

# A Citizen's Guide to the Department of Planning + Urban Design

Presenter Name - Title



# What is Planning?

- You do it every day
- Businesses do it annually
- Municipalities must take the long view
- Planning is an act of compromise that brings a myriad of interests together to form agreement



# What is Urban Design?

- The physical manifestation of policy
- The shaping of the built and natural environments
- The organization of civic systems



# Department of Planning + Urban Design

## Mission Statement

*Planning + Urban Design's mission is to enhance the long-term value and livability of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas through the design of a regenerative community that is socially just, economically accessible, culturally diverse and environmentally sustainable.*

*We do this by improving the built, social and cultural environments through strategic, community-based planning, development, and enforcement efforts, as well as advising government agencies, supporting public officials and empowering constituents to realize their shared vision of the future.*

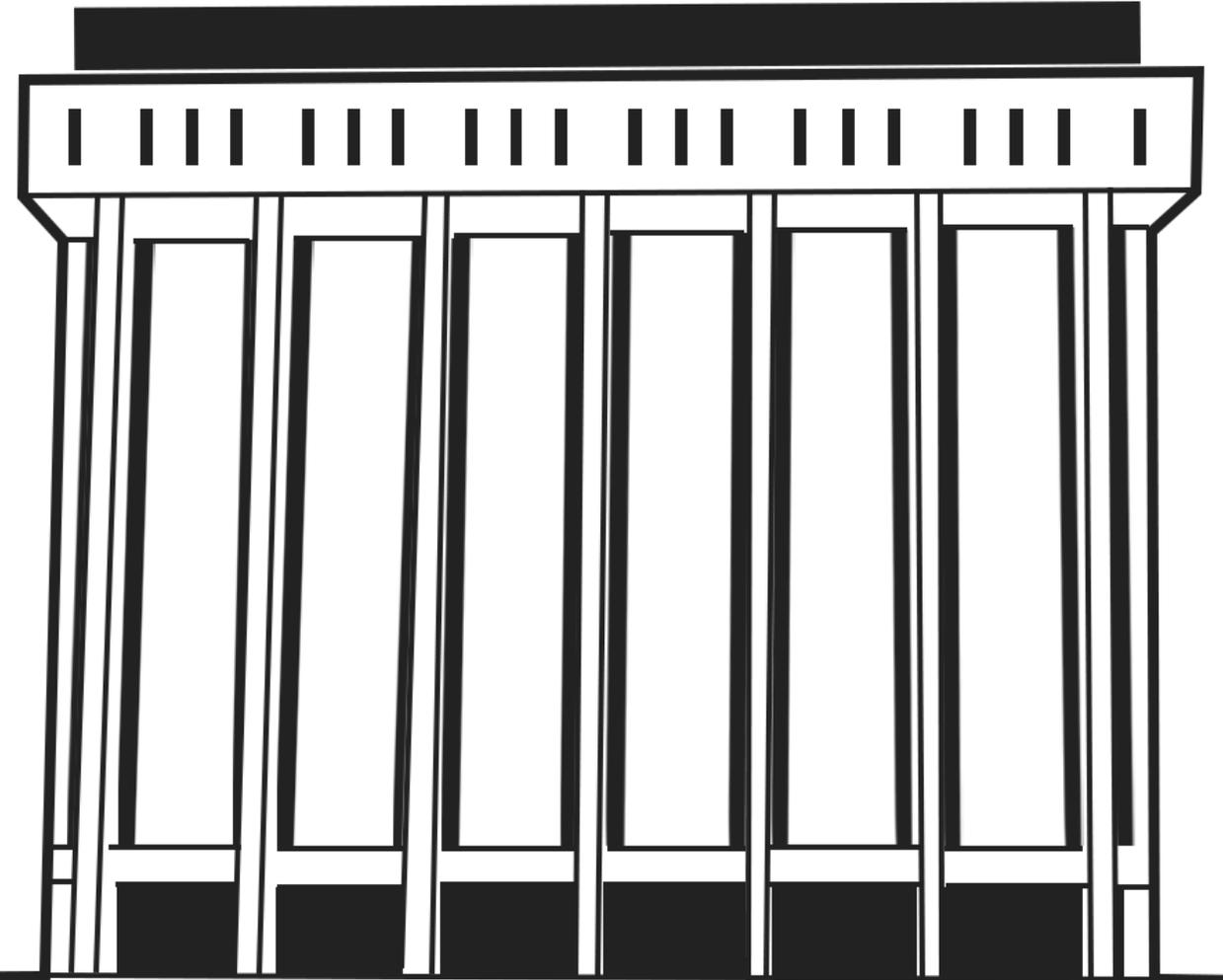


# What is the Department of Planning + Urban Design?

- Long Range Planning
- Current Planning
- Ordinance Studies
- Zoning Enforcement
- Implementation



