

PROFILES



Right Sizing Master Plans

IN THIS ISSUE:

DISCOVER & FIND THE
MASTER PLAN FOR YOU

QUIZ: DO I NEED A
MASTER PLAN?

'Plan' isn't a four-letter word

When you or your Board think about master plans, what comes to mind? Long, hard-to-read documents destined to collect dust? Painful data collection and input gathering? Concepts for pie-in-the-sky projects that may never come to fruition? There are lots of misconceptions about what master plans are and aren't. It's time to set the record straight!

In its most basic form, a master plan is simply a way to form a vision and develop a strategy for the future improvements. That is its purpose whether it's for a small park or an entire system of recreation facilities.

A master plan brings together varying visions and desires, prioritizes needs, and provides a cohesive roadmap for the future – including realistic costs.

A PLAN FOSTERS RESPONSIBLE SPENDING

We plan in order to afford our goals for retirement, for home purchases, and even for vacations. Why not establish a plan for your community's park system, too?

The first step in planning is focused towards ensuring responsible spending and maximizing available funds. Without a plan, when funds come your way, how will you know what to prioritize and where to invest?

Your plan establishes a spending roadmap by providing the following:

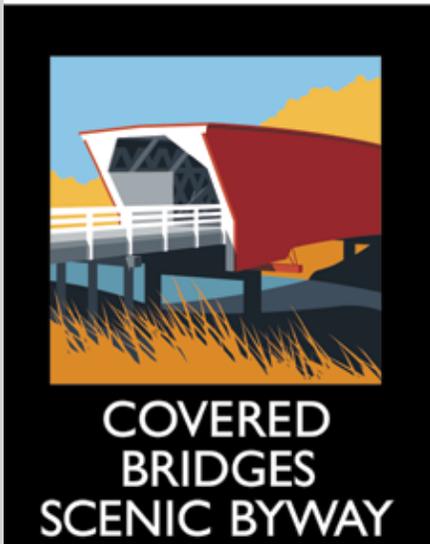
- Cost opinion data and grant application support to secure funding. Presenting a skillfully developed plan offers a better chance of swaying a grant selection committee.



PROFILES

Quick Concepts to Generate Cost Estimates

Get a Copy of the
Madison County
Conservation
Master Plan



To download the Madison County
Conservation Master Plan referenced in
this newsletter:

shive-hattery.com/madisoncounty



Concept sketch for converting an existing nature center to a cabin

- Documentation and communication strategies to ensure transparency among taxpayers, so they know how money is being spent.
- A document of realistic costs to support annual budget work that summarizes and prioritizes projects.

A PLAN CHAMPIONS PROJECT MOMENTUM

A completed master plan can move you closer to your vision with surprising energy. The process, which often involves public input, gives stakeholders more ownership and so more enthusiasm for project

progress. The plan itself is the rallying point for each step. It gives your vision momentum by:

- Lending credibility to future plans through the involvement of a knowledgeable third party.
- Building consensus – or gaining public approval – about the need for certain projects.
- Documenting current conditions and future plans so all information is easily accessible and organized in one place.
- Establishing a written succession plan for future generations to follow. Good stewardship!

A PLAN IS JUST THE RIGHT SIZE

Each county and each county conservation board is unique. For this reason, master plans are scalable and customizable based on needs and budget. They can be basic or in-depth, and include whatever components you need. This makes them just as helpful for large park systems as for small, standalone public spaces.

BASIC MASTER PLANS

In many cases, a county conservation board already has a vision and priority list but needs help visualizing concepts and costs and help creating a professional document that spells out all of this information in an organized way. Basic master plans fulfill these needs, focusing on the prioritization of capital improvement projects and strategies to address the most pressing requirements.

When complete, basic master plans provide only the most relevant information, which may be limited on illustrative graphics or detailed diagrams.

Madison County Conservation, for example, had completed a public survey and created a list of project priorities, but wanted help creating a plan to bring all of the information together. They were able to complete parts of the master plan on their own. (For example, they sealcoat their roads every year and know what to budget for, so cost analysis for sealcoat wasn't needed.)

Shive-Hattery reviewed the information Madison County Conservation brought to the table, made a few recommendations, organized the information, and verified costs where necessary. They worked closely with Director Jim Liechty to provide input on projects such as a future trail extension or conversion of the existing nature center to a cabin.

"I provided information where I could," says Liechty. "Shive-Hattery helped me fill in the blanks on larger projects. The end result was a professional plan I felt comfortable

presenting to the board. And I can go back and update it as needed. It was a very collaborative endeavor."

MID-RANGE MASTER PLANS

Some counties have a slew of projects on their list, but need help figuring out when and how they're going to spend the money they have to make these improvements happen.

In many cases, county conservation boards like to see visual concepts that represent their project options. A mid-range master plan can fulfill this need, bringing together ideas, timelines, and realistic costs to determine a course of action to follow.

Whether you need to collect data to support decision-making efforts or need help organizing and refining information, you have to establish a plan. A mid-range approach to master planning can be a good balance between a basic plan and an all-inclusive plan that involves professionals from the very start.

COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLANS

Comprehensive master plans are the most detailed. They can help call attention to a park system's needs, generate community interest and participation, and help create a new vision for the park's future.

These plans often involve conducting full market research, taking an accurate inventory of existing facilities and infrastructure and analyzing roads and structures to evaluate conditions.

Information is gathered, future needs and desires are discussed, and documents are prepared for presentation. The end result is a complete master plan that includes different concept options and costs for upcoming projects, suggestions for land use and development, amenities the public would like to see, maintenance plans, and costs required to keep existing structures operational.

Take the "Do I Need a Master Plan?" Quiz

Let's find out if you need a master plan...

- Does your organization have a plan for future needs and improvements?
- Has it been more than five years since your organization updated its plan for the future?
- Has your board requested information or plans that illustrate future needs?
- Does your organization need supplemental funding to address future needs?

If you answered "yes" to any of these statements, then a master plan is for you!



PROFILES

MARCH 2019

Profiles, a publication of Shive-Hattery, features issues, trends and innovations in city, county, state and federal government design.

Cedar Rapids, IA
800.798.0227

Iowa City, IA
800.798.3040

Des Moines, IA
800.798.8104

Bloomington, IL
800.798.8992

Chicago, IL
312.324.5500

Moline, IL
800.798.7650

Valparaiso, IN
219.476.1400

shive-hattery.com



Campground Master Plan



Campground Concept View

This comprehensive level of master planning can also include guidance on establishing design standards and guidelines for facility improvements and preservation efforts.

Whatever level of assistance you need, the end result is always the same: a plan to help

guide decision-making about park needs and improvements. Working with a multi-disciplinary team made up of architects, engineers and specialists ensures you'll have access to the resources you need when it comes to creative solutions and accurate cost estimates as part of your master plan.

