Community Planning & Zoning Audit
Planning Coordination
June 30, 2010
back of title page

E-3053
Hard copy price: $5

MSU is an affirmative-action, equal-opportunity employer. Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status. Issued in furtherance of MSU Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Thomas G. Coon, Director, MSU Extension, East Lansing, MI 48824. This information is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names does not imply endorsement by MSU Extension or bias against those not mentioned.

This material becomes public property upon publication and may be printed verbatim with credit to MSU Extension. Reprinting cannot be used to endorse or advertise a commercial product or company.
# Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction. .............................................................................................. 1
  Purpose of the Audit. ........................................................................................... 1
  Organization and Content. ....................................................................................... 1
  How to use the Audit. ........................................................................................... 2
  Organization and Content. ....................................................................................... 3
  Defined Terms. ........................................................................................................ 3

Chapter 2: Planning Coordination. ................................................................................ 5
  Statutory Review of Plans/Coordination. ................................................................. 5
  Other Planning Coordination Practices. ................................................................. 8
  Joint Planning Commission. ................................................................................... 12

Chapter 3: Smart Growth............................................................................................ 14
Chapter 1: Introduction

Organization and Content

This publication is one of a series of 11 Michigan State University Extension Community Planning and Zoning Audits available to walk a community through a performance audit. Topics are:
1. Basic Setup (MSU Extension bulletin number E-3051) makes

Purpose of the Audit

The Community Planning and Zoning Audit is intended for use by local units of government in Michigan to help perform a self-evaluation of the basics of the community’s planning and zoning system. The reason for doing an assessment is to learn of shortcomings and problems before they become controversial issues. As a result of going through this booklet, local officials will be alerted to things that need “fixing” and deficiencies in the community’s files. The document helps accomplish three objectives:

1. Identify liability risks from not following proper procedures and practices, and not having adequate documentation of those procedures and practices.
2. Learn to better manage the planning and zoning administration in your community.
3. Take corrective steps to improve your planning and zoning system.
sure that your planning commission and zoning board of appeals are set up properly and a system is in place to make sure the community keeps up-to-date.

2. **The Plan** (E-3052) reviews the process of plan and plan amendment adoption (to make sure that it was done properly) and reviews of an existing plan to determine if it needs to be updated, and reviews what should be in a plan.

3. **Planning Coordination** (E-3053) covers the process of coordination with neighboring government planning (review of each other’s plans); coordination with state, federal and other government agencies; coordination practices; and joint planning commissions.

4. **The Zoning Ordinance** (E-3054) reviews the process of zoning ordinance and zoning amendment adoption (to make sure that it was done properly) and what needs to be in the file to document that the proper steps were taken. This publication also reviews what should be in a zoning ordinance.

5. **Administrative Structure** (E-3055) provides a performance audit for the operation of the planning commission, zoning administrator, and zoning board of appeals. It covers office procedures, job descriptions, filing systems, bylaws, rules of procedure, compliance with the Open Meetings Act, minutes, and process for meetings and decision making.

6. **Special Land Uses** (E-3056) provides a review of the administrative structure for handling special use permits: pre-applications, applications, public notification, record keeping, and use of standards in making decisions.

7. **Planned Unit Development** (E-3057) provides a review of the administrative structure for handling planned unit development handled as a special use permit and as a zoning amendment: pre-applications, applications, public notification, record keeping, and use of standards in making special use decisions or basis in the plan for zoning amendment decisions.

8. **Site Plan Review** (E-3058) provides a review of the administrative structure for handling site plan reviews: applications, public notification, record keeping, and use of standards in making decisions.

9. **Capital Improvement Program** (E-3104) provides a review of the process of creating an annual capital improvement program (CIP).

10. **Subdivision and Land Splitting Reviews** (E-3105) provides a review of the administrative structure for handling land divisions, subdivisions or plats, site-condominiums, lot splits, and certified plats: preapplication meetings with the developer, public notification, plat review, record keeping, and use of standards in making decisions.

11. **Capital Improvements Review** (E-3106) provides a review of the process for the planning commission to review and comment on local government construction projects (which are otherwise not subject to zoning), and outlines how this review can be used as a constructive way to ensure that government-funded projects comply with the adopted plan and local ordinances.

