

Additional Planning Assistance for Local Governments Minnesota Tools

FROM THE LOCAL PLANNING ASSISTANCE CENTER

<http://www.lpa.state.mn.us/>

The Local Planning Assistance Center (Department of Administration (formerly with Minnesota Planning) helps communities with planning efforts, including comprehensive planning, zoning, subdivision regulations, hazard mitigation and GIS applications. Here you can find the following helpful resources:

UNDER CONSTRUCTION: TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES FOR LOCAL PLANNING

A Planning guide for people interested in shaping their community's future. Available in hard copy or electronic form from Local Planning Assistance Center at <http://www.mnplan.state.mn.us/pdf/2002/UnderConstruction.pdf>



EPIC PLANNER <http://www.lmic.state.mn.us/EPPL7/EPICplanner/index.html>

Epic Planner customizes EPIC GIS to meet the needs of local planners. This new GIS planning tool expands the core functionality of EPIC GIS to include a report and model builder, and also includes data sets tailored to local planning and a conversion tool. Use EPICplanner to:

- **View data** – Quickly view data and create maps using standardized 30 and 100 meter data sets either statewide or by county, watershed or other custom built area. Users can highlight areas of significance with vector and raster overlay options and create elevation profiles with the measurement tools. Simplified legends are tailored to planners' needs and the user-friendly file structure makes incorporation of local data sets easy.
- **Analyze data** – Use interfaces with Excel to incorporate multiple fields from dbase files for in-depth study. Report Builder lets users generate statistics and create customized reports that include a number of features, minimum/maximum/ average values, and area of features, plus create charts in Excel. The conversion tool lets users quickly compute metric equivalents, lot sizes and numbers, and estimates of land needed for development.
- **Evaluate planning scenarios** – Use Planning Applications, EPICplanner's "on the spot" modeling tool, to develop planning scenarios and get results for a county-sized area in as little as five minutes. Users can address suitability, probability and likelihood scenarios by applying predefined models or creating their own. The drag and drop function allows users to rapidly reclassify data.

The software includes modeling features, detailed data sets at 1:24,000 scale, STATSGO soils for all Minnesota counties, report functions and a user-friendly data management scheme. It also streamlines crossover use to ArcView GIS and database programs like Excel. It is designed to help you access and analyze data and make maps to support:

- Comprehensive planning
- Hazard mitigation planning
- Water planning
- Growth boundary discussions
- Suitability studies
- Other local planning needs

CONTACT

For further information on EPICplanner contact Aaron Buffington at 651-296-1715 or aaron.buffington@state.mn.us

HAZARD MITIGATION PLANNING:

Hazard mitigation planning can break the cycle of disaster-repair-disaster in a community and prepare it for a more sustainable future. The Local Planning Assistance Center (LPAC) and the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management partnered to assist communities in developing all-hazard mitigation plans. In addition to providing technical assistance and training to local governments, the LPAC team prepared materials to help local governments develop their own community plans. Materials included maps, data and assistance documents.

- Resource guide development
- GIS applications and data
- Public participation processes
- Site visits to PDM '02 grants

MORE FROM LOCAL PLANNING ASSISTANCE:

[Information request form](#) : Use this form to request information electronically from the Local Planning Assistance Team.

[Local Planning Assistance Center](#) : The technical assistance arm of the Local Planning Assistance Team.

[Publications](#): View recent documents to local planning assistance.

[Planning laws in Minnesota](#) : Read excerpts from planning statutes in Minnesota, organized by chapter and by topic.

[Financial assistance](#) : Links to information about grants and loans for Minnesota communities.

[Planning-related links](#) : An annotated list of more than 150 local and national links related to comprehensive planning.

FROM THE LAND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION CENTER

<http://www.lmic.state.mn.us/>

The Land Management Information Center offers services and products that promote the effective use of geographic data and geographic information technology to benefit the people of Minnesota.

