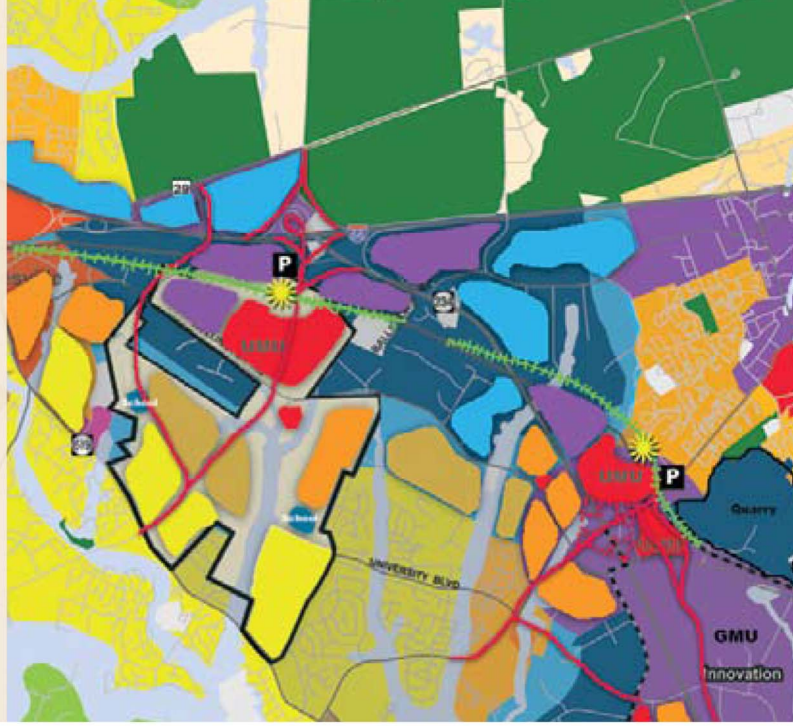


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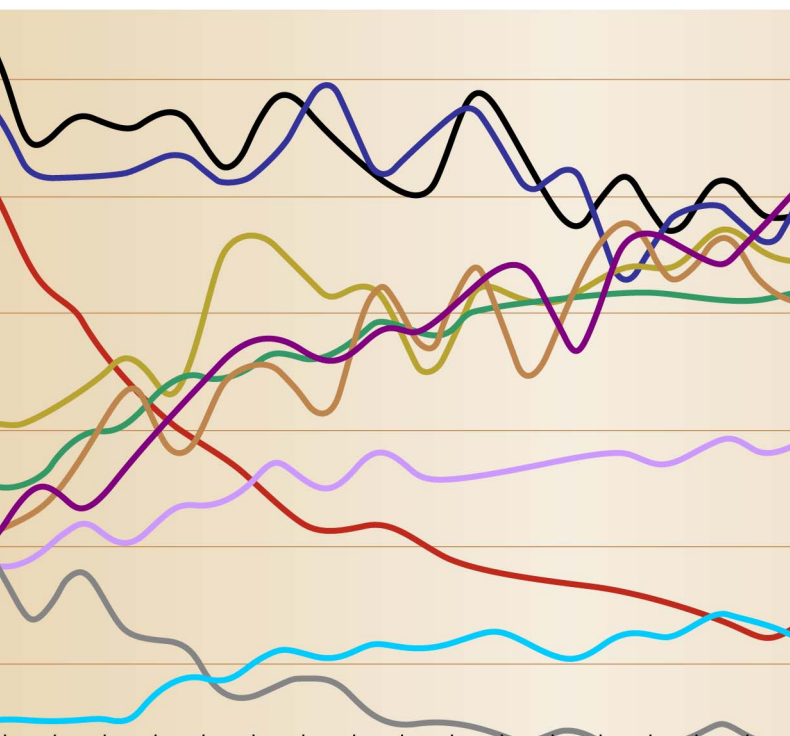
Lewis D. Hopkins

and

Marisa A. Zapata



ENGAGING THE FUTURE



Forecasts,
Scenarios,
Plans, and
Projects

ENGAGING THE FUTURE

Forecasts, Scenarios, Plans, and Projects

edited by Lewis D. Hopkins and Marisa A. Zapata

 LINCOLN INSTITUTE
OF LAND POLICY
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Contents

	List of Figures	vii
	List of Tables	x
	List of Boxes	xi
	Preface	xiii
	How to Read This Book	xv
1	Engaging the Future: Tools for Effective Planning Practices Lewis D. Hopkins and Marisa A. Zapata	1
2	The Use of Forecasts in Creating and Adopting Visions for Regional Growth Terry Moore	19
3	Vision, Planning, and Democracy Jill Grant	39
4	Promoting the Community Future in the Contest with Present Individualism Dowell Myers	59
5	Using a Scenario Approach: From Business to Regional Futures Erik Smith	79
6	Using Scenarios to Make Urban Plans Uri Avin	103
7	Using Scenarios to Build Planning Capacity Stacy Anne Harwood	135

8	How We Use Planning: Planning Cultures and Images of Futures Michael Neuman	155
9	Forecasting to Learn How the World Can Work Andrew M. Isserman	175
10	Deliberating About the Future Richard E. Klosterman	199
11	Developing and Using Scenarios Brian Deal and Varkki George Pallathucheril	221
12	Engaging the Public Through Narrative-Based Scenarios Richard Cummings	243
13	Person-Oriented Narratives: Extensions on Scenario Planning for Multicultural and Multivocal Communities Marisa A. Zapata	261
14	Using Plans and Plan Making Processes: Deliberation and Representations of Plans Lewis D. Hopkins	283
15	Engaging the Future More Effectively: A Model Request for Proposals Lewis D. Hopkins and Marisa A. Zapata	315
	Glossary of Planning Terms	333
	References	344
	Index	357
	About the Authors	370
	About the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy	374

ENGAGING THE FUTURE

Tools for Effective Planning Practices

1

Lewis D. Hopkins and Marisa A. Zapata

As planners we want to work with constituents to engage and shape futures, not merely stumble upon these futures as they emerge. To shape futures, we must imagine them in advance and understand how they might emerge. Forecasts, scenarios, plans, and projects are four ways of representing, manipulating, and assessing ideas about futures. They are not only ways of *thinking* about the future, but also ways of *influencing* the future on our way from present to future. The intent of this book is to reframe the way we think about these futures tools so as to engage our futures more effectively.