Each of these **Community Planning and Zoning Audits** is available at [http://web2.msue.msu.edu/bulletins/subjectsearch.cfm](http://web2.msue.msu.edu/bulletins/subjectsearch.cfm) and [www.msue.msu.edu/lu](http://www.msue.msu.edu/lu), and from your county Extension office.

**How to use the Audit**

The **Community Planning and Zoning Audit** is not difficult to complete. However, it does take time and the ability to search for and find various records in your local government. The actions taken as a result of this exercise should help reduce liability risk and improve your community’s planning and zoning program.

The **Community Planning and Zoning Audit** can be utilized by...
local units of government in a variety of ways. A community can go through this booklet as a group (e.g., the planning commission or a subcommittee) or a community can have an individual do so. The advantage of performing the assessment as a group is that reviewing the community’s documents and files in detail is a great educational experience for local officials. Alternatively, a staff person within the planning department may be able to perform the audit quicker because of having greater familiarity with how the unit or government maintains its records.

Additionally, a community can perform the Community Planning and Zoning Audit with certain chapters reviewed by various groups or individuals. For instance, the planning commission could review a few chapters of the audit while the zoning board of appeals addresses another set, and the legislative body performs the evaluations in the remaining chapters. Regardless of the approach taken, the main idea is to take the time to find out where various documents are and to make sure that proper documentation is on file. Then, where necessary, take action to correct any shortcomings.

Upon completion, if your community still has questions or wants help, please contact your county Extension office. They can contact the Michigan State University Land Use Team to provide further assistance and educational programming.

Organization and Content

The Community Planning and Zoning Audit contains the following chapters:

1. Introduction.
2. Planning Coordination.
3. Smart Growth.

The audit is based on Michigan Public Act 110 of 2006, as amended (the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, M.C.L. 125.3101 et seq.), Public Act 33 of 2008 (the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, M.C.L. 125.8101 et seq.), recommendations from members of the MSU Extension Land Use Team, and intergovernmental coordination and plan content “best planning practices” derived from a proposed Coordinated Planning Act developed by the Michigan Association of Planning.

The Community Planning and Zoning Audit is not designed to be a substitute for reading and understanding the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act or the Michigan Planning Enabling Act. Nor is this document a substitute for legal advice or for professional planner services. It is important to document each step of the process in planning and zoning a community. Keep detailed minutes, affidavits of publication and mailing, open meeting notices, letters of transmittal, and communications all on file so that years from now they are still available.

Defined Terms

“Appeals board” means the zoning board of appeals (ZBA).
“Certified” (resolution, minutes, ordinance, etc.) means the keeper of the records for the local unit of government (secretary of the planning commission or clerk of the local unit of government for the planning commission or the clerk of the municipality for the legislative body) provides an affidavit that the copy provided is a true and accurate copy of the document.
“Elected official” means a member of a legislative body.
“Legislative body” refers to the county board of commissioners of a county, the board of trustees of a township, the council of a city or village, or any other similar duly elected representative body of a county, township, city, or village.
“Local unit of government” means a county, township, city, or village.
“Municipality” means a city, village, or township.

“Plan” means any plan or master plan adopted under the Michigan Planning Enabling Act or one of the three former planning acts, regardless of what it is titled.

“Planning commission” means a zoning board, zoning commission, planning commission, or planning board.

1 On or before July 1, 2011, the duties of the zoning commission or zoning board shall be transferred to a planning commission. Thus, the zoning commission or zoning board will no longer exist (M.C.L. 125.3301(2)).

2 Starting on Sept 1, 2008, “planning boards” need to be named “planning commissions” even if a charter, ordinance, or resolution says otherwise (M.C.L. 125.3811(1)).
Chapter 2: Planning Coordination

The purpose of this chapter is to help determine if best planning practices are being used to work with surrounding governments for planning and work with various state, federal, and tribal governments.