EPIC ATLAS/ MINNESOTA ENVIRONMENTAL ATLAS

<http://www.lmic.state.mn.us/EPPL7/Atlas/>

The Minnesota Environmental Atlas is an electronic textbook that delivers the best of Minnesota's GIS data to education, government and citizens. Designed in cooperation with secondary and college instructors, the atlas contains more than 250 digital maps along with the software to retrieve and analyze the information. The atlas has been described as a tool "that will fundamentally change the way environmental education is taught in Minnesota classrooms."

The EPIC Atlas is fast, easy-to-use and requires no formal GIS training. Instructors use the atlas to support lesson plans in environmental science, ecology, biology, geography and social studies. Digital maps address agriculture, climate, ecology, forestry, geology, hazards and events, land use cover, demographic change, soils and water resources themes.

The atlas also provides government units with an effective productivity tool to retrieve and analyze information. Analytical features allow maps to be compared side-by-side, merged together, statistically tabulated and re-colored. Users can measure distance, determine direction and graph elevation across aerial photos and topographic maps. The environmental atlas includes new composite data layers, hot links to Web sites and integration with online DNR data sets.

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THE MINNESOTA DESIGN TEAM <http://www.minnesotadesignteam.org/>

'A volunteer group of architects, landscape architects, urban designers, planners and other experts in design and community development that has been helping communities around Minnesota to develop shared visions for improving their physical and environmental designs since 1983.'

1000 FRIENDS OF MINNESOTA <http://www.1000fom.org>

The mission of 1000 Friends of Minnesota is to encourage development patterns that promote healthy, livable communities and conserve farmland, forests and natural areas. 1000 Friends of Minnesota is currently requesting proposals for participations in their 'Growing by Design' initiative. They offer visioning, planning, and technical assistance services, using the powerful planning and analysis tool Community VizTM, to communities in a 22 county target area. See their website for more information.

SEEK <http://www.seek.state.mn.us/eelinks.cfm>

Check out the environmental databases' section of the links page:
A variety of data sources for your browsing pleasure!

CITIZENS GUIDE TO LOCAL LAND USE AND PLANNING:

www.northstar.sierraclub.org/land

From the Sierra Club. The citizens guide to local land use planning website is a tool for residents, researchers, and communities to open the doors to your local planning process.

Additional Planning Assistance for Local Governments Nationwide Tools

COMMUNITYVIZTM <http://www.communityviz.com>

Community VizTM is a GIS-based decision support tools that make your work more visual, more collaborative, and more effective. CommunityViz tools allow you to envision alternatives and understand their potential impacts. Explore options and share possibilities with others who have a stake in the outcomes. Examine scenarios from all angles -- and feel confident that you've made the best possible decisions. CommunityViz is a program of The Orton Family Foundation, a non-profit organization committed to helping communities make decisions about their future. For more information, visit www.orton.org

CITYGREEN <http://www.americanforests.org/productsandpubs/citygreen/>

CITYgreen is a powerful GIS application for land-use planning and policy-making. The software conducts complex statistical analyses of ecosystem services and creates easy-to-understand maps and reports. CITYgreen calculates dollar benefits based on your specific site conditions.

CITYgreen analyzes:

- Stormwater Runoff
- Air Quality
- Summer Energy Savings
- Carbon Storage and Avoidance
- Tree Growth

With CITYgreen, you can take advantage of natural systems to produce the maximum economic benefits for your growing community. CITYgreen uses the most up-to-date scientific research to calculate the dollar value of trees and vegetation.

CITYgreen creates:

- Broad regional studies or detailed small site assessments
- Ecological maps revealing the value of resources
- Models for future growth
- Colorful, easy-to-understand presentations
- Automatic reports that summarize key findings

Who Uses CITYgreen:

Planners model development scenarios and evaluate landscape ordinances. Engineers estimate the impact of tree loss on stormwater management costs. Urban foresters justify increases in maintenance, planting, and preservation. Educators teach forestry, environmental studies, landscape architecture, and city planning. Citizen groups advocate environmentally friendly solutions. Developers save money on erosion control and stormwater management. Regulatory agencies measure the air quality benefits of greenspace.