TOWARD MORE EFFECTIVE PLANNING PRACTICES

The implications of the experiences brought together in this book are that we can and should move beyond the notion of distinct areas of expertise to create forecasts, scenarios, plans, or projects. Instead, we should frame expertise in shaping the future through utilizing forecasts, scenarios, plans, and projects in our efforts to influence others and make choices. The work that these tools can do is inter-related, iterative, continuous, and rooted in uncertainty. Using tools separately to create one forecast, scenario, plan, or project leaves planners isolated from deliberations among community members about what to do.

Futures shapers focus on making and influencing choices and achieving concerted actions. Information and ideas are essential to help planners and their constituencies understand, imagine, and devise combinations of actions that can achieve intentions in the face of partially understood futures. Thinking in numerical calculations, stories, and images simultaneously and iteratively is essential to inventiveness, effectiveness, and persuasive collaboration. A *forecast* elaborates an idea. A *scenario* focuses on change not salient in obdurate data. A *plan* contem-

plates related actions in light of multiple scenarios, tested by forecasts. A plan is alive, a state of knowledge about interrelated actions that can only be reported at a time and from a point of view. A forecast is triggered and quickly embedded. A scenario influences beliefs about how the world works, changes coalitions for concerted action to build a project, and calls into question assumptions of a forecast. The information content of plans changes.

The realities planners face—their clients, constituencies, and legal mandates—may demand single, static, and completed plans, forecasts, scenarios, and projects. But, planners still have the opportunity to use these tools creatively. The following chapters offer ideas for planners in situations where they are positioned to advocate for a new kind of planning—one that allows communities to face uncertain and malleable futures with continuous and deliberative planning activities.

In this chapter, we first describe the norms, aspirations, and acknowledged ambiguities and criticisms of current planning practices. Second, we elaborate on each of the tools—forecasts, scenarios, plans, and projects—by explaining underlying concepts, conflicting definitions, and ambiguities in our use of these terms. A more complete glossary of planning terms is included at the end of the book. Third, these ideas for improved practices are brought together in a thematic reading of the book: using forecasts, scenarios, plans, and projects in continuing, deliberative practices among multiple actors.


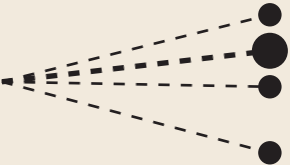
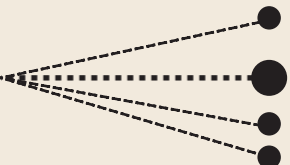
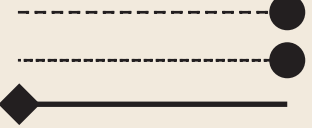

NORMS, ASPIRATIONS, AMBIGUITIES, AND CRITICISMS OF CURRENT PLANNING PRACTICES

Planning takes place in the present and engages the future. The present is a point in time now and the future is a point in time later, frequently 20 years in urban development planning. Visioning, forecasting, scenario generation, plan making, and project design are currently practiced modes of planning that link present to future. Modes are distinguished from the tools themselves in that the modes, and their surrounding norms and aspirations, are achieved through techniques for using tools.

These modes frame current practices so that we can describe the norms and aspirations that drive them and the ambiguities and criticisms that challenge them. None of these modes can be dismissed, though all have their fans and foes. Some constituents find these processes threatening to their perceived interests and argue against them. Some participants find them ineffective and reject them. Some scholars question them on theoretical grounds. They are, however, our base on which to build innovations and improvements.

Figure 1.1 describes these five modes, or processes, of linking present to future. One way to link present and future is by creating a vision, a description of a desirable situation at that future time. In this mode, experts facilitate broad participation in the present to imagine (represented by the dotted line) a desirable future (the node at the future end of the imagination line). This planning practice is called visioning and is currently a popular way of engaging the future (Ames 1998; Shipley 2002; Shipley and Newkirk 1998). The role of visions in focusing

FIGURE 1.1
 Modes of Current Planning Practice Linking
 Present Planning Activities to Representations of Futures

	Activity in Present		Representation of Future
<i>Visioning</i>	<i>Facilitated participation of constituents</i>		<i>Vision as agreed intent of concerted action</i>
<i>Forecasting</i>	<i>Expertise and negotiation among authorities</i>		<i>Accepted forecast as accurate and shared</i>
<i>Preferred Scenario Selection</i>	<i>Decision makers generate scenarios and select preferred scenario</i>		<i>Preferred scenario chosen from set of structurally different scenarios</i>
<i>Plan Making</i>	<i>Forecast; set goals, allocate land uses, and set infrastructure; and implement</i>		<i>Forecast, plan as future pattern adopted officially, implemented through projects</i>
<i>Project Design and Construction Management</i>	<i>(After plan) Design project and manage construction</i>		<i>Physical change in state of the world</i>

attention on the future is emphasized by Grant (chapter 3), Myers (chapter 4), Harwood (chapter 7), and Neuman (chapter 8). Current visioning practice places major emphasis on involving a large and representative group of constituents in the process of creating a vision as a shared view of the future. A vision may serve

as a common text for negotiation of interests (Innes 2004). More frequently, claims favoring visioning processes emphasize achieving motivation for concerted action or getting a constituency and its leaders on the same page, as exemplified by Myers's (chapter 4) call for community futures to defeat present individualism.

