

The city planning bureaucracy

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The City Planning Bureaucracy A City Planner is hired by a local city municipality to work in a planning department while being paid an hourly wage. One chief objective of a City Planner is to complete and update a Comprehensive Land Use Plan for a municipality. Another objective for a planner is to construct and amend zoning ordinances as well as enforce the zoning regulations.

A planner also constructs and enforces Subdivision Regulations, and manages projects through the Capital Improvements Plan. A city planner in turn uses these tools as well as their specialized knowledge to help city officials and the public design their community and set goals that promote smart growth in their community. A city planner also writes grants for various special interests groups and conducts studies that help to serve the public by enhancing the quality of life in all neighborhoods, downtown business centers, historic properties, as well as environmental planning for the community at large. The city planning department within a local municipality is quite comparable to the bureaucracy that Max Weber described. City Planning has remained a permanent establishment ever since the 1920's and will continue to be a part of local government as long as there is growth and development.

Planning departments usually have a Planning Director who oversees and manages the operations of the planning department within the local municipality. The other planners that operate under their supervision are Planners I, II, III and possibly other Assistant Directors within the planning department. City planning is based on management of papers in files through various resources and manages people specifically through zoning

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regulations and subdivision regulations. Furthermore, a city planning department seeks to manage the act of building and development by issuing building permits, inspections, as well as conducting routine negotiations through the use of subdivision plats from which planners and developers can establish the best possible means for orderly growth in a community. City planners are experts in the field of city building and development. Most planners have master's degrees in planning and have obtained special skills to deal with the everyday tasks that planners encounter in their professional work setting of the local municipality.

Most of the time planners are not corrupt because they seek to find the best possible solutions for the general welfare of the public. City planning has a distinct division of labor in which there are two general types of planners within a city planning department, Current Planning and Long Range Planning. Current Planning deals with the everyday inquiries and procedures of development. Long Range Planning deals with the policies and goals that need to be implemented for future management of growth in a community. City planners are somewhat impersonal in that they treat each applicant and citizen the same because they strive to look out for the public's best interests and welfare.

Finally, city planners do have to keep some individual studies secret until the time in which they are finalized. This is because they want to make sure that their studies are conducted in a non-biased manner and are conducted in privacy so that there studies are not prolonged from the interruption of public inquiries. The city planning bureaucracy also differs from Max Weber's classic description of a bureaucracy, because sometimes planners succumb

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to the pressure of vested interests that city council members and other city government officials have in the community. City planners either back off the discussion or conduct studies that cater to the needs that have been expressed through these special parties. City planning departments also tend to help the public instead of dehumanizing them and again they sometimes fail to act in the best interests of the public because they must cater to the needs of the city officials and council men who may have vested interests in development. Finally, city planning bureaucracies differ from Max Weber's Classic description of a bureaucracy because all the information they compile and retain is all open to the public with the exception of a few ongoing special studies in a community.

There are two big problems that city planning bureaucracies tend to face; one is the massive interference by the political processes within the local municipality, which include political leaders such as city council men as well as other city officials. The other problem city planners face is the lack the power they have to better implement policies/plans that will help to guide the process of community design from the standpoint of smart growth and good city planning.