CHAPTER ONE


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If you selected a shirt to wear the same way we select a land development to build, you would let the shirt manufacturer make your selection based on shirt regulations. That process alone is not likely to achieve “Smart Dressing.” See page 16 for the solution.
Success — Byram, New Jersey
Conflict resolved between neighbors and planning board over traffic from proposed project.

In Byram the collaborative planning team revised a conventional twelve lot subdivision to include a walkway that made a loop through the project connecting two adjacent neighborhoods. They also created a totlot park near a small hemlock grove and rock outcrop that was to be blasted away for the new road. They recommended that the new road be narrower and follow the existing contours of the land so that the hemlock grove would be spared and become part of the park.

“They had been battling for almost two years. There was a developer, two sets of neighbors and the planning board. Everybody was pretty frustrated. When we started the collaboration, no one was really talking to each other or knowing what to do. The big issue was that no one was talking to anybody! I mean feelings were that hurt! The planning board was in the hot seat.

“We said, ‘Well, it’s our community; what if we do it this way!’ We met at one of the neighbors’ houses with neighbors from both sides of the development and the developer. In six months it was resolved! We relocated buildings and put in lots of walking paths and green space. It’s going to enhance the whole community; it’s going to be a really pretty development, and it’s going to work!”

Audrey O’Connell, Collaborative Planning team

“We had been locked in a difficult, disjointed situation with a lot of misunderstanding and no spirit of cooperation. With this process we found ourselves sitting in someone’s dining room discussing the issues calmly. It was a whole other ballpark! In a private setting with a relaxed atmosphere, they can see who you are, you see who your neighbors are, and you address each other’s concerns. It’s much easier and much more fruitful. You get a better understanding between neighbor and developer. No question about it!

“Now we are on excellent terms! I think it’s really excellent. There is faith and trust on both sides. The greatest thing is when you sit down with the neighbors you get a feeling about those people who will be participating in the public meeting. For us, we actually saved some money because of what they wanted to see developed there. We don’t have to do the wider roads mandated by the municipality. We have smaller roads and a little park and sidewalks. They came up with some good suggestions that are saleable items. So, we learned a lot, and we benefited.”

Dennis McConnell, Developer and Attorney

The best thing about this collaborative planning is that it asked us to play a real role in the development of our community. We shared the table and spoke freely with the developer and local officials. We now can make ourselves a powerful part of the conceptualization process at the very start, when we have a real chance to help design good development. People share very similar ideas about what a community should be. This was our best chance to achieve it — and we did!”

Margaret McGarrity, Environmental Commission
Who benefits from Collaborative Land Use Planning?

**Neighbor**

Are you a neighbor of a proposed land development who is concerned about the effect the proposed project will have on the quality of your life and your property values? If so, this book shows you how a proposed project is an opportunity for you to make your neighborhood *better*.

**Developer**

Are you a developer proposing a project in a settled area who is concerned about an expensive and protracted permitting process that may wind up in the courts? Then this book is for you. It teaches a way to use your development expertise to work with local residents and environmental experts so that your project steadily improves and consistently gains public support throughout an efficient and even enjoyable approval process.

**Environmentalist**

Are you an environmentalist who is dismayed by Sprawl and the damage it is causing to the environment? Collaborative Land Use Planning gives you a way to insure that your voice can be heard and shows how a proposed development is a way to solve existing environmental problems.

**Planning Commission Member**

Are you a planning commission member or elected official who wishes that your work would achieve more productive improvement of your community with shorter, less controversial meetings? This book provides a technique for unifying the energy and expertise of neighbors, developers, and environmentalists to help you efficiently generate truly beneficial projects.
Planner

Are you a planner who would like to help create projects that incorporate the best ideas for community improvement? This book gives you a process you can use to achieve stakeholder agreement on profitable projects that truly enhance the community.

Realtor

Are you a realtor who avoids developable properties because closings can be complex, risky, and time-consuming? By using collaborative planning, you can smoothly get to closing on tough development projects while forging new friendships and improving land values.

Attorney

Are you an attorney who wishes that land development did not have to be an adversarial proceeding? This book shows you a process for settling litigation that not only satisfies the litigants but actually improves the proposed project for the community.

Business Person

Are you a business person who wants to build a new headquarters building or manufacturing plant? This book shows you a process you can use to work together with the community and build good will as you get your permits.

The illustrations in this guidebook are not intended to stereotype any profession.