A second mode to link present to future is forecasting, which relies on some analytical means (represented by the dashed lines) for predicting the state of the world at a time in the future, usually in the sense of a most likely future. Typical practice first considers multiple possible forecasts, but usually only to set a range of predictions from which to choose some kind of midpoint prediction (represented by the bolder forecast line and end node) (Klosterman 1990).

As explained by Moore (chapter 2), in many situations planners are required to use a particular forecast, identified ahead of time by some other organization or agency such as a state government. Such requirements undermine the logic of using forecasts to analyze different possible actions in the present in order to learn how to affect the future. Isserman (chapter 9) shows how forecasts can be varied to learn about the future, think about how the world works, and frame reasonable choices to shape the future.

It is apparent that a vision and a forecast can become aspects of the same future if that future is seen as both desirable, perhaps through collaborative visioning, and likely, probably through expert analysis by forecasting (Harris 1960; Isserman 1984). Working together in this way, forecasts and visions reinforce the planner's desire for a consistent, coherent narrative about the community and its singular, likely future. Such combinations of likely and desirable futures are sometimes called normative forecasts (Ascher 1978). This combination is one of the ambiguities in conventional planning practices because it becomes unclear how to make sense of the participatory practices for creating visions and the expert practices for creating forecasts.

A third mode for thinking in the present about the future is preferred scenario selection: a collaboration among experts in the present (represented by the dotted lines in figure 1.1) generates plausible scenarios of the state of the world (represented by nodes at the future end) at a future time. The important distinctions from visioning and forecasting in this rendition of scenario generation are that the focus is on generating different, plausible futures, not envisioning a desirable future or forecasting a likely future (Avin chapter 6). This approach is intended to increase the range of ideas considered and often to structure an argument in favor of choosing one as a preferred future.

In transportation planning practice in the United States, the selected scenario is referred to as the "locally preferred alternative," because it is chosen by local authorities as part of a planning process mandated as a requirement in order to receive federal funding. Arguably, a locally preferred alternative should be equivalent to a normative forecast. That is, those who choose it should do so because they believe it is both desirable and, contingent on their making the included investments in infrastructure, likely to occur. This terminology begs additional ambiguities about what is included in the choice of an alternative (Hopkins 2001b). Is it

the future state that is being chosen? Or is it the set of transportation infrastructure investments that is being chosen? Unless we assume certainty and control, these are not the same. Scenario planning as practiced in the business world, which is elaborated below, suggests a different approach to this ambiguity.

The fourth mode of creating futures in the present is plan making. The most traditional prescription of plan making is to take a forecast of population and economic activity (represented in figure 1.1 by the dashed top line in the plan-making mode), convert this forecast to land use requirements, and allocate (represented by the dotted line) these land uses and infrastructure to serve them spatially (represented by the node at the future end of the dotted line). The planned pattern is then achieved by implementing in the present regulatory and investment projects (represented by the diamond in the present) to achieve (represented by the solid line) the intended future pattern. The most complete description of this approach is in Chapin (1972) or his earlier editions of *Urban Land Use Planning*.

Working from ambiguities identified above, the plan could be created to achieve a vision rather than to serve as a forecast, recognizing that it should be a normative forecast or preferred scenario. This transition from forecast to vision is often achieved through a process of goal setting that filters the forecast into required land uses. In any case, a plan-making process is usually much more explicit than are the visioning, forecasting, or scenario selection processes about “backcasting” from a vision or forecast (of the future) in order to figure out what to start doing now (in the present) in order to get to that forecasted and chosen future. Put differently, to put visions, forecasts, or preferred scenarios to work requires some form of backcasting to actions in the present.

This approach to plan making has long been challenged, but is still deeply embedded in daily practice. The most general criticism is that it seems oblivious to the complexity of the planning situations in terms of uncertainty, distributed authority, contesting interests, and the dynamics of getting from the present to the future. Hopkins (2001b) argues that plans can work in several different ways, that there will be and should be many plans by different actors at different times, and that such a perspective rescues plan making from these challenges of complexity. The most recent edition of the Chapin textbook (Berke et al. 2006) describes an enhanced version of the plan-making approach that recognizes a set of regional to local plans, as opposed to a single plan. Donaghy and Hopkins (2006) argue that an even more complex set of plans and planning activities better describes, and would better prescribe, plan-making processes.

The fifth mode is project design, such as building a highway or subdivision or enacting a regulation. Projects are typically thought of as actions in the present that connect to the future only by directly creating it, sometimes in the literal physical sense. This is the sense in which projects are described in figure 1.1, whether in their role in implementing plans or as a separate, singular project seen as building a future.

The possibility that projects, for example ideas about potential construction, can and do frame effective discussions and engagement with the future should,

however, also be considered. Observation suggests that controversy and deliberations often focus at least as much on proposals for specific projects as on visions, forecasts, or plans (Grant chapter 3; Hopkins chapter 14). We should, therefore, also consider projects as ideas through which to engage our futures, which would imply a dotted line of imagination taking projects into the future, as in figure 1.2.

These diagrams can be compared with discussions and related diagrams in later chapters that explain planning processes in the face of expertise and participation and likelihood and desirability. Moore (chapter 2), Grant (chapter 3, figure 3.1), Myers (chapter 4, figure 4.1), Smith (chapter 5, figure 5.5, and Avin (chapter 6, figure 6.2) all frame these issues in slightly different ways and build their particular ideas from them.

While each of these modes has its own set of criticisms, when considered together they articulate problems in planning practice: Planners are challenged when addressing uncertainty in continuously changing communities, incorporating deliberation, and working with multiple actors who hold different values. Expertise and democracy are inherently in tension as two aspects of deliberation. There is no simple way that a planning process—visioning, forecasting, or plan making—can replace the messy contentions of political and social choice or address deeply embedded power relations and oppression. Emphasizing the incorporation of deliberation, collaboration, and participation by decision makers and constituents is one counter to this concern but does not recognize multiple interests and perspectives. Altshuler (1965) placed planning processes in the political context of multiple jurisdictions and differences of interest and influence. Davidoff (1965) argued that each interest deserved to be represented by advocates, rather than assuming that expertise alone could or should be relied on to find a common interest.

