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# CUPPAD

*Central Upper Peninsula Planning & Development  
Regional Commission  
Serving Alger, Delta, Dickinson, Marquette,  
Menominee, and Schoolcraft Counties*

April, 2008 Newsletter

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### Notes from the Director's Desk (Lloyd R. Matthes, Executive Director)

In the last 6 months, CUPPAD has taken on a number of new personnel and to some extent a new focus, or perhaps I should say an expanded focus. We still do everything we did in the past, but we are expanding our services to be more useful to the Central Upper Peninsula and to the Upper Peninsula as a whole. Some examples of the new services include helping communities locate foundation grants, mapping tax parcels for city assessors, and doing planning related specialty research, and serving as a neutral moderator for certain controversial projects. In this latter role, CUPPAD is highly effective because it is a totally non-political organization whose mission is the improvement of the Central Upper Peninsula.

One new service is especially promising for smaller communities with sanitary and water utilities. In small communities utility documentation often consists of a single map carried in the cab of the service truck. Notes are penciled on the maps, which are soon frayed from being read while spread over the hood of the truck or in the cab. As a result, information is lost or becomes unreadable. CUPPAD's ability to identify utilities and convert the data to reproducible documents/maps can prove to be a major cost savings to the smaller communities when accurate location data is needed to make a repair.

Call the CUPPAD office for help with your next project at 906-786-9234 or 800-562-9828.

### What is a plan?

Recently, at a presentation I was giving to a local community action group, the chairperson asked "Is it a legal requirement to do a Master Plan?" The answer of course is no; it is not a legal requirement. There are a number of reasons why a community or for that matter an individual should take the time and steps for planning. These include the planning requirement of many funding programs from bank loans to grants, but no one has ever gone to jail for not writing a formal plan. The purpose of planning is to increase the potential for things to go as you want them to. This is true of both local governments and of personal endeavors. If you don't plan, you are in effect agreeing to allow things to happen without your control.



Visit our web site at [www.cuppap.org](http://www.cuppap.org)

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**CUPPAD**

**SERVICES:**

*Community Planning*

*GIS Mapping*

*Transportation Planning*

*Zoning & Subdivision*

*Ordinances*

*Grant Research &*

*Grant Writing*

*Other Related Services*

*(Call to discuss)*

**Continued...**

When we go on a vacation, we don't just walk out the door and take whatever occurs for the next week or two. We often spend months deciding where to go, when to go, how to go, what we want to do when we get there, what clothes we want to wear and what souvenirs we want to bring home. This is planning in our personal lives.

The same thing occurs in a more technical form when a community invests in a plan. A community is made up of a number of diverse individuals. The planning process obtains a consensus of what the major portion of the community wants or needs and where it wants to be at a fixed point in the future. The planning process then develops a strategy for how to best get to the point where the community wants to be in the future.

Data is collected about the needs and desires of the community. This may be in the form of a comprehensive master plan, which forms a broad picture of where a community (local, state, or federal) wants to be in a fixed period of time or a more specific plan such as a recreation or transportation plan. This is usually the first point at which the residents of the community are asked what they want.

Once the needs and desires of the community are identified, goals and objectives are established. Goals are broad statements of what is to be accomplished and objectives are more specific. For example, the goal may be to get rid of the alligators while the objective is to drain the swamp. Goals and objectives identified by the public serve as a compass to provide direction to the plan. Without a clearly defined set of goals and objectives, a plan becomes random and quickly falls apart.

The next part of a plan is to determine how to assess the various alternatives. This is done by looking at standards and by making reasonable assumptions; nationally accepted standards are often used. In some cases, the standard either does not exist or cannot be applied and a reasonable assumption needs to be identified within the plan. This could be due to a natural or man-made hazard, an existing historic feature, or a major employer located in the middle of the proposed site.

Then alternatives are developed. Public input is necessary to ensure that all reasonable alternatives are considered. The alternatives are analyzed based on the standards and strategies that are developed. Often a strategy is a hybrid of the more functional parts of two or more alternatives melded together to form a strategy to achieve a single goal.

Once the strategies are identified, a method of implementation is determined. This may address funding programs, timelines, acquisitions, bidding processes, or any of a myriad of other factors that will ultimately result in the implementation of the plan.

The final important step is a method of evaluation by which to measure the success or failure of the plan within a fixed period of time. One key element of the evaluation process is the periodic review of the plan as a whole. Life is not static and as situations change, it is necessary to revisit the plan and adjust it to conform to current conditions.

As I stated at the beginning of this article, it isn't a legal requirement in most cases to have a plan. However, if a community chooses not to develop a plan, it leaves itself at the mercy of whatever happens. A plan won't necessarily prevent difficulties. However, without a plan difficulties are much more likely to occur.