**Community  
Engagement**



# Long Range Planning: Plotting a Course

## City-wide/County-wide Master Plans

- Broad policy recommendations
- Big-picture objectives
- Sets the strategic framework

## Area Plans

- Geographic and community-defined boundaries
- Detailed goals and objectives
- Implementation Strategy

## Focused Plans

- Corridor or neighborhood specific
- Address issues that cross community boundaries or explore a specific subject in depth

## Historic Preservation

- Identify, document, and designate historic assets
- Provide protection to historic assets



# Long Range Planning: City-Wide Master Plans

Adopted: July 2008

Scope: Unified Government

Goals: Set broad policies and defining a strategy

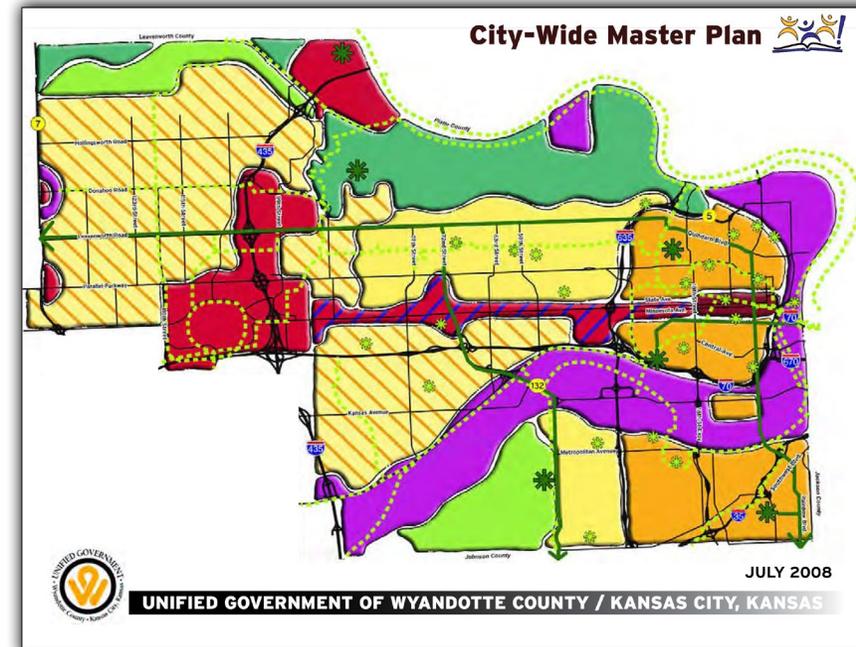
Uses: Illustrates the community's vision

Set priorities & guiding principles for other plans

Current Example: County-wide Mobility Plan

## From the City-Wide Master Plan, on Intent

A Master Plan is more than a collection of static goals, policies and strategies. Rather, it is a document that reflects the values and needs of the entire community. The underlying purpose of the Master Plan is to identify policies and strategies that improve the quality of life for all residents within that community. As such, it takes collaboration and coordination among everyone who is concerned about the future of his or her community.



Cover of the 2008 Plan ▲

Representative page from the Plan, showing broad use recommendations and guiding principles ▼

**Parks and Open Space:** These uses are intended to provide both passive and active recreational opportunities throughout the city.

- Allowed Uses:
  - Active and passive parks
  - Open space
  - Trails
- Discouraged Uses:
  - Heavy industrial uses
- Green Principles:
  - Parks and open space areas can serve to mitigate storm water run-off.
- Cultural Principles:
  - Each neighborhood should have access to a public park.

**Floodway:** These areas carry the runoff from the adjacent floodplain without causing the flood elevation to increase by 1 foot or more at any point along the basin.

- Allowed Uses:
  - Passive parks and open space
- Discouraged Uses:
  - Permanent structures should be prohibited within these areas. Significant disturbances or development would require construction of a levee and other improvements upon approval by the Army Corps of Engineers.
- Green Principles:
  - Preservation of key natural areas.
- Cultural Principles:
  - Waterways are an important part of the City's heritage.

**Public/Semi-Public:** These areas include publicly-owned or non-profit property. When these uses are sold, the City should carefully consider alternative uses for redevelopment.

- Allowed Uses:
  - Schools
  - Publicly-owned lands and buildings
  - Churches
  - Other non-for-profit owned land and buildings
- Discouraged Uses:
  - Adult-oriented businesses
  - Night clubs and bars selling alcohol
- Green Principles:
  - Public/Semi-Public uses are encouraged to adhere to the Plan's "green" principles including but not limited to:
    - Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) compliant construction.
    - Energy Star qualified buildings.
- Cultural Principles:
  - Each neighborhood should have an institutional focal point.