“I really benefited from partaking in collaborative planning by being involved with citizens that care. It enabled us to work in a positive emotional environment. It’s a positive way to be creative in engineering and planning.”

Peter Meyer, President, Professional Planning and Engineering, Cedar Knolls, NJ
Why Read This Book?

This book is a practical guide to help you build a better place to live.

We all want to live in nice communities that become better and better with every new “development,” yet many people are dissatisfied with the way their communities are evolving. During 12 years of meetings with boards, neighborhood groups, developers, and environmental groups, the Smarter Land Use Project discovered a new way of thinking about land development. In the end, the Project devised a collaborative planning process that results in smarter land use.

The rest of this chapter will give you background information on the collaborative approach. Chapters Two through Seven and the Appendix give you a practical guide so that you can initiate and benefit from a collaborative land use planning process, regardless of your role or experience. Chapter Eight tells the history of the Smarter Land Use Project.

What Is Smarter Land Use?

Smarter land use adds community-enhancing projects to existing settled areas.

Smarter land use results when land development is specifically designed to benefit its adjacent human and wildlife communities.

We all live on land that has been developed. Humans change the environment that nature provides in an effort to have more comfort, security, and beauty. Our ancestors built houses, farms, trails, and workplaces. Our towns are enriched by libraries, theaters, playgrounds, and meeting places. We are ready for an effective way to improve our environment and enhance our sense of community as we continue to create habitat for our increasing population and our changing needs.
A collaborative planning process that integrates proposed projects into their existing neighborhoods has emerged after years of experimentation. This process doesn’t change the current legal and administrative structures that control land development. Rather, it adds a voluntary but powerful technique that helps the existing administrative procedures work more smoothly and productively. Arguing and lawsuits decrease, and projects and their surrounding neighborhoods improve. This collaborative process achieves smarter land use and enables Smart Growth.

**Smart Growth vs. Sprawl**

Recently the public’s concern about the problems caused by land development has been deepening. The terms Sprawl and Smart Growth are now widely used to help us think about these issues. Urban decay makes people flee to the suburbs. Unfortunately, the same land development process which caused urban decay has been used to develop suburban areas. Sprawl has been the result.

Although it is clearly understood that there are problems associated with Sprawl, it is still the most common type of new land development. These projects intensify traffic, environmental, and social problems to the point where people want to escape, creating a demand for new land development in less densely populated areas and perpetuating the Sprawl cycle.

“Residents had been looking to reestablish their roots, so when they say, ‘I’m FROM someplace,’ it’s a place people will recognize and say, ‘Oh, yes, that’s a lovely place to be from.’”

Ted Chase, Planning Board Chairman, Lewisboro, NY
To break the cycle, many communities are seeking to adopt laws to minimize the spread of Sprawl. Unfortunately, laws haven’t worked well for this. Rather than make more laws, an alternate strategy is to end the demand for Sprawl, thereby making it obsolete. The way to end the demand for Sprawl is to improve the quality of life in settled areas so that people do not wish to flee to less settled areas. Edge, in-fill, and revitalization development in existing neighborhoods can be planned expressly to accomplish this task. The collaborative planning process, explained in the following chapters, makes this possible.

Smarter land development or redevelopment is designed specifically to benefit its adjacent human and wildlife community. It builds community spirit, solves existing problems, and further develops the best character and identity of the area. It increases property values and reduces the expense of community services. Smarter land development is supported by both residents and developers and is easily approved through existing administrative channels.

Smarter land development is how Smart Growth is achieved – one project at a time.
Summary of the Current Land Development Process

Developers use their resources to acquire land and “develop” it to make a profit. Often a project provides a profit for the developer but causes problems for the adjacent community.

In response, towns adopt development regulations to protect the interests of their citizens. The regulations generally focus on minimizing the damage caused by development. They do this by regulating the permitted types of land use (residential, commercial, industrial) and by limiting the amount of negative impact development can have on noise, traffic, scenery, natural and historic resources, etc. Each stakeholder (developer, citizens, environmentalists) fights for adoption of regulations that help protect their own special interests.

Each political jurisdiction (borough, town, township, city, etc.) has a planning commission or board that is appointed by elected officials. Responsibilities of the planning commission include overseeing and coordinating development, reviewing proposed land development projects to ensure they comply with development regulations, and then approving the plans for construction if they comply. Another responsibility of the planning commission is to recommend improvements to the development regulations (or ordinances) to the elected officials, who then vote to adopt them.