If we cannot expect to identify easily a single, common interest, then we must operate in a world of differential power and interests (Bryson and Crosby 1992; Hoch 1994). Forester (1989; 1999) argues that such situations require deliberative forms of practice. These practices may focus on achieving consensus in the specific sense of consent for action (Innes 2004), through collaboration (Healey 1997), interest-based negotiation (Susskind and Cruikshank 1987), or recognition of and respect for differences (Sandercock 2004). These challenges to conventional practice undermine the assumptions of one interest, one plan, and expertise as the driving forces for planning. Instead, these challenges demand that we should find ways to imagine our planning as continuing, deliberative work among multiple actors.

From this base of current modes of practice we can consider other ways to put the basic tools that support these modes—forecasts, scenarios, plans, and projects—together in different ways. By responding to challenges and criticisms, in part by looking closely at cases from practice, we can devise more effective practices.

FORECASTS, SCENARIOS, PLANS, AND PROJECTS

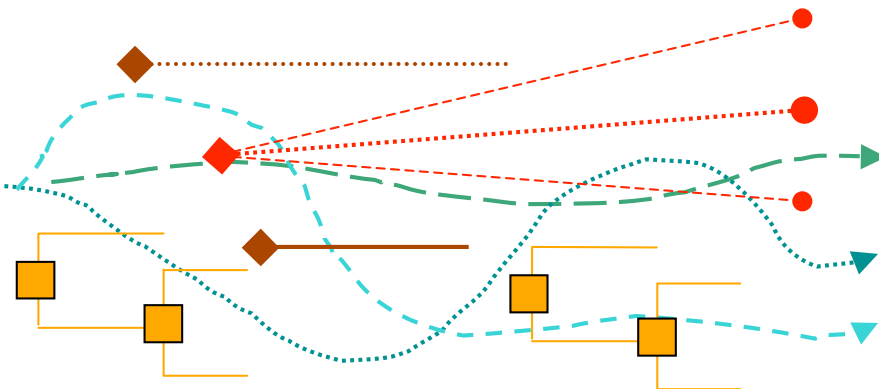
What are forecasts, scenarios, plans, and projects, and what are they intended to accomplish? Of what use are they in engaging the future? These artifacts of planning can affect and help create the future, but in different ways. The approach of this section is to build on distinctions to find relationships among these tools.

To help articulate these relationships, we expand figure 1.1 to reflect a more complex view of how these various planning activities, and their supporting modes, interact in the world in ways that frame potentially more effective planning practices. We can then imagine planning activities as combinations of these tools being used over time, as diagrammed in figure 1.2, instead of the isolated modes described in figure 1.1. Figure 1.2 includes each of the previously identified tools, though some are now represented differently. Scenarios are now wavy lines emphasizing processes of change from one time to another. Plans are decision trees, emphasizing interdependent decisions. The ideas in figure 1.2 are referred to throughout the following discussion of forecasts, scenarios, plans, and projects.

In this discussion, the concept of visioning is not included as a distinct tool or technique. Visions, as desired futures, matter in planning processes, and Myers (chapter 4) argues strongly for this approach to focusing attention on the future and community. As suggested in the discussion of planning modes above, scenarios and forecasts may be chosen as visions, and are here treated as more basic tools for devising futures. Also, from the editors' perspective, a focus on the visioning aspect alone tends to push planners in a direction that conflicts with the needs of present-day overlapping communities in which actors have distributed authority and diverse interests. We instead emphasize the opportunities for scenario planning to bring community members together to engage their futures. This disagreement is not simply an opinion about which labels—visioning or scenario planning—should be in vogue, but an argument that framing tools and techniques

FIGURE 1.2

A Cluster of Planning Activities: Forecasts, Scenarios, Plans, and Projects



in different ways influences effectiveness in devising processes that address the multiple, conflicting, and continuous planning our communities demand. Thus, in what follows, desirability of a future is explored through scenarios and plans.

What Are Forecasts?

Forecasts are techniques that derive possible futures by predicting change in some variables. A forecast is based on what is expected to happen under some set of conditions.

The conventional notion of a forecast in planning methods is the prediction of future values of a variable or set of variables over time and perhaps disaggregated in space. For example, forecasts of populations for municipalities or metropolitan regions are still conventionally used to drive comprehensive planning initiatives.

Ascher (1978) argues that decision makers may prefer forecasts that do not distinguish effectively among choices because such forecasts do not limit their discretion when deciding what to do. Decision makers, as forecast users, are thus comfortable identifying forecast makers as separate experts who create numbers open to interpretation and argument and remain disengaged from the larger deliberative process. If forecasts are to affect choices, however, they should be contingent in some way on choices about projects that are available and of interest (Moore chapter 2). Thus in figure 1.2, the red forecast set is shown as contingent on a project, which is represented by the diamond at the beginning of the forecast.

Ascher (1978) also describes a normative role of forecasts, in which forecasts can be chosen because we also intend to choose actions that will make the forecasts likely to come true. The forecasted future can be a future we want. Isserman (1984; and chapter 9) elaborates these ideas to make clear the distinctions among merely projecting past trends, forecasting particular futures based on choices, and recognizing normative futures as plans. The groundwork has been laid for countering the conventional notion of forecasting as a task separate from making plans and from using plans when making decisions. Thus the interactions among forecasts, plans, and decisions can now be considered.