## City-Wide Master Plan

UNIFIED GOVERNMENT OF WYANDOTTE COUNTY / KANSAS CITY, KANSAS



# Long Range Planning: Area Plans

Scope: Geographic and community-defined boundaries

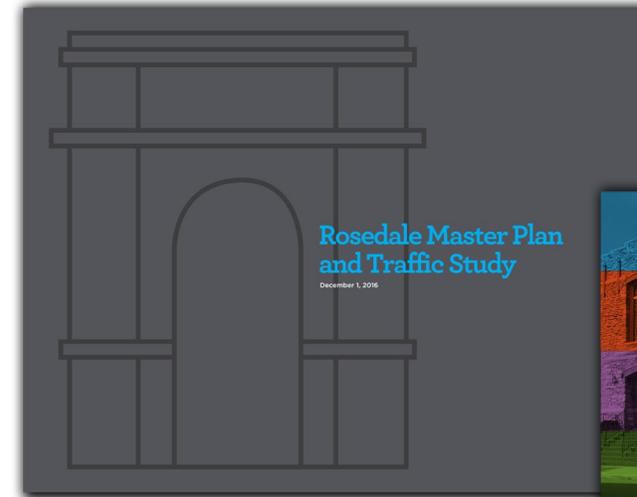
Goals: Implement the overarching goals of the City-Wide Master Plan in a more detailed way to best fit specific needs of distinct communities and neighborhoods

Uses:

- Implements the community's vision
- Outline framework for implementation
- Create community buy-in

## Area Plans Include

- Detailed goals and objectives
- Land use map update
- Zoning code map update
- Street cross-sections
- Action plan



◀ Rosedale Master Plan, 2016



Northeast Area Master Plan, 2019 ▶

**NORTHEAST AREA MASTER PLAN**  
KANSAS CITY, KANSAS

UNIFIED GOVERNMENT OF WYANDOTTE COUNTY/KANSAS CITY, KANSAS  
ADOPTED NOVEMBER 29, 2018



◀ Central Area Master Plan, 2020



Armourdale Area Master Plan, 2021 ▶



# Long Range Planning: Focused Plans

- Can be comprehensive or subject specific
- Coordinates across multiple plans
- Often a subset of an Area Plan that focuses on a single district or neighborhood
- Strategic plans for community-based organizations

## Upcoming Examples

- Merriam Lane Corridor Plan
  - Examining the land use and transportation future of an arterial corridor

**Douglass/Sumner**  
Quality of Life Plan  
Update 2016 - 2018

**Total Population: 1,581**

Demographics	Percentage
African American	84%
Other	9%
White	7%

Age Groups	Percentage
Under 18	44%
Age 18-34	27%
Age 35-64	26%
Over 65	6%

Owner Occupied	18%
Vacancy Rate	15%

Median Household Income	\$17,679
Adults with At Least High School Education	65%
Unemployment Rate	29%

**Our Mission**  
The Douglass/Sumner Neighborhood Association (DSNA) was formed in 1997 by a group of passionate residents who came together to address growing challenges in this traditionally African-American community. Our mission is to revitalize and preserve our culturally rich neighborhood. We envision a prosperous community that is affordable, safe, healthy and sustainable with multigenerational opportunities to grow, learn, live, do business, and raise families. In the next three years, DSNA will focus on implementing a housing strategy, increasing engagement and building organizational capacity to create a livable, vibrant multi-cultural community.

**NeighborhoodsNOW Accelerated**  
After 10 years of a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization strategy in Kansas City, LISG and its colleagues have come to understand four essential elements that are needed, in tandem, to accelerate progress: 1) Organized neighborhood leadership and collective efficacy; 2) Capital, from multiple sources, which can be deployed in the target area; 3) Internal capacity and/or partnerships to do physical real estate development; 4) Alignment with the strategies and leadership of City government.

The 2016-2018 Quality of Life Plan invites stakeholders associated with each of the success criteria to play an active role in fulfilling this neighborhood's three key goals. By working together to cultivate and sustain the capacity for implementation, we can create a place where people lead lives filled with opportunity.