Communities that have development regulations usually have divided the town into development zones (residential, commercial, industrial, etc.). Each zone has different requirements for lot size, building use and height, parking spaces, road width, etc. Some political jurisdictions also appoint a zoning board of adjustment which can review certain projects that do not comply with the development regulations. This board has the authority to permit certain variances to the regulations and to approve projects for construction even if they do not comply with the regulations. Zoning boards provide a degree of flexibility to development regulations. Such flexibility is needed, but the current system is often the source of very contentious debate.

Building uses and heights, parking, lot sizes, set backs, and buffers can be regulated by ordinances . . .

. . . but how do we get public greens, connecting walkways, recreational facilities, diversified housing, and other community-enhancing features?

“What greater reassurance can the planning board have that this is the right thing than have the citizens of their town and the neighbors of this particular project and the owner of the land or the person that’s going to ultimately develop it come to them together and say, ‘This is what we would like to see on this land!’ ”

Peter Meyer, President, Professional Planning and Engineering, Cedar Knolls, NJ
The developer must create a plan that complies with the regulations or obtain necessary variances. The project also must be profitable for the developer to build. The developer usually acquires the property, creates the development plan, presents the plan for approval, and then builds the project. In some situations the developer is the landowner. In such cases, once development plans for the property are approved, they may be sold with the property to a builder.

After the developer discusses the proposed plan with the planning commission, the plan must be presented to the neighbors by the developer in a public hearing. If the neighbors do not like some aspect of the developer’s plan, they have no legal right to force a change in the plan if the plan complies with the regulations. There is usually little or no focus on community-enhancing features.
If the requested changes reduce the developer’s profit and are not required for the plan to comply with the regulations, the developer does not have to make the changes. This can be frustrating for the neighbors, planning board, and developer. The response of the board is most often to suggest to the neighbors that they help upgrade the regulations so that it doesn’t happen the next time. There is nothing they can do about it this time.

Environmental commissions are usually appointed by elected officials. Their responsibilities may include creating a natural resources inventory for the town and suggesting regulations that protect the environment from unnecessarily destructive land development. They also may review the developer’s proposed plans and suggest changes that protect water quality and other natural features.

The planning commission, developer, environmental commission, and neighbors use attorneys, planners, and engineers as necessary to provide expertise in interpreting the development regulations and defending their particular rights. Each participant in the project planning and approval process takes on a role – wears a specific hat – as the drama unfolds.

“The focus is on a subject that people are very, very much concerned about and care so terribly much about, and just allow them to work together. I’m talking about the developers and local residents and local officials. Just get them together and let them focus on the short term and long term needs and the common solutions to those needs.”

Ted Chase, Planning Board Chairman, Lewisboro, NY
Usually planning commissions, zoning boards, and environmental commissions are comprised of citizens who serve without compensation. Developers, planners, attorneys, engineers, and realtors generally earn their living from land development work.

The roles played by these individuals and boards may differ slightly from state to state. Detailed information can be found in the municipal or state regulations or from a local land-use attorney.

**A New Paradigm for Land Development**

Development plans must comply with the regulations and receive approval from the planning board before the developer can build the project. Thus, each project is planned by the developer to comply with the regulations while earning a satisfactory profit.
The current planning and approval system is based on a paradigm (set of assumptions) in which land development is expected to have at least some negative impact on the quality of life. This paradigm generates the vigilance which can set environmental groups and neighbors of proposed projects against the developer. Despite the regulations and the hard work of the planning board, which is often caught in the middle, the resulting project is often a compromise, impacting negatively on the surrounding community and including few community-enhancing features. Research by the Smarter Land Use Project over the last twelve years discovered that some assumptions of this paradigm are not true and these false assumptions yield confrontation and Sprawl.

Sprawl occurs because today's paradigm assumes development to have negative impact.

The research shows that a different paradigm is actually true. A land development procedure in accordance with the new paradigm will yield community-enhancing land development, end Sprawl, and achieve Smart Growth. By improving the assumptions that guide our thinking about land development, we shift the paradigm.

“Coming out of this I would expect would be a better sense of community, a better sense of town, a better sense of wholeness.”