Coordination can take many forms and can be done to a small extent or to a large extent. Generally, with planning, the planning effort should match the geography of the topic. For example, planning that addresses water quality is best done at the watershed level of geography. Watershed boundaries seldom follow political boundaries, so it is best done by involving cooperative efforts from each municipal planning commission that has territory within the watershed. This “issue of greater than local concern” approach can also be used for economic development planning (labor market area), transportation (corridor), and parks (park district), as well as many other topics.

Coordination also means sharing materials, having regular meetings with neighboring municipalities, and sharing resources. Often the county planning commission’s function is to be the body that reviews the “bigger picture” and helps facilitate coordination efforts.

To conduct this review, you will need the following:
1. An individual(s) familiar with past practices and the history of coordinated activities outlined above.
2. A copy of your plan.
3. A copy of the comments made about your plan during the adoption process (from the surrounding local governments and at the public hearing).
4. Minutes of planning commission meetings during the period in which coordination activities took place.

### Statutory Review of Plans/Coordination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Affirmative (we are doing it) answer</th>
<th>Negative (need to correct) answer</th>
<th>Action to correct has been done</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. When the planning commission receives a plan from another unit of government, is there an active process to review that plan and submit comments to the other unit of government? | Yes ☐ Good. Go to the next question.  | No ☐ This practice should be started right away. Review of a neighboring government’s plan(s) should be just as important and of the same priority as processing a special use permit or other | Check this box: to indicate this is an improvement that needs to be done.  
Check this box: to indicate when improvement is done.  |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Affirmative (we are doing it) answer</th>
<th>Negative (need to correct) answer</th>
<th>Action to correct has been done</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Does the review by the planning commission consider at least the following points?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Infrastructure, particularly as it relates to boundary coordination.</td>
<td><strong>Yes ☐</strong> Good. Go to the next question.</td>
<td><strong>No ☐</strong> This best planning practice should be started right away. At a minimum, the process of review should involve looking at these points.</td>
<td>Check this box: to indicate this is an improvement that needs to be done. Check this box: to indicate when improvement is done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Consistency or inconsistencies of the plan being reviewed with the adopted plan for your municipality.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Other border issues.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Issues of greater than local concern.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Comparison with local plan contents.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Comparison with county/regional plan contents.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Comparison with other relevant adopted plans (such as historic preservation, local wetland protection plan, TIF or brownfield redevelopment plan, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Comparison to and with various implementation strategies.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Does the review by the planning commission include:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. A “thank you” for the opportunity to review the plan.</td>
<td><strong>Yes ☐</strong> Good. Go to the next question.</td>
<td><strong>No ☐</strong> This best planning practice should be started right away. At a minimum, the review letter should address these points.</td>
<td>Check this box: to indicate this is an improvement that needs to be done. Check this box: to indicate when improvement is done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. The title of the draft plan being reviewed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. The titles of plans used to determine consistency or inconsistency (along with an indication of the status of those plans – e.g., the date of the plans and if the plan[s] is [are] up-to-date or about to be amended or updated)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. If the issues raised in the review warrant a joint meeting between the two planning commissions or face-to-face meeting between representatives of the two municipalities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. The identity of the submissions’ preparer/author.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Affirmative (we are doing it) answer</td>
<td>Negative (need to correct) answer</td>
<td>Action to correct has been done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 4. If the review is done by a county planning commission, does the review also include the following:  
   a. A statement indicating if the plan is inconsistent with the plan of any city, village, township, or region that received a copy of the draft plan (or amendment).  
   b. A statement if the plan (or amendment) is inconsistent with county plan(s). (M.C.L. 125.3841(3)) | Yes □  
   Good. Go to the next question. | No □  
   At a minimum, the process of review by a county should involve looking at these two additional points. | Check this box: □  
   to indicate this is an improvement that needs to be done.  
   Check this box: □  
   to indicate when improvement is done. |

   (See M.S.U. Land Use Team’s “How Governments Make Submissions on a Neighbor’s or County’s Proposed Plan” at www.msue.msu.edu/lu.)

