



Planning in Plain English: Writing Tips for Urban and Environmental Planners

Natalie Macris

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The ability to communicate effectively is the most valuable skill any employee can bring to the job. That's even more true for planners, who must frequently convey an abundance of very complex, technical information to people who don't share their planning background or vocabulary.

Unfortunately, the language in planning documents frequently is so convoluted, bureaucratic, and padded that its meaning is lost or completely misunderstood. Here is help for planners who write.

In *Planning in Plain English: Writing Tips for Urban and Environmental Planners*, Natalie Macris draws from more than a decade of editing experience to explain how to craft clear, understandable, and highly readable planning documents. She suggests ways to overcome planners' most common writing foibles: acronyms, jargon, and overuse of the passive voice. And she provides handy lists to transform mushy nouns into powerful verbs, pare down bloated sentences, and translate "bureaucratese" into everyday language. She even includes practice exercises designed to help you recognize and overcome bad writing habits.

But even the best writing skills won't help if your document is organized poorly and aimed at the wrong audience. Macris also explains why it's essential to know who your readers are before you start writing and how to organize your work so that it will be easy to understand and use.

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