*neighborhoods*  
**NOW**

**Douglas-Sumner ▲**  
**Quality of Life**  
**Plan, 2016-2018**

**State Avenue Corridor**  
**Redevelopment plan,**  
**2014 ▼**

**STATE AVENUE**  
**CORRIDOR**  
**REDEVELOPMENT**

Creating Sustainable Corridors Study

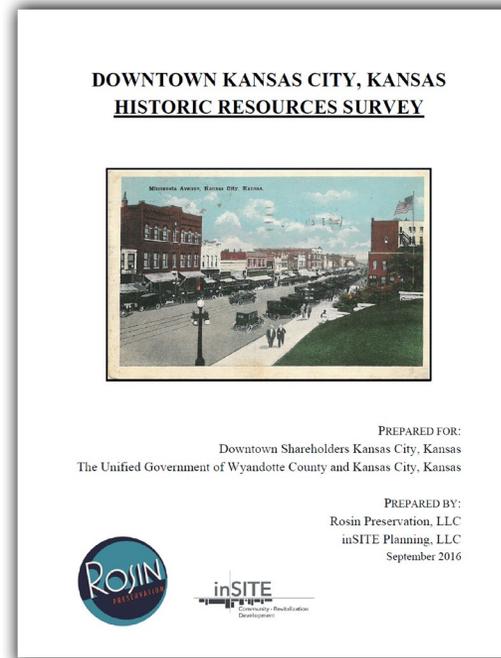
# Long Range Planning: Historic Preservation

## Identification, Documentation, Designation

- Work with the community to **identify** sites of cultural or architectural importance
- Gather evidence and records that help **document** the importance of historic sites
- Propose official **designations** of identified and documented historic landmarks and districts

## Preservation of Historic Landmarks and Districts

- Review proposals that might change the character of historic assets
- Encourage changes to be respectful of historic environs
- Coordinate efforts with the City Landmarks Commission



# Current Planning: Steering the Ship

## UG Planners and Engineers;

- Guide private development through the municipal approval process
- Ensure that changes meet community-defined vision and protect the life and safety of the public
- Provide the Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, and Board of Commissioners with context and recommendations so they can make informed decisions



# Current Planning: Planners

Unified Government Planners help applicants navigate the municipal processes required to make changes to the built environment by:

- Helping applicants find, fill, and submit necessary documents
- Reviewing development proposals
- Writing staff reports that summarize proposals
- Making recommendations based on their professional expertise and community-approved plans

Examples of the kind of analysis that they provide include:

- **Compliance**, does a development proposal fit within existing zoning requirements?
- **Guidance**, can a proposal be amended to fit within established community values, as expressed through adopted plans and design guidelines?
- **Recommendation**, should a proposal be approved by Board of Commissioners, or is it inconsistent with the goals of the community?



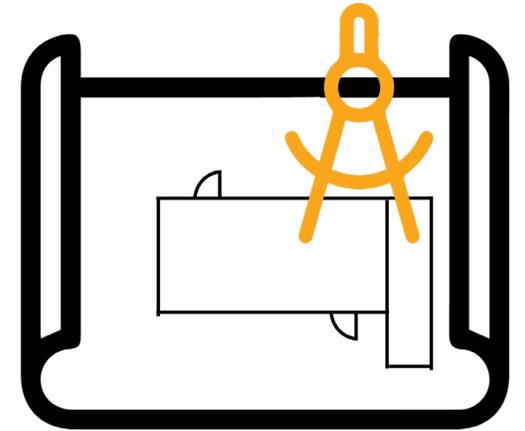
# Current Planning: Engineers

Our Engineers provide technical review of plans and proposals by:

- Ensuring that a project will not adversely affect public infrastructure or adjacent properties
- Evaluating the extent to which new development will impact existing communities and future growth

Examples of the kind of analysis that they review include:

- **Hydrology**, or how water flows through or over surfaces
- **Sewer capacity**, ensuring that existing capacity can handle the added stress of new development
- **Traffic impacts**, estimating the level of traffic generated by a new development or use and whether existing roads can handle the change



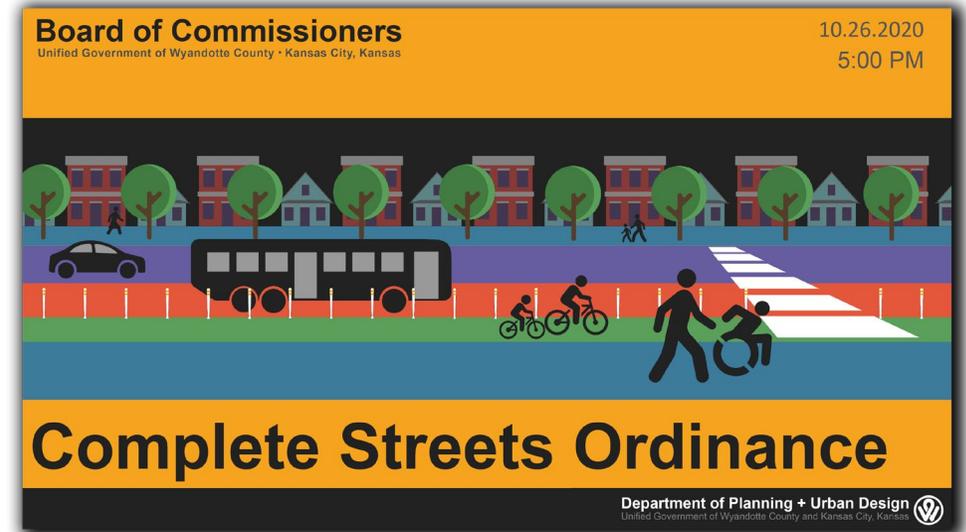
# Ordinance Studies

## Does existing municipal policy serve the community?

- Study precedents in other communities to learn the pros and cons of various policies
- Write draft ordinances that reform existing laws or improve on relevant precedents
- Propose new ordinances and advocate for their adoption by the Board of Commissioners