| 5. When the review of the other plan is done, are comments put in writing and sent to the neighboring government within 63 days of receiving the plan? (M.C.L. 125.3841(3)) | Yes □  
   Good. Go to the next question. | No □  
   This practice should be started right away. Comment should always be in writing. Written comment back should always be done, even if just to acknowledge the plan was received and all appears fine. | Check this box: □  
   to indicate this is an improvement that needs to be done.  
   Check this box: □  
   to indicate when improvement is done. |

   (See M.S.U. Land Use Team’s “How Governments Make Submissions on a Neighbor’s or County’s Proposed Plan” at www.msue.msu.edu/lu.)

| 6. When the review of the other plan is done, are comments put in writing and a copy sent to the respective county planning commission within 63 days of receiving the plan? | Yes □  
   Good. Go to the next question. | No □  
   This best planning practice should be started right away. A copy should be sent to the county planning commission. | Check this box: □  
   to indicate this is an improvement that needs to be done.  
   Check this box: □  
   to indicate when improvement is done. |
## Other Planning Coordination Practices (all optional)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Affirmative (we are doing it) answer</th>
<th>Negative (need to correct) answer</th>
<th>Action to correct has been done</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. By statute, plans must be sent to surrounding municipalities for review and comment (M.C.L. 125.3839(2) and 125.3841(2)). Does local practice also include sending a complimentary copy of zoning and other ordinances to surrounding municipalities?</td>
<td>Yes ☐ Good. Go to the next question.</td>
<td>No ☐ This best planning practice is recommended. Consider starting this as a policy.</td>
<td>Check this box: to indicate this is an improvement that needs to be done. Check this box: to indicate when improvement is done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. If your planning commission receives a complimentary copy of a surrounding municipality’s zoning and other ordinances, is there a file or shelf where these documents are kept for future reference?</td>
<td>Yes ☐ Good. Go to the next question.</td>
<td>No ☐ This best planning practice is recommended. Consider starting this as a policy.</td>
<td>Check this box: to indicate this is an improvement that needs to be done. Check this box: to indicate when improvement is done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do policy or ordinance provisions exist that identify issues of greater than local concern, and when special use permits, PUDs, plan amendments, and zoning amendments are considered about those issues, are notices sent to the respective surrounding municipality(ies)?</td>
<td>Yes ☐ Good. Go to the next question.</td>
<td>No ☐ This best planning practice is recommended. Consider starting this as a policy.</td>
<td>Check this box: to indicate this is an improvement that needs to be done. Check this box: to indicate when improvement is done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Do periodic meetings occur between two or more planning commissions from surrounding municipalities to discuss issues of mutual interest or issues of greater than local concern?</td>
<td>Yes ☐ Good. Go to the next question.</td>
<td>No ☐ This best planning practice is recommended. Consider starting this as a policy.</td>
<td>Check this box: to indicate this is an improvement that needs to be done. Check this box: to indicate when improvement is done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Affirmative (we are doing it) answer</td>
<td>Negative (need to correct) answer</td>
<td>Action to correct has been done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 5. Is there a permanent standing interjurisdictional committee between two or more planning commissions of surrounding municipalities which meets on a periodic basis on topics of common interest for the participating planning commissions? | Yes ☐ Good. Go to the next question. | No ☐ This is a higher level best planning practice and is recommended for communities with more active planning programs. Consider starting this as a policy. | Check this box: to indicate this is an improvement that needs to be done. 
Check this box: to indicate when improvement is done. |
| 6. Is there an effort to have uniform format (codification) for plans and zoning ordinances within a specific geographic area or within a county? | Yes ☐ Good. Go to the next question. | No ☐ This best planning practice is recommended. Consider starting this as a policy. | Check this box: to indicate this is an improvement that needs to be done. 
Check this box: to indicate when improvement is done. |
| 7. Does your municipality have a reciprocal agreement with one or more neighboring municipalities for zoning staff members from one to cover for staff members of the other during vacations, sickness, conflict of interest, and vacancy? | Yes ☐ Good. Go to the next question. | No ☐ This best planning practice is recommended. Consider starting this as a policy. | Check this box: to indicate this is an improvement that needs to be done. 
Check this box: to indicate when improvement is done. |
| 8. Does your community have a shared or joint zoning administration office? | Yes ☐ Good. Go to the next question. | No ☐ This is a higher level best planning practice and is recommended for small or low-volume communities. Consider starting this as a policy. | Check this box: to indicate this is an improvement that needs to be done. 
Check this box: to indicate when improvement is done. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Affirmative (we are doing it) answer</th>
<th>Negative (need to correct) answer</th>
