real estate has increased from \$48.86 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation in 1950 to \$81.85 per \$1,000 in 1960. The assessed valuation increased steadily from \$152,924,258 in 1950 to \$168,671,969 in 1959, but in 1960 decreased to \$167,952,113.

The City has been operating on a short-range, year to year basis. In view of the great increase in the debt and in debt service; the City and combined tax rates; and the leveling off in assessed valuations, it is apparent that the time has come to look ahead and to plan ahead in order to provide the public buildings, facilities and services which this community will need during this decade. The Capital Improvement Program, as a tool of the Master Plan, can serve that purpose.

The Capital Improvement Program is only advisory and informational. In order for it to have real significance, the 6-year program must be adopted by ordinance just as the annual budget is adopted. Thus, the Capital Improvement Program becomes an official statement of legislative intent and the annual budget appropriates funds for the first year of the program.