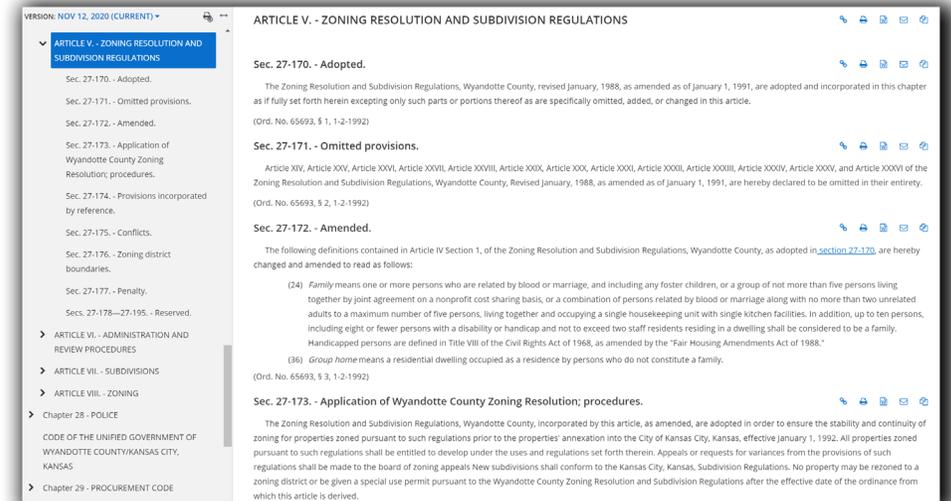
## Recent Examples

- Complete Streets Ordinance – October 2020
  - This ordinance codified existing practices and re-affirmed the U.G.'s commitment to equitable, multi-modal transportation
- Zoning Code Update – 2021
  - Reforming the current Zoning Code to reduce redundancy and clarify use throughout the U.G.



Complete Streets Ordinance Presentation Cover Page, 2020

Sample Page from the Unified Government's Municipal Code



# Zoning Enforcement:

UG **Zoning Enforcement Specialists** help ensure that properties in the UG are maintained in accordance with established laws and regulations

Their responsibilities include:

- Visiting project sites to ensure approved plans are followed
- Responding to citizen concerns regarding zoning violations
- Report violations and track remediation

Zoning enforcement specialists spend much of their day in the field investigating projects, documenting conditions, and noting violations of municipal ordinances



# Implementation

Another important role of the Department of Planning + Urban Design is to assist with the realization of the community's vision.

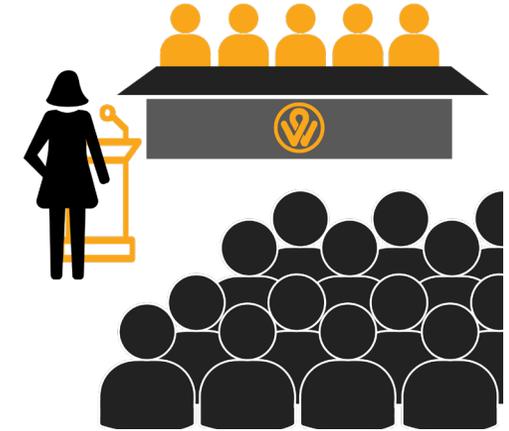
- **Strategic planning with community and neighborhood groups**
  - Build local capacity to realize meaningful, positive change
- **Coordination across UG departments**
  - Bring relevant departments together to coordinate and execute projects
- **Advocacy**
  - Lift up the voices of those in need
- **Grant Writing and Support**
  - In some cases, planners in our department can help your community apply for grants or provide letters of support



