



A site master plan is an investment in long-term planning that is essential for the development of a framework for future land use growth. The organization's strategic plan should serve as the fundamental basis for initiating the site master planning process and is essential to help leadership prioritize and plan for future site development. It provides guidance for decisions regarding budgets, capital improvements, zoning, ordinances, environmental stewardship, and other growth-related considerations.

Importance of a Site Master Plan

The site master plan provides a land use plan for a defined parcel based on the organization's strategic (business) objectives. The site master plan defines short- and long-term land use requirements as a framework for present and future use. The Plan is intended to provide foresight, adaptability, direction, and a defined future by establishing existing conditions, planning principles, goals and objectives, master plan documentation, and an implementation strategy.

Site master planning is one of the most critical steps in creating a strategy that maximizes land use, space economy, flexibility for future growth, and change.

Goals of a Site Master Plan

The goals for a site master plan should be tailored to the specific initiatives of the organization as outlined in its strategic plan. The organization should begin the process by establishing specific goals.

Common topics to explore to establish appropriate goals include incorporating and understanding the following:

- Leadership Initiatives
- Current and Future Facility Needs
- Quality of Life Considerations
- Organizational Culture
- Program Requirements
- Sustainability
- Investment
- Timing / Phasing
- Gap Analysis

It is often one of the most overlooked steps in the project planning process. Many organizations fail to recognize the importance of a Site Master Plan and choose to "skip" this critical step based on time and cost.

Framework for a Successful Plan

A site master plan provides a framework for development of a successful land use plan. The framework to begin the process should include goals (the foundation for the plan), begin with an end in mind, identify key stakeholders, incorporate an existing site audit, assemble pertinent organization information, define building program requirements & adjacencies, site logistics, parking, vehicular & pedestrian travel, infrastructure requirements, and greenspace/ landscape development. The framework should provide a structured approach and clear objectives for land use development.

Beginning the Planning Process

Distribution of the following information to the Site Master Plan Team in advance of project kickoff is critical to establish an organized and productive project start.

Core Values Statement

The organization's current Core Values Statement with commentary as appropriate. For organizations without a formal Core Values Statement, the summary of organizational priorities that drive the desired culture should be included.

Current Strategic Plan

The organization's current Strategic Plan with commentary as appropriate.

Organization Information

Pertinent organization information typically includes master plan goals and objectives, organizational growth projections, past plans, land use data, development constraints, quality of life requirements, design standards, brand guidelines, utility information, parking requirements, traffic / transportation data, environmental considerations, and organization-specific requirements.

Process

Key elements of a comprehensive site master plan process include:

- Design team evaluation of existing information & site investigation

- Kick-off meeting & concept charrette with client leadership
- Public meeting(s)
- Design team research & concept development
- Stakeholder charrette(s)
- Preliminary master plan presentation
- Public meeting(s) as required
- Review and comment period
- Design team draft master plan report development
- Draft master plan presentation
- Review & comment period
- Design team final master plan report development
- Final master plan presentation
- Public meeting as required
- Monitoring the plan
- Amending and updating the plan

In addition to the key milestone activities, the team should plan for interim progress meetings.

Outcome

The site master plan provides an "actionable" plan that is the basis for land use development. The master plan should outline information for leadership to use in the development of next steps to move forward with a development strategy, complete with timeline, phasing requirements (if required), and budget considerations. It should clearly delineate current and future land use requirements.





Drawings

- **Existing Conditions Plan:** Graphic plan that illustrates existing conditions. Features include streets, building footprints, sidewalks, parking, major landscape features, and key facilities areas.
- **Illustrative Plan:** Graphic plan that illustrates potential development supporting the overall planning vision. Features include future streets, building footprints, sidewalks, parking, major landscape features, and key facilities areas.
- **Transportation Plan:** Layout of a new proposed transportation network (pedestrian, bicycle, vehicle, and transit access) to support the proposed development.
- **Developable Area Plan:** Identification of areas for future requirements. Highlight areas that, given the vision, constraints, and opportunities, are open for development and those areas that can be redeveloped to support future growth.
- **Regulating Plan:** Regulates the most essential elements of the Illustrative Plan, i.e., an enhanced land use plan. Features include buildable area, required build-to lines, required entry and parking locations, minimum and maximum building heights, and acceptable uses.
- **Infrastructure Plans:** Primary utilities existing conditions and future utilities improvements plans demonstrating requirements for storm water management, sanitary sewer, electric, gas, and communications, etc.

