

“Why all the Conflict?”



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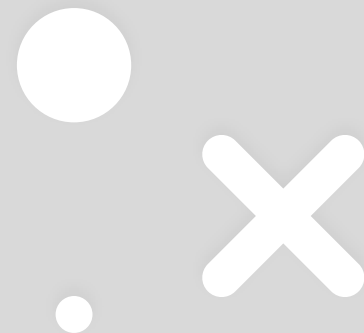




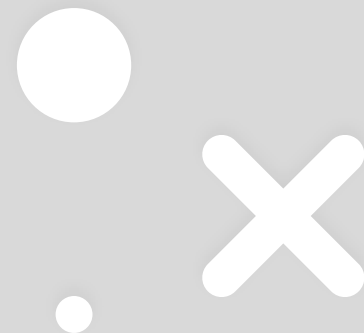
Why All the Conflict?

Session Outline

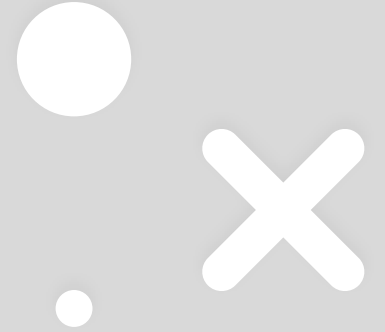
- + Brief introduction to conflict
- + Origins of planning conflict
- + Discussions
- + Closing Remarks



What is one word you think of when you think of conflict? (Popcorn)



Who has experienced conflict in your work?



Who has experienced conflict in your
personal life?

Conflict just is

That's why we need to talk about—and
plan for—conflict

What is conflict?

The intersection of different needs, wants, or concerns that are in tension with each other and not easily reconciled

Conflict just is

Conflict can be
destructive if poorly
dealt with

Conflict can be
productive and
generative if skillfully
dealt with

How parties deal with
conflict will determine
whether it becomes
productive or
destructive

When conflict
becomes destructive,
we call it a “dispute”

Ways of dealing with conflict

Conversation in
the hot tub



War

Unproductive ways of dealing with conflict



Avoiding

Fighting

War

Arguing

Violence

What is conflict competence?

The ability to deal with conflict
skillfully
(i.e., to make conflict productive - and
not destructive)

This session:

Talk about origins of conflict in planning + engage you in talking about how you are experiencing conflict in your work

Danya - afternoon session (3:45-5:00pm):

Introduction to concepts and skills to help you productively navigate conflict

Bruce - afternoon session (3:45-5:00pm):

I'm biased, but I'm trying not to be

Why all the Conflict? The Origins of Planning Conflict

**“Conflict is inevitable in
community planning”
(American Planning
Association [APA], 2025)**



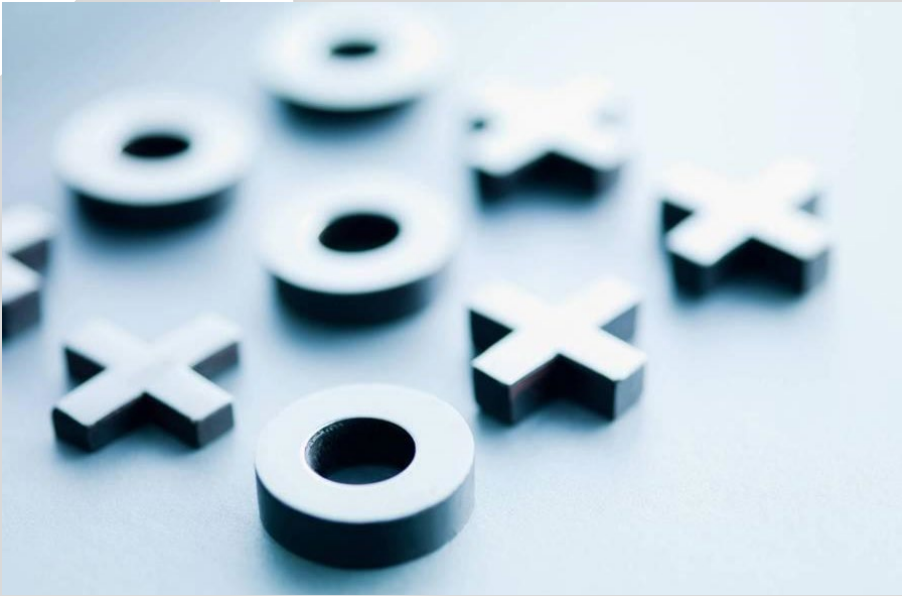
WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER TO BE THE "BEST" DEFINITION OF PLANNING FROM THE FOLLOWING?