Peter Meyer, President, Professional Planning and Engineering, Cedar Knolls, NJ
Let's compare the assumptions of the current paradigm with the improved assumptions of the new paradigm.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Current Land Development Paradigm</strong></th>
<th><strong>New Land Development Paradigm</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proposed development is likely to have negative impact on the surrounding neighborhood.</td>
<td>Proposed development is an opportunity to make the surrounding neighborhood better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developer’s goal is to maximize profit while complying with regulations. Neighbors are vigilant that the project minimizes damage to their quality of life.</td>
<td>Developer will make a good profit building a project that maximizes enhancement to the quality of life in the surrounding neighborhood.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The developer frequently wants more development, while the neighbors want less development with bigger buffers and setbacks.</td>
<td>Developer’s expertise and neighbors’ awareness of neighborhood conditions together can create the project of greatest value to the neighborhood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmentalists want to stop the project or change it to maintain environmental quality.</td>
<td>Environmentalists and developer can work together to configure the project to solve environmental problems and enhance the environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus is inward on the project itself to insure that it complies with regulations and minimizes damage to the environment and adjacent neighborhoods.</td>
<td>Focus is outward on the surrounding neighborhood and how the project can maximally enhance the quality of life and the environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development is governed by master plan, regulations, and the permitting process.</td>
<td>Development is governed by master plan, regulations, voluntary creative collaboration, and the permitting process.</td>
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A truer paradigm yields community-enhancing land development. The developer can become a hero.
Smart Growth occurs when the paradigm for land development shifts to the expectation that each proposed project in a settled area will be designed expressly to benefit the surrounding neighborhood. How can development enhance life in the surrounding neighborhood? This becomes the new focus for development. Voluntary, creative collaboration will find ways to do this and allow the developer to make a good profit. The developer, neighbors, city planner, and environmentalists can support the neighborhood-enhancing agenda and work as a team to conceptualize the project. The larger agenda also allows them to achieve their special-interest goals.

Just reading the table on the preceding page starts to shift your paradigm about land development. It doesn't hurt too much, does it? It doesn't hurt, but you might feel confused about what you should do now. The rest of this chapter provides additional mind-expanding ideas so that you will be ready for roll-up-your-sleeves, practical advice in Chapter Two.
Current Conceptualization Process Is Incomplete

The current land development conceptualization process often produces Sprawl instead of Smart Growth because the process is limited to these elements:

- Development concept complies with regulations
- Developer makes a profit

These elements are not enough. More issues must be considered when land development plans are conceived.

Completing the Conceptualization Process

Here are the considerations that are missing from the current process:

- How can the project benefit neighborhood life?
- How can the project bring out the best in the community?
- What architecture expresses the best existing character?
- What configuration looks best on the landscape?
- What design features most help the environment?
- Which configuration most supports neighborhood values?
- Are the facilities sustainable? Will they last?
When project designers deal with these considerations, community-enhancing features dominate the plans they create.

Examples of community-enhancing features are public greens, recreational facilities, affordable housing, architecture in the best character of the existing neighborhood, wildlife sanctuaries, and walkways through the project from adjacent neighborhoods directly to important destinations. Many more are included on the Checklist of Community-Enhancing Features in the Appendix. These features foster a sense of community, increase safety and emotional support, help the aging population and children at risk, reduce traffic congestion, and enhance the natural environment, the surrounding neighborhood, and the project itself.

Community-enhancing features are generally not included in projects today because (1) there is no cooperative forum for a systematic evaluation of the surrounding neighborhood to see which features would be of greatest benefit, and (2) the approval process is confrontational, preoccupying the developer, the neighbors, and the boards with defending their agendas and building a basis for successful litigation.

Four Principles of Collaborative Land Use Planning

How can project designers be encouraged to deal with these additional considerations and include the appropriate community-enhancing features? Since every project is located in a different place and helps a different neighborhood, zoning regulations cannot require these features or specify which ones to include. Our research discovered that the above questions will be consistently considered and the appropriate community-enhancing features will be included whenever the four principles of Inclusive Team-building, Outward Focus, Enhancement, and Sustainability are applied in planning a project. The following pages review each of these principles and how they are applied to land development conceptualization to consistently achieve smarter land use and ultimately Smart Growth.

Smart Growth projects include community-enhancing features such as public greens, connecting walkways, affordable housing, wildlife sanctuaries, and recreational facilities.

Community-enhancing features will be included in land development plans when four principles are applied.