# The Citizen Planner

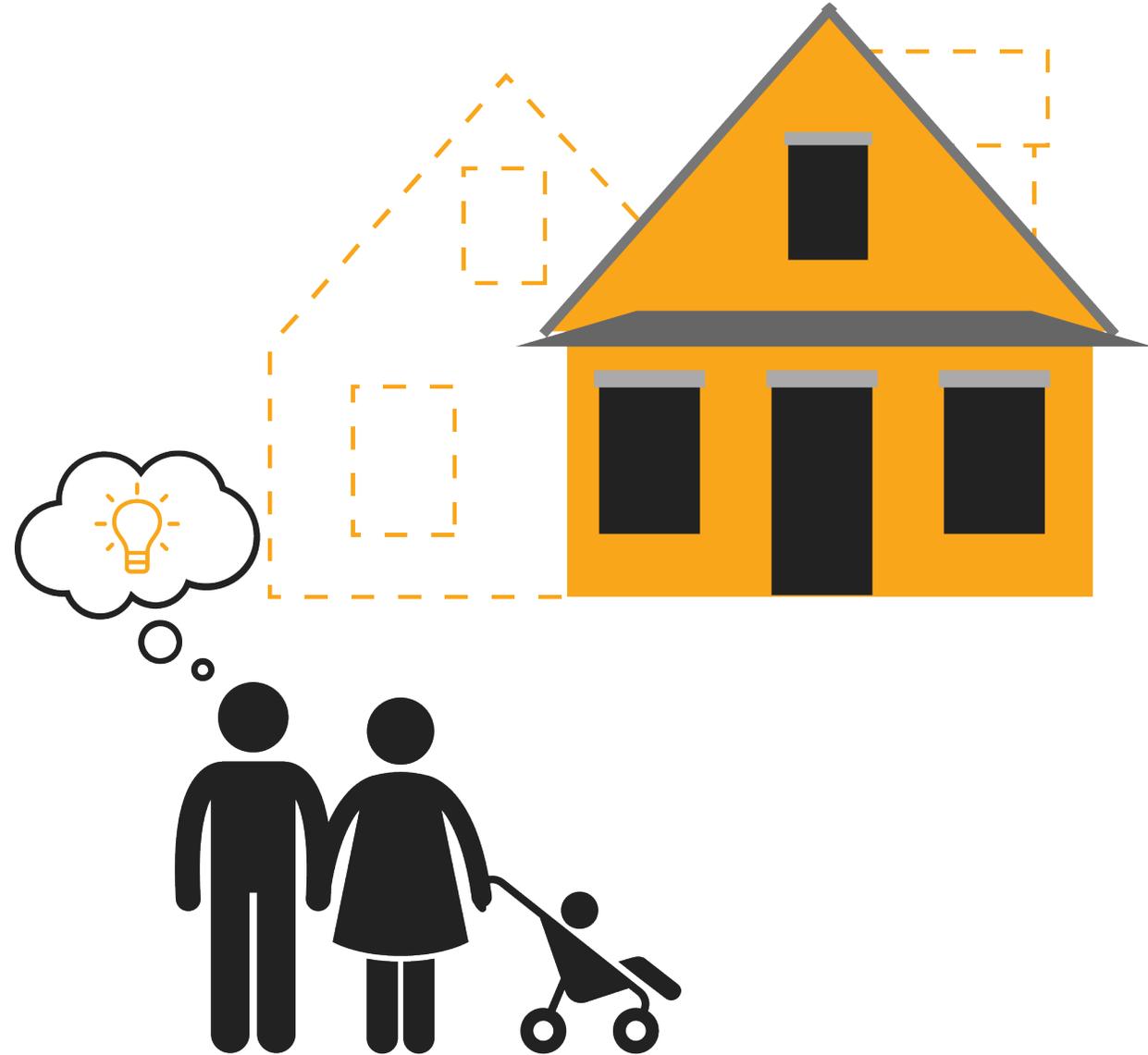
There are four primary reasons you may encounter Planning + Urban Design staff

- 1. If you plan on making changes to your property**
- 2. If a neighbor is planning on making changes to their property**
- 3. You live in an area subject to a long-range planning process**
- 4. Your property is in violation of a zoning regulation**