WHAT ARE THE PURPOSES OF PLANNING?



WHAT SHOULD BE PLANNING'S OUTCOMES OR PRODUCTS



Some Origins of Planning Conflicts

Interpersonal

Disputes between individuals or small groups based on disagreements. Often very emotional and personalized.

Development (or Change Process) Push-backs

Community resistance to various planning matters, including general plan contents and priorities, resource allocations, land use and structure incompatibilities, and local negative impacts created by regional, state, or federally required facilities. Impacts are localized, but benefits are wide.

Historical Injustices

Experiences with past planning actions that ignored or disadvantaged people or places.



Additional Origins of Planning Conflicts

Planning's

- Definition
- Purposes
- Goals/Values



“Planning” – Its Definition Planning is . . .

“Controlling the decisions of many people, with different interests and purposes, to secure a premeditated effect” (Wildavsky, 1971).

“The ability to control the future consequences of present actions” (Wildavsky, 1971).

“An intervention with an intention to alter the existing course of events” (Fainstein and DeFilippis 2016).

“An ethically informed approach intervening in how society relates to the environment in which it is embedded” (Lennon, 2017).

Conceiving of a future better than the present, but at least no worse (Campbell, 2003).



“Planning” – Its Definition

Planning is . . .



Hoch et al. (2000) saw that planning was becoming more expansive in its outlook. “Planners have not abandoned the traditional emphasis on land use, but their work now reaches far beyond regulatory concerns.”

Planning addresses numerous community issues (Ozawa and Seltzer, 1999). They saw planning to be more expansive than only land use.

Planning's – Purposes, Goals, Outcomes

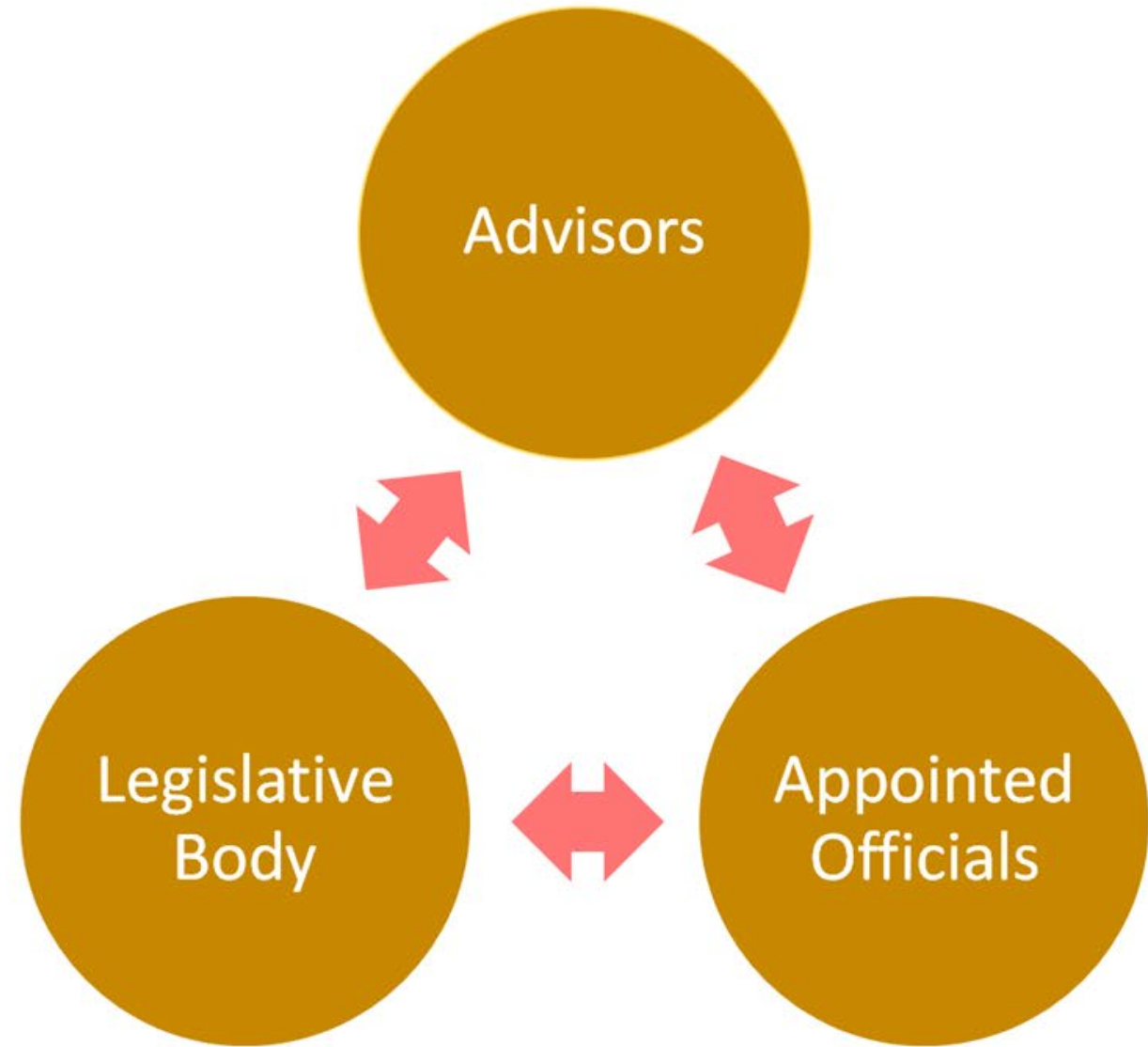
“To maximize the health, safety, and economic well-being of residents in ways that reflect the unique needs, desires, and culture of those who live and work within the community” (APA, retrieved February 2024 from <https://www.planning.org/educators/whatisplanning/>).