“Collaborative planning improves the plan because it has input from three different areas as opposed to just coming from a developer’s idea. And any plan that has more input, you know, it’s got more profitability because it’s more creative. So it’s definitely improved.”

Audrey O’Connell, collaborative planning team, Environmental Commission, Byram, NJ
Principle #1: Inclusive Team-building

The goal of smarter land development is to add as much value and vitality to the surrounding neighborhood as possible. When the project designers understand the neighborhood surrounding the project, its assets, liabilities, problems, and potential, they know which community-enhancing features to include in the project.

When the design team includes expertise in construction, financing, marketing, and the environment, they can find ways to include the most community-enhancing features in the project. Voluntary, creative collaboration of neighbors, developer, city planner, environmentalists, and other interested citizens is the best forum for producing smarter land use. Our research shows that the more inclusive and unified the collaborative team, the more community-enhancing features will be included in the project.
Today, when the developer’s pre-made plan is presented to the planning board, neighbors and environmentalists during the approval process, confrontation frequently results because they must review the plan from the perspective of minimizing damage to their specific interests. The damage control mentality polarizes the neighbors, the developer, and the environmentalists by placing each of them on the defensive. The defensive posture shuts down community-oriented thinking and results in a costly approval process and a compromised project with few, if any, community-enhancing features.

The community-enhancing features of smarter land use begin to appear when the neighbors, city planners, developers, and environmentalists start to work together. Inclusive teambuilding can work well in land development planning because the neighbors, developer, and environmentalists can each visualize and support an overall community-building agenda that includes their special interest agendas. Once collaboration begins, participants see that the more they cooperate and share their expertise, the better their opportunity for achieving their special interest agendas. The teamwork generates a wealth of creative synergy and clear, relaxed thinking that can result in projects that actually exceed individual special-interest agendas and yield significant community-enhancing features.

Inclusive team-building in achieving smarter land use means that neighbors, developer, city planner, and environmentalists work as a team to conceptualize the project. The collaborative planning process detailed in Chapter Two gives them the forum, the steps, and the tools for steadily improving their teamwork. Chapter Four provides specific collaboration aids that will help unify the neighbors, developer, and environmentalists concerned about a specific project, regardless of their history.

Defensiveness among the stakeholders shuts down creative thinking.

Inclusive team-building works because the team’s community-building agenda includes each member’s special-interest agenda.

“It’s a win-win situation for us because basically what we’re trying to do is create an option for a better way to develop the land. We are not ruling out the conventional approach and, therefore, when you have an option, you’re always better off.”

John deNeufville, developer, Mendham, NJ
Principle #2: Outward Focus

Today, the focus of land development planning is inward on the project site and on planning the project to be profitable and comply with regulations. It is assumed that the land development regulations will protect quality of life and property values in the neighborhood surrounding the project. There is no requirement or procedure for specifically planning the project to include features that enhance the surrounding neighborhood. Surrounding neighborhoods are not shown on plans except for structures within 100 feet of the property line.

Projects that are planned with this inward focus tend to encourage isolation because they are not connected to adjacent projects with walkways, architecture, and other community-enhancing features. Since they are not planned expressly to solve social and environmental problems in the surrounding neighborhood, they usually increase automobile traffic and intensify the social and environmental problems, thereby adding to Sprawl.

For smarter land use to occur, collaborative project planning must use an “outward focus.” Assets and liabilities of the surrounding neighborhood must be inventoried and evaluated so that the project can be planned expressly to benefit its surrounding area.

With an outward focus, neighbors, developer, and environmentalists evaluate social, environmental, and economic characteristics of the surrounding neighborhood to determine where there are opportunities for improvement. Then, as the project is configured, community-enhancing features are selected to solve existing problems and improve life as much as possible.

The proposed project site, when seen as the “center of the donut,” becomes the key to knitting the surrounding neighborhood together. Walkways/bikeways can be planned on the site to directly connect important gathering places, such as churches, schools, post office, and shopping, to residents on opposite sides of the site. In addition to residences or commercial buildings, facilities such as public
greens, pavilions, recreational facilities, and benches can be planned along the connecting walkways as opportunities to bring people together. Architecture that best promotes the historic identity of the neighborhood can be used in the new buildings.

A project uplifts and brings out the best in the surrounding neighborhood when it focuses outward rather than inward. The project thus becomes the centerpiece of the surrounding area and gains higher value and appeal. By focusing outward and enhancing life in the surrounding neighborhood, the project achieves its greatest value.