In recent conversations in regional science these interactions have come to the forefront. The field of regional science provided the methods-development hothouse for many of the forecasting techniques now used in planning. In a recent compilation of methods, the introduction recognizes that understanding processes of change is as important as predicting the value of a variable:

Particular subjects, such as estimation of population numbers, migration and regional income, per se, have become less important while the causal interconnection or interrelationship of forces leading to change (such as population numbers, migration and regional income) have become examined more intensely. (Isard et al. 1998, 3)

Such recognition brings forecasters closer to scenario builders, who write narratives about how things change. If forecasters create multiple forecasts to help understand a system and explain these forecasts in terms of processes of change

rather than simply as resulting numbers, then forecasts are equivalent to scenarios. A culture of calculation versus a culture of narrative may be a remaining distinction, but merging numerical, verbal, and visual narratives reduces this distinction even further (Deal and Pallathucheril chapter 11). Klosterman (1997; chapter 10) argues that traditional planning techniques, including forecasts, scenarios, and plans, can be used in a contemporary deliberative and collaborative mode of planning.

What Are Scenarios?

Scenarios are stories about how the world changes and how it will be changing at some future time. Scenarios include the identification of issues and forces shaping communities through conversations with and about multiple actors intersecting with their communities. By comparing scenarios, we might discover that we prefer one scenario to the others. This preference does not, however, imply that we can choose one scenario and ignore the others, because the scenarios are not completely within our control.

Myers and Kitsuse (2000) advocated a focus on the future and introduced to the planning literature the work of business-based scenario planners. Avin and Dembner (2001) suggested ways to bring scenario planning into comprehensive planning. Scenario planning is best described as a way of thinking about the future without trying to predict it. Scenario planning produces a set of scenarios and uses them to rehearse future decision making to reflect on possible action. A set of scenarios includes structurally different, but plausible ways that futures may unfold (Avin and Dembner 2001; Heijden 1996; Myers and Kitsuse 1999). Individually, a single scenario may reflect one possible future. Together, the scenarios in a set demonstrate the multiplicity, complexity, and unpredictability of forces shaping the futures of companies, cities, or nations.

Scenario planning roots run from the U.S. defense sector (Smith chapter 5). Strategists initially employed scenario planning in the mid-twentieth century to improve decision-making strategies related to weapons technology (Xiang and Clarke 2003). Scenario planning gained notoriety when Shell Oil Company used scenario planning techniques and, as a result, more successfully navigated the 1970's dramatic drop in worldwide oil prices than its counterparts (Schwartz 1996). Today, scenario planning is a common business practice.

In the field of urban planning, conventional practice often utilizes scenarios, but in a preferred scenario selection mode, as described in figure 1.1. A somewhat different conception of scenario planning than presented in the business literature, this mode of practice represents a scenario as a state at a future time as imagined in the present. Building scenarios in this situation often includes some type of forecasting combined with visioning and, as Moore (chapter 2) describes, creates a blurry line between scenarios and other futures tools.

Yet, a scenario is distinguishable from a vision and forecast in two ways. First, a scenario is a possible future. A scenario need not be desirable, thus it is not a vision, nor likely, thus not a forecast. Second, a scenario emphasizes a pro-

cess of change, not just a point in the future. In figure 1.1, the preferred scenario selection mode of practice represented a scenario as a state at a future time as imagined in the present. In contrast with figure 1.1, in figure 1.2 a scenario is represented as a pattern of change over time (a wavy line distinct in pattern from other lines in the scenario set) beginning from the present and continuing into the future. Scenario planning in this form emphasizes processes of change, relies on a set of scenarios as a way of thinking about futures, and expects planners and their constituencies to use a set of scenarios while acting now and moving into the future (Smith chapter 5).

This reconceptualization away from preferred scenario selection shifts scenario planning toward its roots in business practice. Certainly, scenario planning practices in different sectors will vary. Smith (chapter 5) considers similarities and differences between scenario planning in the private and public sectors. In public planning situations, Avin (chapter 6) suggests using scenario planning when the futures are unclear, when there are a number of groups with disparate interests, when significant change is taking place or likely to occur, and when planning for at least a ten-year period. Cummings (chapter 12) demonstrates that such scenarios can be effective in influencing public discussion about futures.

Expanding the use of scenarios from simple preference selection among multiple scenarios to creating and maintaining multiple plausible narratives about the uncertain future allows planners to explore the range of possibilities scenario planning offers. Planners can employ scenarios as a way of discovering unknown or poorly understood interrelationships or use scenarios to engage broader public input into planning processes. Planners can make use of scenarios to help differing interest or social groups understand one another's experiences in a particular place and their concerns and ideas about the future, as Zapata (chapter 13) articulates through the stories of change that fictional characters experience in various scenarios. Harwood (chapter 7) describes the impact of scenarios when they reflect tangible distinctions between the choices communities make now and the often unexpected impact these decisions have in the future.

The distinction between the use of scenarios in current planning practice or a more fully adopted use of scenario planning might be summarized as follows: In current practice we pretend we can choose with certainty and control a future and work toward it (the preferred scenario). In fully adopting scenario planning ideas we acknowledge that the future cannot be selected with certainty. We keep multiple scenarios in the mix so that we can plan and act in the face of multiple futures. This transition is not an easy one and it may not work in all urban planning situations. Still, the most significant contribution from scenario planning to urban planning is that it encourages the consideration of multiples (futures, viewpoints, ideas), and this opportunity has yet to be fully realized.

What Are Plans?

Plans are information about intentions and actions in relation to other possible actions and expectations about variables we cannot control.

Community members often ask what is the plan? Citizens want to know what the city, county, corporation, or developer is going to do, even if their intent is to oppose the plan. They want the plan to be fixed, completed, certain, and clear so that they can be sure that actions and intents of others will be predictable, both for argument and in realization (Moore chapter 2; Grant chapter 3). For instance, the city wants to know what the regional transportation plan is and the regional transportation agency wants to know what the city's plan is. In this view there can be only one chosen plan, at least by any one entity, and plans that overlap in scope should be made consistent with each other. Plans as certain, singular visions can play particular roles in influencing the future (Neuman 1997; and chapter 8), but plans also play other roles in processes where multiple forecasts, scenarios, and actors are also in play (Hopkins 2001b; Neuman 1998a).