# The Citizen Planner

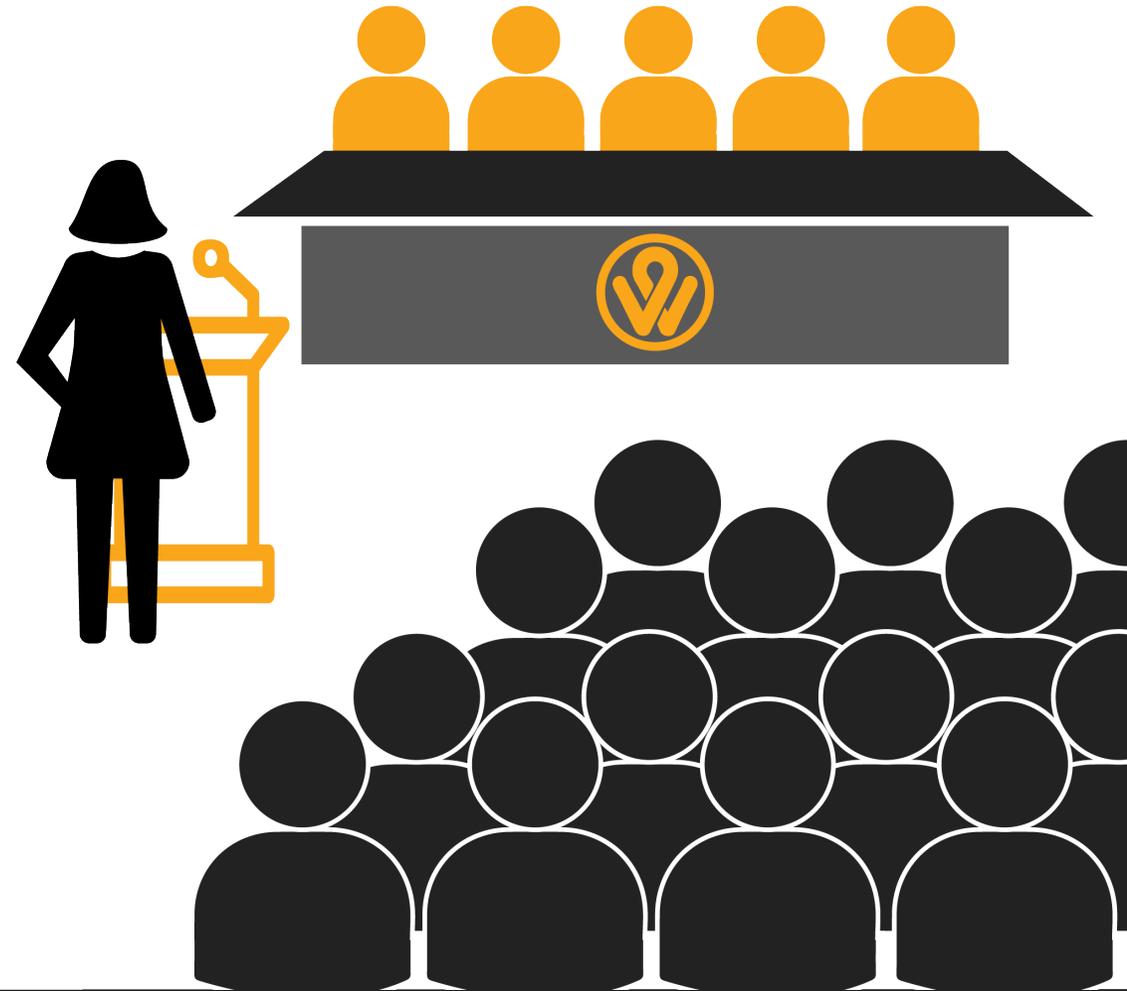
1. **If you plan on making changes to your property**
  - Contact the Department of Planning + Urban Design
  - A staff planner will work with you to **navigate the entitlement process**
  - The staff planner will inform you of your rights and responsibilities
  - The staff planner is **not an advocate for your project**, but for the greater good, which is embedded in the master plan, zoning code, and other policies