EPA'S 'GREEN COMMUNITIES' PROGRAM

<http://www.epa.gov/greenkit/>

Featuring 'Five Steps to Community Sustainability':

[Where Are We Now?](#) Step One - Community Assessment

[Where Are We Going?](#) Step Two - Trends Analysis

[Where Do We Want To Be?](#) Step Three - Vision Statement

[How Do We Get There?](#) Step Four - Sustainable Action Plans

[Let's Go!](#) Step Five - Implementation

EPA'S ENVIROMAPPER FOR WATER

<http://www.epa.gov/waters/enviromapper/>

EnviroMapper for Water is a web-based Geographic Information System (GIS) application that dynamically displays information about bodies of water in the United States. This interactive tool allows you to create customized maps that portray the nation's surface waters along with a collection of environmental data. Click on the graphic to the left to generate maps using EnviroMapper for Water! The application can be used to view environmental information from the national level down to community level (within one mile), and provides the ability to pan, zoom, label and print maps. You can also link to text reports after identifying a specific waterbody of interest. Have you always wondered about the health of a river near where you live? Now you can find out by creating a map using EnviroMapper for Water!

EPA'S SOFTWARE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

<http://www.epa.gov/seahome/>

More than sixty programs that can be run directly or downloaded, including the entire Wisconsin Farmstead Assessment System. There are courses in quality grant writing, environmental assessment, and small-community environmental planning. A sampling of titles:

- Environmental Planning for Small Communities
- Water Efficient Landscape Planner
- Biodiversity Around the Great Lakes
- Habitat Management and Volunteer Monitoring
- Protecting Children's Health in Schools
- Big River: The Upper Mississippi
- Municipal Pollution Prevention Diagnostic Planner
- Alternatives for Unsewered Communities

LGEAN (LOCAL GOVERNMENT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSISTANCE NETWORK)

<http://www.lgean.org/>

A free planning tool website with tons of information for local governments maintained by the International City/County Management Association.

L-THIA (LONG TERM HYDROLOGIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT)

<http://www.ecn.purdue.edu/runoff/lthianew/>

The Long-Term Hydrologic Impact Assessment (L-THIA) model was developed as an accessible online tool to assess the water quality impacts of land use change. Based on community-specific climate data, L-THIA estimates changes in recharge, runoff, and nonpoint source pollution resulting from past or proposed development. As a quick and easy-to-use approach, L-THIA's results can be used to generate community awareness of potential long-term problems and to support planning aimed at minimizing disturbance of critical areas. L-THIA is an ideal tool to assist in the evaluation of potential effects of land use change and to identify the best location of a particular land use so as to have minimum impact on a community's natural environment.

DIGITAL WATERSHED <http://www.iwr.msu.edu/dw/>

Michigan State University's Digital Watershed is a national freely accessible web-based (no ARC-VIEW needed) environmental planning tool, coordinating physical, environmental and demographic information; now integrated with L-THIA. It offers access by web-based GIS or street address for all of Region 5. It covers the entire country at an 8-digit watershed level. From this resource, you can locate things like industrial facilities discharge sites, toxic release inventory, water quality monitoring stations, and more.

PATHWAYS TO PLANNING <http://www.surveycafe.com/VtForum/entry.asp>

An online assessment tool from the Vermont Forum on Sprawl and The Orton Family Foundation.

This tool offers communities and citizens strategies, case studies, tutorials, and examples of how to achieve **smart growth** and to arrest **sprawl**. The tool will ask you questions on various related topics and generate resources catered to your town's needs.

With this tool you can find out

- What other towns are doing to improve their town centers
- Ways to provide more housing choices
- Citizen involvement strategies
- How to protect wildlife habitat and important open spaces

Information you get is customized to your needs based on your responses to a set of survey questions which you are required to answer.

MAPMACHINE <http://plasma.nationalgeographic.com/mapmachine/>

National Geographic's redesigned online atlas gives you the world—your way. Find nearly any place on Earth, and view it by population, climate, and much more. Plus, browse antique maps, find country facts, or plan your next outdoor adventure with our trail maps.