Building most directly on the work for the 1929 Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs (Johnson 1996), during the 1960s and 1970s the approach to plans and forecasts became intertwined in a particular way. Belief in the ability of predictive models to adequately account for future changes in communities created an environment where technologically rational planning fully emerged. Here, plans relied on models of how a community's demographic, economic, and fiscal conditions would change. Business-as-usual trends were forecasted. Planners offered strategic recommendations to respond to these changes and remedy undesired environmental, economic, and social conditions. The effects of the plan's proposed actions were forecasted with the same models and shown to be worth doing. This process is the one diagrammed as plan making in figure 1.1.

Enabling legislation for planning by local governments in the United States has focused largely on the role of plans as backing for instruments of regulation, especially zoning (Pelham 2005). If a plan is primarily the explanation and justification for a pattern of land use regulations, then the plan should be clear about why that pattern is in the community's interests and how that pattern was derived through expertise and analysis (Mandelker 1976; Sullivan 2005). The plan should be stable over time and consistent in its treatment of development proposals. It should be formally adopted by the council (Kent 1964), and it should be hard to change without clear justification. In such roles, a plan can become nearly as legally binding as the zoning regulation itself. A plan-making process as described in figure 1.1 would make sense for this specific purpose for a single jurisdiction. But this view is insufficient to encompass all the kinds of planning that occur and that are valuable in shaping our futures.

In contrast, inspirational plans as visions for the future are typically created beyond the scope of authority of a zoning jurisdiction. Imagination and daring in combination with analysis, rather than consistency and clear backing, are highly valued (Isserman 1985; Myers and Kitsuse 2000; Wachs 2001). Passionately envisioned futures are a means of shifting the focus from the present and individual interests to the future and community interests (Myers chapter 4). This view tends also, however, to focus on one future of one group, without acknowledging the complexity within and among such futures.

As it became clear that predictive techniques failed to account adequately for the complexity of changes shaping neighborhoods, cities, and regions, planners recognized that separating the tasks of forecasting and plan making and relying on distinct expertise resulted in plans with insufficient complexity to cope with the complexity of the world being planned. Although one response was to reject completely the possibility and desirability of plans as effective tools (Lindblom 1959), another response was to build a richer notion of the integration of forecasting and plan making. Attitudes about the kind of order planning activities should encompass slowly changed. Grant (1994a, 37) richly articulates: “We may not find syllogistic reasoning in the logic of planning activities, but we can discover a cultural logic that orders planning discourse.”

Sets of plans can cope with the complexity of urban development processes. The systems view of planning popular in the 1960s (Friend and Jessop 1969; Harris 1960; McLoughlin 1969) was a critique of the concept of end-state plans as insufficient to control a complex system, but was largely rejected in part, perhaps, because of its inability to frame planning as an activity of sufficient complexity. A systems view should not put planning outside and controlling the system, but rather as one of many activities within a system. It should acknowledge and represent many plans, many actors, continuity over time, and deliberative decisions (Hopkins 2001b). It is then possible to imagine forecasts from urban development modeling, scenarios written as narrative stories, and concerted actions through envisioned futures as complementary activities in a planning process (Couclelis 2005).

If plans are conceived as information that is useful in making interdependent decisions within a particular cultural context, then plans can incorporate uncertainty and contingency and thus incorporate forecasts and scenarios. Such plans are represented in figure 1.2 as a very simple decision tree. And these plans are embedded in other planning activities at a level of complexity impossible to represent directly in the diagram. Forecasts no longer occur prior to plans, but are embedded in them to run live for given decision-making tasks. Rather than reading a plan, we can imagine “running” a plan in a process analogous to running a piece of software or rehearsing a play. Rather than merely referring to a plan when trying to decide what to do, or making yet another plan, we can use plans with forecasting or scenario tools to update, elaborate, more closely specify, or change ideas.

What Are Projects?

Projects are concrete proposals for action: a highway, a park acquisition, a jobs program, a tax increment finance district, an affordable housing ordinance requiring a portion of affordable housing in each development, or a new urbanist gated community. Projects are within the grasp, the capabilities to imagine and to implement, of one or a few actors—an agency, municipality, developer, or coalition.

Projects often are the focus of advocacy, debate, conflict, and fundraising, long before they are fully designed or engineered, much less built (Grant chapter 3). Projects can be imagined as one thing, even though there may be many parts. This memorable concreteness makes them excellent shapers of attention in debate. A

proposed interchange improvement east of Urbana, Illinois, has been the focus of conflict for more than a decade (Hopkins chapter 14). Thus, in figure 1.2, projects (diamonds) occur as the basis for contingent forecasts, as ideas for engaging the future, and as projects to get built.

A project proposal is often the trigger for use of plans as a basis for review or reaction, or the trigger for creation of new plans. Project proposals prompt forecasts of their effects from the perspectives of various actors. A plan is about more than one project and indicates how these projects relate to each other and to other actions and changes in context. Projects can be evaluated for robustness across a set of scenarios or be embedded in the narrative of a particular scenario. In a scenario, a proposed light-rail project might become a built project that sustains or conflicts with the unfolding story line. In widespread transportation planning practices in the United States, plans and improvement programs are framed as sets of related projects constrained by a budget (Moore chapter 2).

Projects often play the role of solutions being sold to solve apparently salient issues, as described in Cohen, March, and Olsen (1972), Hopkins (2001b), and Kingdon (1984). A new bridge across the Mississippi at St. Louis would increase development potential in Illinois (Deal and Pallathucheril chapter 11). A third airport south of Chicago would enable the city to maintain its world-class status, or undermine the political strength of the City of Chicago, depending on where you stand. A light-rail system, a ring road, an interchange, a new urbanist development, a mixed-use development, a baseball stadium, a housing linkage program are all projects, and any one of these could become a focus of attention in local discussions about the future.