Narrative Documentation

- Executive Summary
- Acknowledgements
- Vision
- Goals & Objectives
- Planning Principles
- Existing Conditions
- Illustrative Plan
- Infrastructure
- Zoning
- Phasing Dependencies & Requirements
- Transportation Plan Requirements / Limitations Network (pedestrian, bicycle, vehicle, and transit access)
- Future Development Opportunities / Capacity to Accommodate Growth
- Stewardship Requirements for Natural, Recreational, and Cultural Resources
- Environmental Law Compliance
- Building Summary & Setbacks
- Building Distance & Height Limitations
- Security Criteria
- Sustainability Initiatives
- Emergency Fire Response to Facilities
- Compliance with Facility Standards
- Implementation Strategy
- Appendices (supporting documents)

Project Example

The site master plan prepared by emersion DESIGN for the 230-acre AeroHUB Innovation District addressed the development of an advanced manufacturing district strategically co-located immediately west of the Evendale, Ohio GE Aviation research, test, and manufacturing campus.

The completed site master plan outlines near- and long-term implementation and growth focused on property currently owned and controlled by Evendale, with options for an expanded vision if additional identified adjacent properties become available. Development goals include the promotion of employment and prosperity, innovation, collaboration, benefits to the community and region, sustainability, and diversity of innovation partners.

The success of the site master plan is being realized by the commitment of the Village to engage a national Manufacturing Extension Partner, targeted OEMs, education institutions, and workforce development partners in a common centrally located Innovation Center as the hub of the campus.

Progress & Highlights

AeroHUB is being developed through a public-private partnership between the Village of Evendale and other private, public, and non-profit entities. JobsOhio has provided \$2 million in funding, demonstrating its commitment to invest in leveraging and growing Ohio's manufacturing base.

"emersion DESIGN is a firm that understands the importance and value of collaboration and client focused service. The site master plan, developed by emersion, is fundamental to Evendale's strategy to attract and retain sustainable, high value businesses.

*-David W. Elmer, Director of Administrative Services
Village of Evendale*

- | | |
|------|--|
| 2017 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Total of 52 acres acquired & 100+ acres under control• Awarded \$500,000 JobsOhio infrastructure grant |
| 2018 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Master Plan adopted• MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) established with major innovation center partners. |
| 2019 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completion of AeroHUB Boulevard Phase 1• Awarded a \$438,371 JobsOhio grant |
| 2020 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Modal Shop new 40,000 sf manufacturing headquarters constructed• Awarded a \$1,000,000 JobsOhio grant |
| 2021 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kinetic Vision 51,000 sf Headquarters begins construction• AeroHUB Boulevard Phase 2 under construction• 39-acre pad-ready sites developed |

About the Author:



Steve Kimball, Esq., PMP, LEED AP

Steve has over 40 years' experience with business leadership and project management. Prior to co-founding emersion DESIGN, he was the President and CEO for a 100-person architectural – engineering firm with offices in Ohio and Florida. He has an extensive 30-year history of managing projects such as campus master plans, office buildings, computer centers, research and testing facilities, healthcare facilities, labs, university academic buildings, and engineering centers. He has been the lead Project Manager and Principal for projects ranging from \$100,000 to \$250 million and has managed the design of over \$1 billion in construction.

emersion DESIGN, located in Cincinnati, OH is a collaborative architecture, interior design, planning, structural engineering and sustainable design firm driven by a passion for exceptional designs that advance clients and society.