Chapter Two gives you the step-by-step collaborative planning process.

“As a result of collaborative planning I got to know quite a few of the people who live bordering this property, and their honest input has been very useful to me. Secondly, to have a plan that is supported by quite a large number of the citizens surrounding the property, which is our goal, is something that’s almost unheard of, and it takes what is usually the biggest problem in developing land and turns it into a benefit.”

John deNeufville, developer, Mendham, NJ
Principle #3: Enhancement

Today, land development projects are designed to comply with the regulations, and then approved to minimize damage to the area influenced by the project.

One problem with working toward the goal of minimizing damage is that it usually results in at least some damage. To get no damage the goal must be to maximize enhancement. Then there will usually be at least some enhancement.

A second problem of working toward a goal of protection or minimizing the damage is that somebody always gets defensive because they see themselves as the person or group being protected against. For example, efforts to minimize damage and protect the environment tend to polarize the neighbors, developer, town officials, and environmentalists because people become defensive. Damage-control mentality takes over. Collaboration, clear thinking, and creativity are hampered, and community-enhancing features are shelved.

Consider the effect of the word “Protection” in the name of the Environmental Protection Agency. It makes some people offenders and puts them on the defensive. That then puts the Environmental Protection Agency on the defensive. On the other hand, suppose the name were changed to the Environmental Enhancement Agency? Would that take the offenders off the defensive and encourage them to invest in enhancing the environment as much as possible? With the support of the Environmental Enhancement Agency? I think so. When the assumption is enhancement, every project becomes an opportunity to make the community a better place to live. Then, land development actually develops the community’s land into a better and better place.
Each land development project can be planned expressly to include community-enhancing features. Money for community-enhancing features is available from philanthropic sources when (1) a clear vision of placement, use, and benefits of such features can be presented, and (2) there is a clear consensus and enthusiasm from neighbors, developer, environmentalists, and town officials that such features are desired. The collaborative planning team described in Chapter Two achieves these two objectives. Smarter land use results in community enhancement instead of damage control.

**Principle #4: Sustainability**

Sustainability is achieved when land development uses renewable resources and does not cause undue drain on non-renewable resources. In order to achieve sustainability in a land development project, the process for designing the project must also be sustainable. A confrontational planning and approval process is not sustainable because it drains the energy of the boards, developers, planners,

*“In my view it’s best for the collaborative planning team to do it themselves as much as possible, to let all of the good things that people have to offer just flow to the surface, and to provide that kind of a process.”*

Ted Chase, Planning Board Chairman, Lewisboro, NY
neighbors, and environmentalists. In fact, sustainability issues are seldom discussed in planning board meetings because people are busy defending their agendas and are focused primarily on density, buffers, and setbacks.

In our research we found that when the neighbors, developer, planners, and environmentalists work as a team so that they can include community-enhancing features in the project, they would readily discuss the development configuration in terms of energy and resource conservation and the use of renewable resources.

A confrontational process is a non-sustainable drain on problem-solving resources, and the project is likely to reflect that drain.

Smarter land use reflects a smarter project design and approval process. Selected locations for the facilities, as well as the construction, maintenance, and use of the facilities, have long-term benefits and do not drain non-renewable resources. The sustainability of a proposed development pattern is considered in terms of how it achieves social and community health, economic security, environmental enhancement, application of intellectual resources, and spiritual and moral goals.
How to Apply the Four Principles

Application of the principles of inclusive team-building, outward focus, enhancement, and sustainability is assured by following the collaborative planning process described in Chapter Two. It is an easy, step-by-step process that any community can use on any size project.

Why collaborative planning? Because the project is not limited by lot boundaries. Improvement of the entire area influenced by the project is the goal.

Neighbors, developers, planners, and environmentalists who have followed the collaborative planning process have made the shift from defending role-based agendas to working as a team. The team seizes the opportunity presented by the proposed project to creatively and cooperatively make the surrounding neighborhood and the project a better place to live and work. The next chapter will lead you through this exciting process.

Smarter land use reflects a smarter project design and approval process.

“The discussion of the possibilities and the moving around of little models acts as a cross-fertilization of ideas about how an ultimate goal could be accomplished, and that’s a good thing. That’s what I found to be very beneficial.”

Paul Nussbaum, Attorney, Planning Board, and collaborative planning team, Hope, NJ