The diagram in figure 1.2 emphasizes the interactions among and complexity of forecasts, scenarios, plans, and projects as tools for engaging our futures, addressing some of the concerns about the present-day modes of practice described in figure 1.1. It lacks, however, two crucial components: (1) recognition that there are many different actors making plans; and (2) recognition that planning has been going on, is going on, and will happen again in the future. For that, we must begin to think of using our planning tools in continuing, deliberative practice among multiple actors.

USING PLANNING TOOLS IN CONTINUING, DELIBERATIVE PRACTICE AMONG MULTIPLE ACTORS

Reframing planning as continuing, deliberative practice among multiple actors is not easy. Conventional roots run deep in practice. Consider the traditional claims of need for forecasts, scenarios, plans, and projects:

“We need a forecast. We need to know what is going to happen.”

“We need some scenarios. We need to consider possible futures.”

“We need a plan. We need to decide what we will try to make happen.”

“We need a project. We need to focus on something we can do.”

The usual response to these needs is to find someone, an expert, who knows how to create them. We look for someone who has professional expertise devel-

oped through textbook knowledge about how to project a number representing the future, write a story about the future, describe a set of desired outcomes or effective actions, or design and manage a particular project.

Forecasters focus on how to predict accurately with persuasive theoretical mechanisms particular, well-defined measures such as population, jobs, economic measures of production, air quality, demand for housing, demand for transportation, and demand for water. Their success is in creating forecasts of increasing disaggregation and accuracy, in delivering forecasts to clients with sufficient lead time to permit them to act, and in interpreting the implications if their forecasts turn out to be correct.

Scenario writers focus on scenarios as creative, grounded explanations of change, developed through concerted interaction with constituencies as sources of knowledge and legitimation. Their success is in creating scenarios that attract the most publicly visible leaders of localities as participants and implicit advocates.

Planners focus on making plans that meet federal, state, and local requirements for what plans should do and salient paradigms for the substance of what ideas and objectives plans should contain. Their success is in making specific recommendations for action and depicting results of these actions in plans that will plausibly inspire and motivate concerted efforts to move toward them.

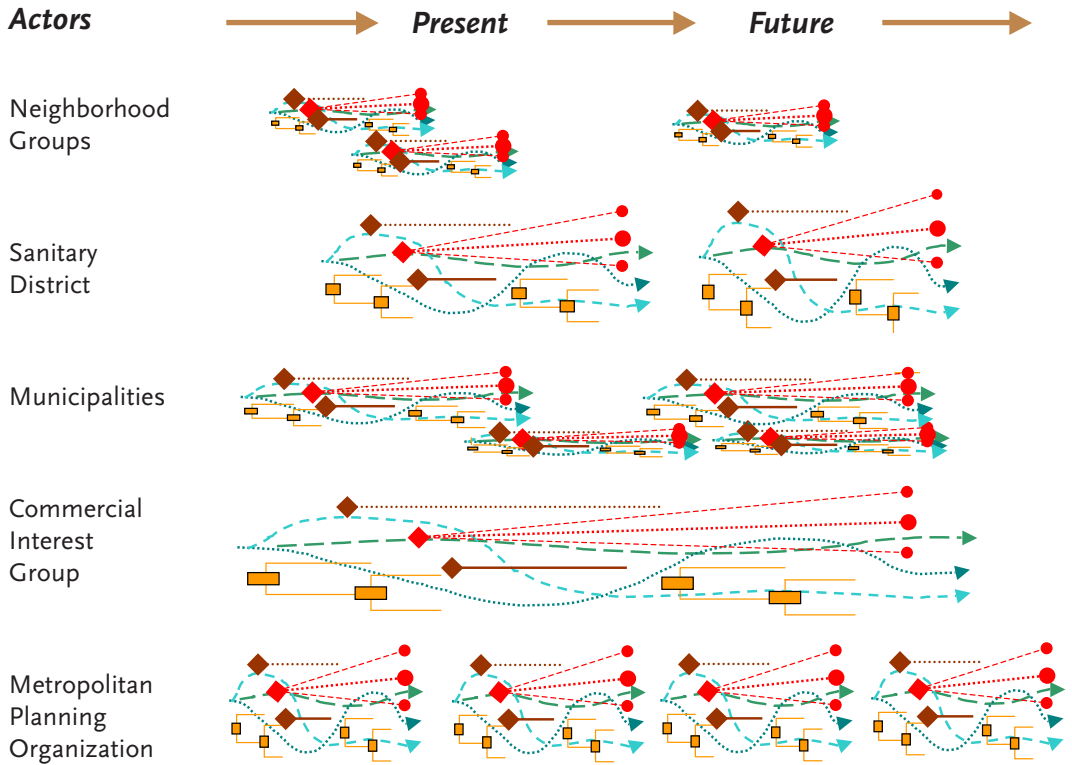
Project designers focus on elaborating the details of a proposal for action such as designing a building, a road project, a financial prospectus, or a social program. Then project managers focus on getting the project built or implemented. For the designer, success is a project that works well and wins rave reviews. For the manager, success is getting the project done on time and within budget.

This attitude of strong reliance on expertise to make forecasts, scenarios, plans, and projects has two important ramifications. First, it focuses on getting forecasts, scenarios, plans, or projects made, not on using them to engage the future. It might be taken to imply that the same experts who create forecasts, scenarios, plans, and projects also know how to *use* them and are involved with *using* them. Yet, in the descriptions above, the same expert rarely implements ideas, makes decisions, takes action, or addresses conflict. There is nothing self-evident about what to do with these tools or how to use them once made. Presently, we overvalue expertise in creating forecasts, scenarios, plans, and projects, and undervalue learning how to use them.

Second, this attitude focuses on making forecasts, scenarios, plans, and projects in a set time period and without constituent participation. Engaging our futures requires knowledge and skills with which planners and their constituents can collaborate in using these tools while enacting their futures. It ignores the possibility that these futures tools might be useful in continuing, deliberative engagement in the future by multiple actors.