# The Citizen Planner

## 2. If a neighbor is planning on making changes to their property

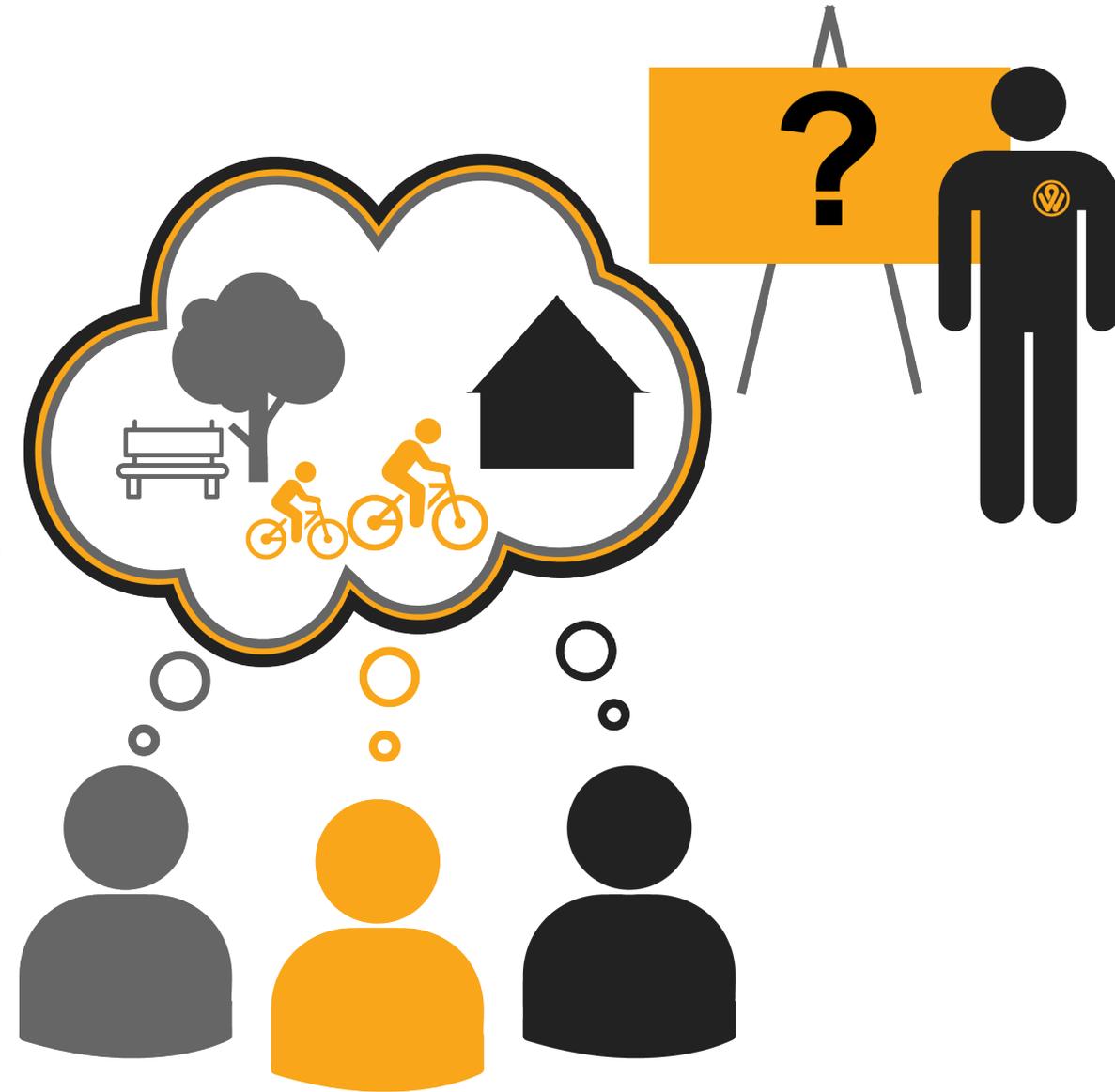
- You will be notified by mail if you own property within 200 ft of a proposed project that requires action by the Board of Zoning Appeals or Board of Commissioners
- You **are not required** to take any action
- You **are invited** to share your thoughts, whether for or against the project, at a meeting that is open to the public
- The notice will have details about when, how, and where the meeting will take place
- Written comments may also be sent to the planning department and will be submitted on your behalf



# The Citizen Planner

## 3. You live in an area that is subject to a long-range planning process

- You will be invited and encouraged to provide input
- This is your best opportunity to guide the future of your community
- **Community leaders** may act as representative stakeholders throughout the process
  - Regular steering committee meetings
  - In-depth community conversations
  - Assist or lead the implementation efforts
- **Your input may include:**
  - Responding to surveys
  - Participating in open-house events
  - Submitting your own thoughts and testimonials
  - Share your vision for your community



# The Citizen Planner

## 4. If you are in violation of zoning regulations.

- You will receive a **Notice of Violation**
- This Notice of Violation must be addressed, or you **risk an administrative citation (fine)**
- A Notice of Violation can be addressed in 2 ways
  - **By obtaining official approvals**
  - **Through the remediation or removal of the issue**
- Any enforcement officer can issue a Notice of Violation
  - **Zoning Enforcement Officers, Codes Enforcement Officers, Public Health Officers, Police Officers**



# Become a Citizen-Planner Today!

Planning is not just a role for your municipal staff.

**Anyone who is passionate about their community can help plan for its future.**

Participate in citizen-led planning today:

- Engage with your neighborhood organization
- Keep an eye out for on-going planning efforts and make your voice heard by participating in them

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## Further Resources:

### Unified Government Resources

[Department of Planning + Urban Design](#)

[Neighborhood Resource Center](#)

[311 Call Center](#)

### Regional Planning Resources

[Mid-America Regional Council \(MARC\)](#)

[Kansas City Area Transportation Authority \(KCATA\)](#)

[BikeWalk KC](#)

### Planning + Urban Design Resources

[American Planning Association](#) Org for professional planners

[Next City](#) Planning-focused media outlet

[CityLab](#) Planning-focused media outlet

[City Beautiful](#) Planning-focused YouTube channel

[Planetizen](#) Planning-focused media outlet

[The Urban Activist](#) Urban advocacy-focused media outlet