“A spatial process that maximizes the well-being of community residents” (APA, 2024).

“Ethical actions that identify and achieve the future needs of a geographic area, including the needs of its existing and future inhabitants and its natural and built environments (Parker, 2024).

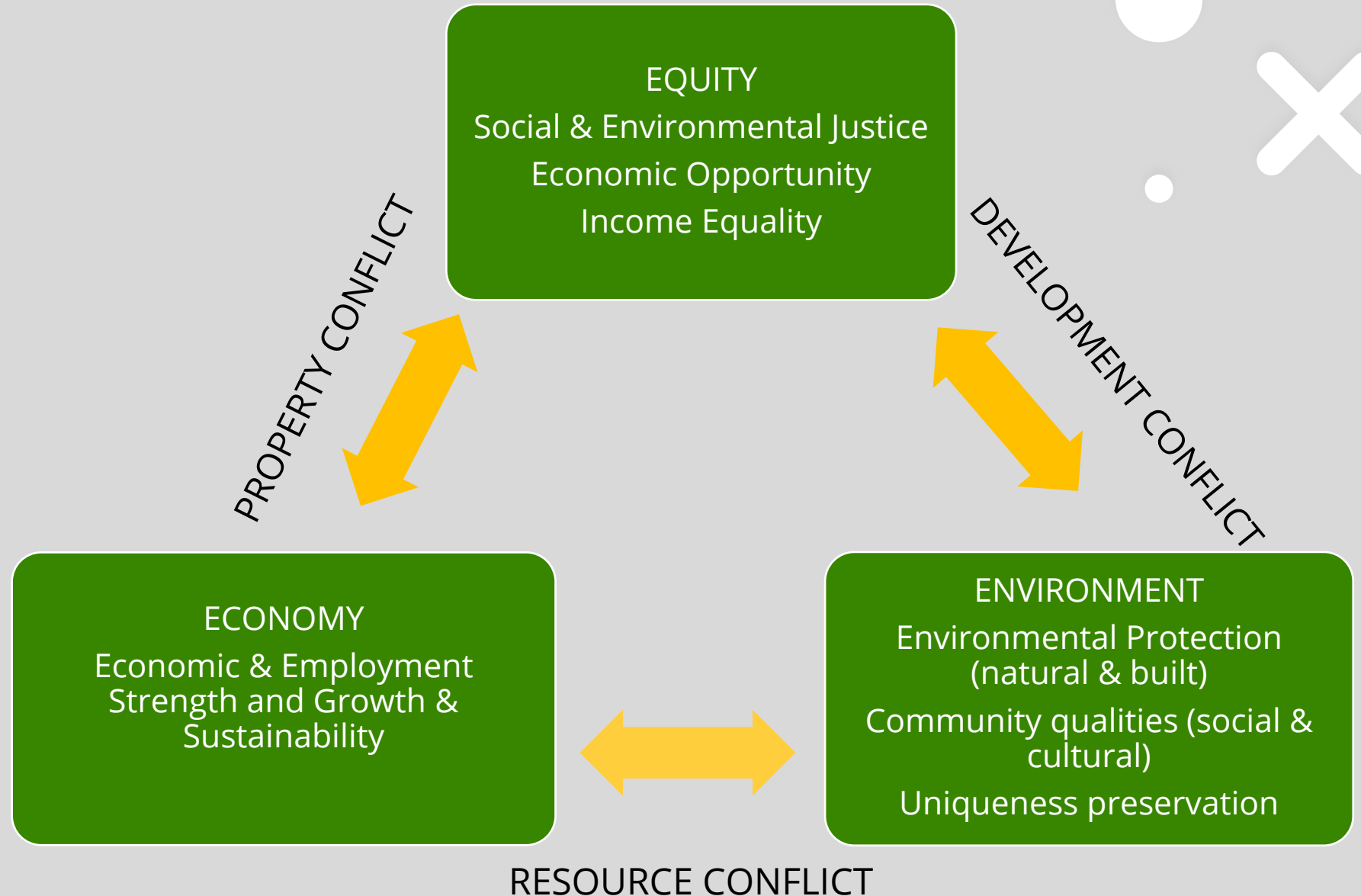


Locations for Planning Conflict



Planning Goals

Parker, 2025, after Campbell,
1996

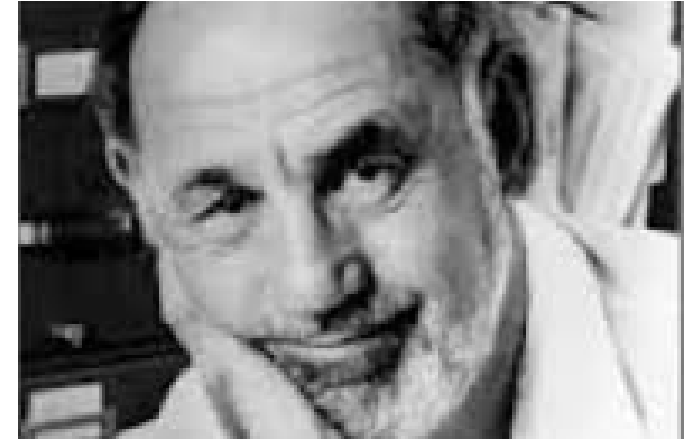


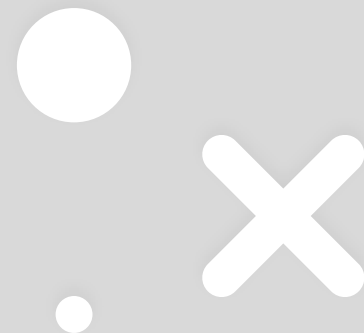
Planning's – Outcomes (Context dependent & achievable)

Planning, and the work of planners, is futile if it can not deliver any of its proclaimed and observable results (Wildavsky, 1971).

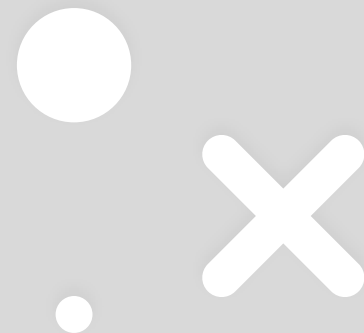
The real test for planning is for planning to show successes because of planning, rather than the “random occurrences” that would happen anyway (Wildavsky, 1971).