<th>Action to correct has been done</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. If this audit is being done for a county planning commission: does the planning commission view itself as a facilitator, pointing out issues of greater than local concern and helping convene meetings between respective municipalities?</td>
<td>Yes □ Good. Go to the next question.</td>
<td>No □ This best planning practice is recommended. Consider starting this as a policy.</td>
<td>Check this box: to indicate this is an improvement that needs to be done. Check this box: to indicate when improvement is done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NA □ Not applicable because this is not a county planning commission.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. If this audit is being done for a county planning commission: does the county have a professional planning staff (employees or contract basis) that works with municipalities in the county and provides technical assistance to municipalities in the county?</td>
<td>Yes □ Good. Go to the next question.</td>
<td>No □ This is a higher level best planning practice and is recommended for county planning. Consider starting this as a policy.</td>
<td>Check this box: to indicate this is an improvement that needs to be done. Check this box: to indicate when improvement is done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NA □ Not applicable because this is not a county planning commission.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. If this audit is being done for a county planning commission: does the county develop sample ordinance, plan, and other document language for use by municipalities? Are representatives of municipalities directly involved in preparing the sample ordinance language?</td>
<td>Yes □ Good. Go to the next question.</td>
<td>No □ This is a higher level best planning practice and is recommended for county planning. Consider starting this as a policy.</td>
<td>Check this box: to indicate this is an improvement that needs to be done. Check this box: to indicate when improvement is done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NA □ Not applicable because this is not a county planning commission.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Affirmative (we are doing it) answer</td>
<td>Negative (need to correct) answer</td>
<td>Action to correct has been done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. If this audit is being done for a county planning commission: does the county have a geographic information system (GIS) with GIS data readily available for use by municipalities in the county, or is there a municipal system of sharing data for planning purposes?</td>
<td>Yes □ Good. Go to the next question.</td>
<td>No □ This is a higher level best planning practice and is recommended for county planning. Consider starting this as a policy.</td>
<td>Check this box: to indicate this is an improvement that needs to be done. Check this box: to indicate when improvement is done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Does the planning commission take an active role in the state regional planning agency (council of governments, regional planning commission) by participating at its meetings, knowing its staff, etc.?</td>
<td>Yes □ Good. Go to the next question.</td>
<td>No □ This best planning practice is recommended. Consider starting this as a policy.</td>
<td>Check this box: to indicate this is an improvement that needs to be done. Check this box: to indicate when improvement is done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Does the planning commission make sure it is on various state government agency and federal government agency public notification mailing lists as well as county, regional, and tribal government public notification mailing lists, so that the planning commission receives notices of infrastructure, planning, and management issues?</td>
<td>Yes □ Good. Go to the next question.</td>
<td>No □ This best planning practice is recommended. Consider starting this as a policy.</td>
<td>Check this box: to indicate this is an improvement that needs to be done. Check this box: to indicate when improvement is done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. When the planning commission receives these notices, does it review them and make comment as appropriate?</td>
<td>Yes □ Good. Go to the next question.</td>
<td>No □ This best planning practice is recommended. Consider starting this as a policy.</td>
<td>Check this box: to indicate this is an improvement that needs to be done. Check this box: to indicate when improvement is done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Affirmative (we are doing it) answer</td>
<td>Negative (need to correct) answer</td>
<td>Action to correct has been done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>16. Do you send an up-to-date copy of your zoning ordinance to the county planning commission?</strong></td>
<td>Yes □ Good. Go to the next question.</td>
<td>No □ The ordinance on file with the county planning commission, and the county planning commission keeping a current library of all those ordinances is recommended and a best planning practice.</td>
<td>Check this box: to indicate this is an improvement that needs to be done.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Joint Planning Commission**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Affirmative (we are doing it) answer</th>
<th>Negative (need to correct) answer</th>
<th>Action to correct has been done</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Does the planning commission regularly evaluate and consider the merits of forming a joint planning commission pursuant to the Joint Municipal Planning Act (P.A. 226 of 2003, as amended, M.C.L. 125.131 et seq.)?</strong></td>
<td>Yes □ Good. Go to the next question.</td>
<td>No □ This best planning practice is recommended. Consider starting this as a policy.</td>
<td>Check this box: to indicate this is an improvement that needs to be done.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

