



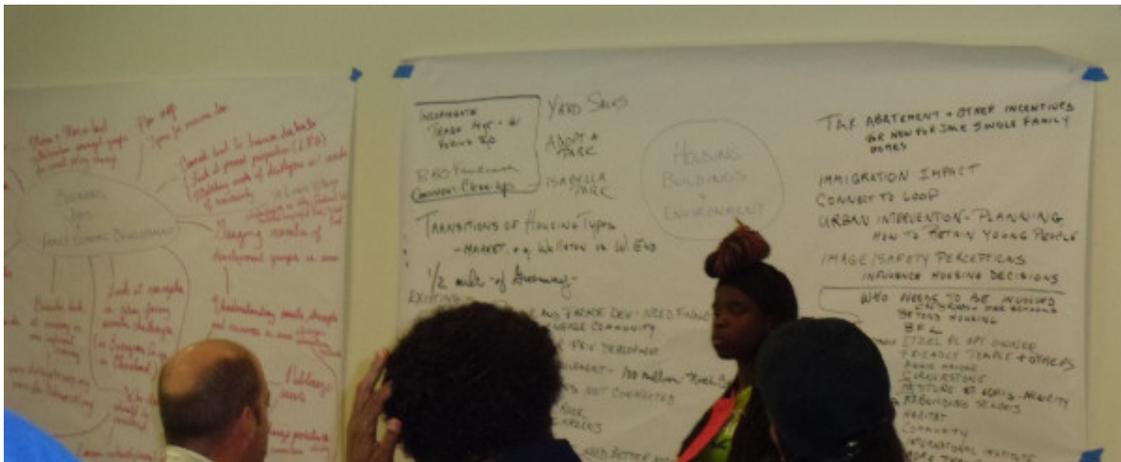
January 2018

# Useful Community Development... quick notes

## This Month: Strategic Plan or Neighborhood Plan?

Visit us and explore at <https://www.useful-community-development.org>.

## Strategic Plan or Neighborhood Plan?



Recently a neighborhood association officer asked us whether his group should prepare a strategic plan or a neighborhood plan. It's a good question to discuss with your board, community, and local government.

A strategic plan usually focuses on matters internal to the organization, although we must caution that the word "strategic" is thrown around in many contexts. A neighborhood plan focuses on what the community needs and typically does not address how to improve an organization.

Can you do both in one document? Yes, that's feasible if the community development corporation or neighborhood association is strong and will be perceived internally and externally as the voice of the neighborhood. But most of you will tackle one at a time.

Rather than pit the two against each other, we prefer to show some contrasting emphases.

### STRATEGIC PLAN FOR ORGANIZATION

1. Assesses the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) to the neighborhood association or CDC

### NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

1. May also use the SWOT approach or any of several other approaches to describing existing conditions

2. Sets forth goals and objectives on how to position the organization for success
3. Approved by the organization's board
4. Often limits topics to those over which the neighborhood association feels it has some influence
5. May be prepared by a board, or committee of the board, together with staff and a paid or unpaid outside facilitator
6. Ideal exercise for a new group

2. Goals and objectives address neighborhood needs
3. Should be submitted for formal ratification by the local government, which then would use the plan as a basis for decision making concerning the neighborhood
4. Topics often very broad
5. Usually prepared by city staff or by paid city planning consultants
6. Project usually too complex for a new neighborhood association

Now if you prefer to blend the two, or reverse what we call them, that's fine. Just make sure you are all communicating about the meaning of your planning project.

Pages of our website especially relevant to this topic are [community planning process](#), [neighborhood plans](#), and [SWOT analysis](#). You'll find more by consulting the Sitemap.

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## Organizations to Get Acquainted With

[Prosperity Now](#) works on wealth inequality in the U.S.

[Good Jobs First](#) tracks tax breaks that local governments give to big corporations.

[Everyday Democracy](#) provides tools and guides for community dialogue.

[Center for Community Progress](#) deals with vacant land issues.

[Strong Towns](#) helps cities, towns, and neighborhoods figure out how to become financially strong and resilient.

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New Website Content This Month: We wrote an overdue page on [Neighborhood Traffic](#) issues. New question and answer pages included: [Funds to Fix Up an Abandoned House](#), [Advantages and Disadvantages of the Felt Need Approach](#), [Must an Heir Sign to Change a Deed Restriction?](#), [Amendment to Restriction Never Recorded](#)

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