Comprehensive Plan Topics (or "Elements")

A comprehensive plan will usually describe existing conditions and historical trends. The plan will use historical trends to predict future growth or future conditions. The plan also consists of goals, objectives and policies that describe what the community will do to navigate through those changes. Existing conditions and future projections are described through text, images, tables, charts and maps.

Introduction/History
Vision statement
Summary of the Process Used to Create the Plan

Existing conditions / also plan topics or "elements"

Physical Characteristics
- Boundaries
- Land use
- Zoning
- Topography / terrain
- Riparian areas (rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands)

Demographics
- Population
- Age groups
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Income
- Net migration in and out of community
- Commuting patterns in and out of community

Housing
- Number of households
- Percentage of households that are rented versus owned
- Average household size
- Housing stock characteristics
  - Average age, value, size
- Number of new households projected over the planning period

Economy
- Major employers
- Job sectors and number of jobs in each sector
- Energy resources overview/characteristics (coal, oil, mining, wind)
- Agricultural production profile

- o Soil conditions
- Economic development plan/strategies

Public services, facilities, infrastructure
- Transportation (road network, rail, airports, ports, etc.)
- Water supply & distribution systems
- Sanitary sewer & wastewater treatment
- Storm water management systems and retention/detention facilities
- Emergency services
  - o Law enforcement
  - o Fire department
- Schools
- Other community-specific services & facilities
- Capital improvement plan

Hazard mitigation
- Flood hazard areas/planning
- Wildfire hazard areas/planning
- Hazardous material facilities

Community Health

Growth management strategy or Zero-growth strategy (as the case may be)

Historic preservation

Document Community Assets
- Parks (local, state, federal) & recreation areas
- Trails
- Historical sites
- Others unique to the community

Goals, Objectives and Policies

Future Land Use Map

Data Sources (generally online)

Demographics
- U.S. Census (<u>American Fact Finder</u>/"Advanced Search" option)
    - Demographics, housing, travel patterns, many more

Jobs/Economy
- Bureau of Labor Statistics
- ND Office of State Tax Commissioner

Agriculture
- USDA Census of Agriculture
- USDA / Natural Resources Conservation Service / Web Soil Survey

Energy
- US Energy Information Administration
- ND Industrial Commission

ND Department of Health Community Health Profiles, also regional health district reports

ND State Water Commission

Map Data (GIS files)

If you don't have GIS (look into partnering with neighboring city or county that does). Many map files are available through the state GIS portal: gis.nd.gov   and/ or the State Water Commission Map Service on the "Information & Education" tab, then "Maps/GIS & Data" option.

- Roadways (created locally)
- Flood hazard areas (Federal Emergency Management Agency)
- Topographic contours (ND State Water Commission map service)
- Utility lines (from water, power, cable companies)
- State/interstate pipelines
- Rivers, streams, watersheds, aquifers (ND State Water Commission map service)
- Satellite/aerial imagery (ND State Water Commission map service)

Gather your own data
- City, County, Twp building permits (track housing starts over time)
- Create a survey that township residents can fill out (online and paper versions)
- input from public meetings/workshops

More on Goals, Objectives, & Policies

Goal
- Big idea / statement of a future condition
- Example: main street in Amber Grain Township is a thriving place that draws visitors from the surrounding community on a regular basis.

Objective or implementation step
- Action step that will lead to achievement of a goal
- Example: Amber Grain Township will create a store-front improvement incentive program to be implemented by spring 2021.

Policy
- Rule you intend to abide by to help reach objectives and goals
- Example:

Make goals and objectives SMART:
Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Realistic
Timely

Key questions a Comprehensive Plan should address

1) What do we want our community to be like in x years? What steps do we need to take to make it that way?
2) What issues is the community facing? What are we going to do to address them?
3) What issues do we predict we will encounter in the future? How will we address them?
4) How much are we going to spend? On what? When? (i.e. create a capital improvement plan)
5) Where is the most appropriate place(s) for new development to locate? OR How do we preserve the community we have (for zero-growth scenarios)?