Figure 1.3 adds two crucial aspects lacking in figure 1.2: (1) recognition that there are many different actors making plans; and (2) recognition that planning has been going on, is going on, and will happen again in the future. Figure 1.3 thus reframes planning activities as continuing, deliberative practices among multiple

FIGURE 1.3
Using Forecasts, Scenarios, Plans, and Projects in Continuing, Deliberative Practice Among Multiple Actors



actors. The many instances of the planning-activities diagram repeated in figure 1.3 from figure 1.2 are stretched or compressed to indicate variations in time and geographic or functional scope. The time dimension should distinctly represent revision intervals of plans and horizons of plans, but the diagram is already at the edge of being too complex for comprehension. These three significant, yet often abstract, concepts—continuity, multiplicity, and deliberation—will help constituents and their planners engage their futures together, and they warrant further attention.

Continuity refers to the idea that planners should keep planning and using planning techniques, even when the planning process, according to conventional thinking, is complete. Continuity stands in opposition to the loathed plan-as-artifact sitting on a shelf, collecting dust after its successful creation. Traditional discussions on forecasts, scenarios, plans, and projects focus on how to carry out a task that is completed once the forecast is made (Klosterman 1990), the scenario created (Avin and Dembner 2001), or the plan adopted (Kaiser, Godschalk, and Chapin 1995). These discussions describe planning practices as if each separable

task could be completed at a point in time for a future point in time. That is the frame implied in figure 1.1.

The frame offered in figure 1.3 is fundamentally different. Rather than the present as a point in time and the future as a point in time with relationships between them, figure 1.3 includes time in the past without specific limit, futures tools used in planning at many times, and futures as continuing in time. This implies an image of planners, consultants, and community members continually engaged in conversation, reflection, and action, using information conceptually equivalent to the content of plans while deciding what to do.

Providing this information in ways that defy shelving defends against failure to use futures tools and enables deliberative use. Discussions of deliberation and building relationships generally appear in scholarly work on the process part of planning. These scholars focus on how attitudes and choices are shaped and made (Forester 1999; Hoch 1994; Innes 1998), which should be applied both in making forecasts, scenarios, plans, and projects (Hopkins chapter 14) and in using them (Grant chapter 3). Neuman (chapter 8) emphasizes a culture of planning that implies deeply embedded, continuing attitudes to the uses of planning.

Multiplicities include many voices, many possible futures, and many techniques for coping with the world. Such multiplicity can be overwhelming. In practice, planners contend with multiple issues, forces, and competing interests. They rely on concepts, tools, and techniques to understand and act in the face of conflicting desires and unforeseen events as they address the diversity of interests in the present day.

Each row in figure 1.3 represents a different actor or type of actor; real cases will have many more. Many of these actors make plans with different temporal scopes (horizontal dimension) and functional or geographic scopes (vertical dimension). These scopes, indeed, usually overlap, but only partially and imperfectly, both functionally and geographically.

The futures tools discussed here engage planners in thinking about the multiplicity of plausible futures. As any given community plans, the understanding that there are various plausible futures and that a future cannot be achieved simply by choosing it challenges human desires for certainty and control. Figure 1.3 encapsulates the messiness of planning activities into icons so as to show that there are multiple actors—differences in interests, authority, influence, community identity, geographic scope—who are both planning about their actions and acting. When plausible futures are associated with decisions made today to help people cope with their fear of uncertainty and desire to control all situations, planners provide decision makers and community members with better insights into engaging their futures. Constituencies and their planners are empowered to act, using their abilities to influence and shape their futures without becoming discouraged by the limits of these abilities.

The examples provided in the following chapters help planners consider various interpretations of planning in multiplicity. Multiplicity acknowledges membership in various and shifting social groups while also recognizing each person

as an individual. There is a long history of pluralism in political theory, which emphasizes the priority of deliberative process across differences among individuals over an a priori identification of the common good or a unitary community (Dahl and Lindblom 1953; Hurley 1989). Davidoff (1965) argues that different interests should be intentionally represented through advocacy so that capacity to participate is more equal. Sandercock (2004), drawing on Young (1990), argues for a politics of difference where multiple perspectives, knowledge, and ideas from various societal vantage points are represented. In this view, cities are seen as places of multiculturalism in which planners work rather than places with differences to be resolved. In this book Myers (chapter 4) calls for common community vision to resolve individualism while Cummings (chapter 12) shows the value of multiple scenarios and Zapata (chapter 13) calls for opportunities for multiple voices to be heard.

Accepting that there is no perfect forecast, no capability to achieve a future simply by choosing it, no single plan, and no foolproof charted course of action in choosing projects forces planners to engage in a deliberative practice (Forester 1999). A planner cannot simply run a single statistical analysis for future housing needs and come up with the right answer. Rather, the deliberative planner utilizes sets of analyses to prompt information from constituents and to influence decision makers, offering insights on present-day housing needs and possible future changes. Moore (chapter 2), Avin (chapter 6), Harwood (chapter 7), Isserman (chapter 9), Klosterman (chapter 10), and Deal and Pallathucheril (chapter 11) all describe tools and processes put to work through deliberation. Figure 1.3 tries to capture the messiness, complexity, and uncertainty that deliberative planners face.

CONCLUSION

The following chapters provide specific ideas and examples of how planners and community members can use these tools more effectively. In the concluding chapter we attempt to capture some of these ideas in the form of a request for proposals (RFP). We selected an RFP as a means of summarizing because it is the usual way of framing a scope of work when seeking the services of planning consultants. In that chapter we draw from the characterizations of current planning practices to create a current practices RFP. Then we present another RFP, dubbed the Engaging the Future RFP, which is intended as a model for improved practices drawn from ideas in this book.

Such innovative practices require planners to function as coactors in their communities. The planner does not simply offer a single recommendation, safely removed from deliberation. Instead, planners actively converse with other planners, government employees, elected officials, stakeholder groups, and the public at large about various forecasts, scenarios, plans, and projects. Through deliberation, planners utilize these concepts, tools, and techniques to act within a set of decisions with the intention of spurring future, well-guided action.