3 A joint planning commission, (M.C.L. 125.131 et seq.) may be formed when any two or more townships, villages, and/or cities join together to form one planning commission with jurisdiction over any part or all of the participating townships, villages, and/or cities, and the joint planning commission has just planning, or zoning, jurisdiction or jurisdiction over both. How joint planning commissions are set up has a great deal of flexibility and is entirely up to the participating governments, including membership, financing, authority, appointment process, and so on.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Affirmative (we are doing it) answer</th>
<th>Negative (need to correct) answer</th>
<th>Action to correct has been done</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. If this audit is being done for a county planning commission: does the planning commission propose or point out possible joint planning commission possibilities and facilitate the discussion about the idea between the respective municipalities?</td>
<td><strong>Yes</strong> ☐ Yes ☐ Good. Go to the next question.</td>
<td><strong>No</strong> ☐ No ☐ This best planning practice is recommended. Consider starting this as a policy.</td>
<td>Check this box: ☐ to indicate this is an improvement that needs to be done. Check this box: ☐ to indicate when improvement is done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ <strong>NA</strong> ☐ Not applicable because this is not a county planning commission.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 3: Smart Growth

The purpose of this section is to provide basic information and introduce communities to the 10 tenets of smart growth. Covered here are the basics necessary for the administration and operation of zoning. If your community is interested in incorporating the principles of smart growth into its ordinances and develop according to the smart growth principles, the Smart Growth Readiness Assessment Tool (SGRAT) can be used to guide your community through an evaluation of the plans and implementation tools currently used to guide growth. This assessment can also help your community identify tools that may help produce a smart pattern of growth in the future.

This document represents the first stage of a community assessment. To go on to the next step in assessing your community’s planning and zoning, you should review the Smart Growth Readiness Assessment Tool on the Internet. Go to http://www.landpolicy.msu.edu/sgrat/.

1. The Governor’s Land Use Leadership Council used the following smart growth tenets^ for many of the recommendations contained in its report on land use in Michigan. These 10 tenets can form the basis for establishing a set of state land use goals.
   a. Mix land uses.
   b. Compact building design.
   c. Increase housing choice.
   d. Encourage walking.
   e. Offer transportation variety.
   f. Create a sense of place.
   g. Protect farms, unique natural features, open spaces.
   h. Direct new development to existing communities.
   i. Make development process fair, predictable, efficient.
   j. Involve stakeholders.

2. What is smart growth?
   a. Smart growth is development that serves the economy, the community, and the environment.
   b. It provides a framework for communities to make informed decisions about how and where they grow.

3. Why smart growth? It makes dollars and sense because it is financially conservative, environmentally responsible, and socially beneficial.
   a. Financially conservative
      i. Makes responsible use of public money.
      ii. Reuses existing buildings.
      iii. Uses existing roads and highways.
      iv. Uses existing water/sewer infrastructure.
      v. Uses higher density to maximize the value of publicly funded facilities and services.
      vi. Keeps taxes and public service costs low.
   b. Environmentally responsible
      i. Uses and/or reuses developed areas.
      ii. Keeps impervious surfaces to a minimum by concentrating dense development.
      iii. Builds to fit existing land rather than changing the land to fit what is built.
      iv. Avoids oversized lots and yards to reduce excessive mowing, fertilizing, etc.

---

For more detail and examples, see http://www.smartgrowth.org/pdf/gettosg.pdf.
c. Socially beneficial  
   i. Encourages people to live close enough to one another for comfortable interaction. 
   ii. Designs residential areas for conversation from the sidewalk to the front porch.
   iii. Encourages “eyes on the street” at all hours to reduce crime and fear of crime.