

Envisioning and Enacting the Future

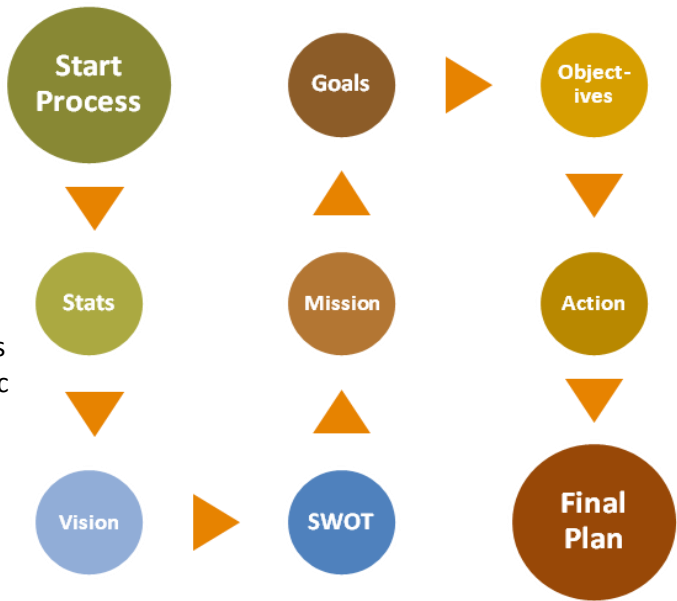
Comprehensive Theories, Objective Tools, and Expeditious Practices

The mechanics of a community-based strategic planning process can be depicted by the figure at right.

Building Communities believes this process is the perfect way to develop a plan that *appears* to provide an effective road map for a community’s future.

Unfortunately, this traditional process frequently fails in truly making a positive difference.

At Building Communities, we have 16 foundational beliefs that guide a different and successful approach to strategic planning¹:



- 1. **People gravitate to known outcomes**
- 2. **Time spent planning takes away from doing**
- 3. **1-3% of the local population drives 100% of the decisions**
- 4. **Strategy creators are the best strategy implementers**
- 5. **Plans are meant to be executed, not just developed and read**
- 6. **Locals generally know all the answers, just not all the questions**
- 7. **People naturally default to desire over logic in selecting strategies**
- 8. **People ask “what?”, but they should also ask “can we?” and “how do we?”**
- 9. **The professional motivation of economic developers focuses drive and talent**
- 10. **Community input should be aggressively invited and progressively structured**
- 11. **Determination of strategy should guide the determination of mission and vision**
- 12. **Systematically selecting strategies and measuring capacity is objective, not subjective**
- 13. **When people understand the benefits of collaboration, they almost always will seek it**
- 14. **Money spent on research and technical reports, if not grounded in sound strategy, is wasted**
- 15. **Civic condition, which can be determined and categorized, is the ultimate foundation for progress**
- 16. **SWOT analysis (defining strengths/weaknesses/opportunities/threats) should be strategy-focused, not community-focused**

When combined, these beliefs add up to something totally different and completely new—a powerful set of theories, tools, and practices that can create a comprehensive, objective, and expeditious process for communities to envision and enact their future.

Theories	Tools	Practices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four Stages of Civic Condition • Community Motivation Theory • Economic Developer Triad Theory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy Selector Tool • Community Organizer Tool • Alliance Builder Tool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seven Step Planning Process • Plan Week • Planning/Acting Local Committee



¹ The 16 overarching beliefs are color-coded according to the primary benefit to communities as follows:

Comprehensive	Objective	Expeditious
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Turning Beliefs into Action

A Fully Integrated Planning System

Each of the 16 overarching beliefs for the Building Communities economic development strategic planning approach directly align with one or more of the theories, tools, and practices. This alignment is shown below.