If planning cannot articulate its desired outcomes and deliver on those outcomes, then why plan (Lennon, 2017)?

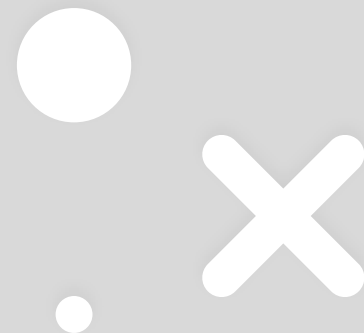




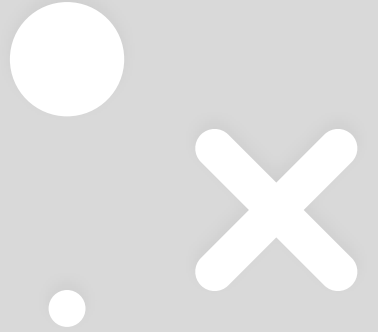
Questions or observations so far




Who thinks conflict (by my definition) is
inevitable in planning?



Why?

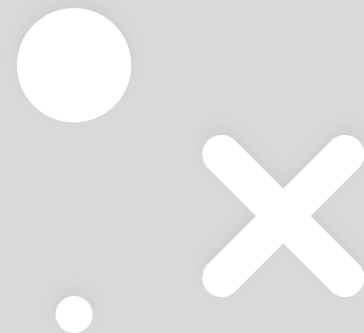


Conflict happens when some problem
brings us into interdependence and we
don't see eye to eye about it



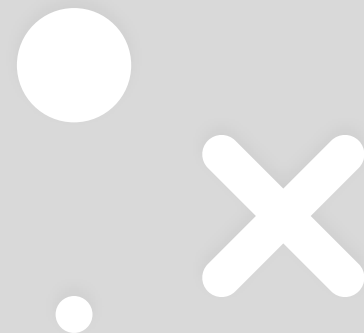
The question isn't how do you avoid
conflict or make it go away

The question is how do you harness the
productive potential of conflict to solve
problems and create good outcomes



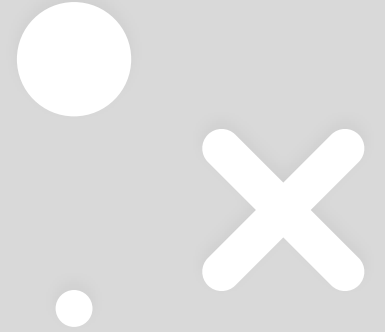
Problem:

When reality doesn't meet expectations



“Probletnity”

In every challenge, there is an opportunity



Good outcome:

One that meets involved parties' core
needs and solve the problems

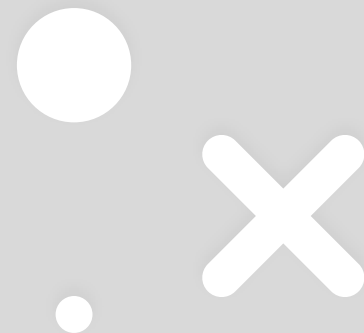
Practice effective listening:

- *Listen to understand*
- *Ask questions to help each other explore*

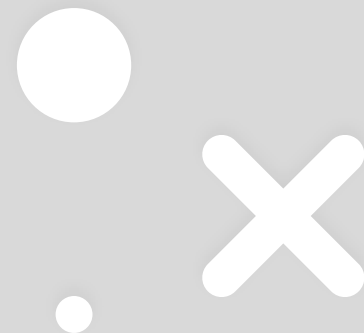
Discussion

On own for 3 minutes, then groups of 3-4

- What is a key conflict in your community/work?
 - What is the “probletnuity” around which people have conflict? (You may need to really think about this!)
- What would be a truly good outcome for this situation?
 - What are people’s key needs and concerns related to this situation?
 - How could they be addressed?



Insights we all can learn from?



Q&A and discussion



Want to learn how to productively
navigate conflict?

Come to Danya's 3:45pm
Introduction to Conflict Competence Mini-
Training

Wallace Stegner Center EDR Program Resources

Danya.rumore@law.utah.edu

www.law.utah.edu/stegner-center/edr/

EDR Blog



Free tools and
resources



Collaboration
Certificate
Course



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