Dots crying in the wilderness
Planning gets lost in translation from urban to rural

by Jean Garren

Roughly a quarter of the nation’s population lives in rural areas. Actually, most people think that roughly three-quarters of the nation’s population live in urban areas, for that is how the data is normally presented. Thus, we in that “other” category conceptually disappear behind rings of suburbs, walls of skyscrapers, miles of asphalt, and inner-city chaos. Rural America comprises a racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse -- and largely ignored -- invisible minority under siege.

Perhaps the operative word is “invisible,” for rural America is not labeled on maps; it is, when one thinks about it, only noticeable by absence. A tiny dot -- or no dot at all -- may mark a rural center whose constituency lies scattered in many directions for many miles, off the highways on rough dirt roads, behind hills or at sparse intervals across an empty horizon. Because it is invisible, rural America is at the mercy of the collective imagination and myth-formation of the urban majority, for, despite its invisibility, rural America is highly visible. Every Dances with Wolves, every 4x4 crashing through the empty terrain of a television commercial, every rugged lonesome handsome Marlboro man, every “Colorado Rocky Mountain High,” every tourism Get-Away-From-It-All brochure, sends the message that out “there,” where people are not, is where one wants to be. I am bemused by neo-Victorian architecture and neo-traditional town planning, and tend to agree with those who consider them manifestations of an urban wish to escape to sometime past, anywhere else. And escaping to rural America they are, in droves. It’s the “quality of life.” It’s not, however, the way of life. I confess to living in an attractive, rather isolated county of still less than 18,000 people. Originally settled around 1875, it has five incorporated towns (the core with a population of around 8,000, the peripheral rest smaller by great magnitudes) and a quota of “bink and you’ve missed it” unincorporated dots. I confess to tenanting from a rancher and a coal miner whose family homesteaded here eighty-some years ago. And I confess to believing that between those who have lived their generations on the land and those who have not, there are fundamentally different ways of being in the world. Where I live -- and, from having read journal articles and APA newsletters from around the country, elsewhere as well -- the two are becoming less and less compatible, more and more at conflict. Planning literature speaks much about preserving the form of rural life -- cluster development, open space preservation, and other “design solutions” -- and little about preserving its substance. Even the word “rural” itself has defied academic definition; nor do traditionally rural people tend to define themselves as “rural.” From out here, then, it often seems as
Confronting Globalization: The Role of Progressive Planners
Discussion Paper prepared for the Planners Network 96 Conference

by Tom Angotti

Thinking global these days can make you giddy.

All the progress made empowering communities and making national governments more responsible is threatened by the latest wave of globali-

zation. Giant transnations are moving capital around the globe at lightning speed, beyond the pale of government regulation and local accountability. This trend affects us all, from those who live in the North to those in the South. The same forces are at work around the world, and planning a more sustainable future will be necessary for all. But we have to go beyond this giddy outlook. Things are bad, but not that bad.

We are two decades into a new phase of globalization (it all began at least 150 years ago) and much remains to be done. The winds of change are blowing in the right direction, not in the wrong direction. The United Nations Conference on Human Settlements held in Istanbul in May 1996. During many of our previous conferences and ses-

sions, thousands of progressive organizations (NGOs) from around the world came together to pressure governments and interna-
tional agencies to pay attention to the needs of historically disad-

vantaged neighborhoods.

As a whole NGOs have helped to break the neo-liberal escape from government responsibility. But not all NGOs, and the policies they advocate, are progressive. Indeed, some of them help reinforce the neo-

liberal agenda of government downsizing by giving credence to the conser-
vative myth of self-help. They offer crutches for the weak and crutches for the dead.

There exists an alternative network of community-based organizations and planners that is helping to build community power, national reforms and global alternatives. We should join it. This is a loose network like Planners Network that brings together professionals and communities struggling for a better quality of life.

Globalization / continued from page 2

Global Action

There is a need for an alternative network of community-based organizations and planners that is helping to build community power, national reforms and global alternatives. We should join it. This is a loose network like Planners Network that brings together professionals and communities struggling for a better quality of life.

Urban development and planning in the U.S. are dominated by a pro-
growth mentality, spurred by the real estate market. Metropolitan growth is spurred to accommodate the private auto as the main mode of transportation. Urban sprawl consumes large amounts of land and encourages higher rates of energy consumption and waste than more compact forms of development. In large part because of its sprawl, metropolitan regions are the largest source of carbon dioxide in the world, and a major contributor to global warming.

Reliance on the auto not only wastes energy and pollutes the environ-

cement, but wastes human resources because people spend excessive time in traffic. In international fora, the U.S. is relatively closed to globali-
sation because of its reluctance to trade. Through highway and infra-
structure development, loan guarantees, and tax benefits, govern-
ment intervention in the U.S. is plentiful and favors the wealthy. The public-private partnerships favor the private; the public is usually the junior partner.

In reality, self-help is a survival strategy for the majority of the world's populations. It describes the way most poor people are forced to live because they don't have access to buy urban ser-

vices in the marketplace. It is telling that most progressive NGOs are in fact committed to political agendas that call for self-help but not for greater government aid to genuine efforts.

Decentralization and Local Control

Another crucial led by the U.S. is for decentralization and local gov-

ernment control. While real decentralization of power is surely needed everywhere, for the most part the U.S. and the global aid establishment pretend that reform in the national government means downsizing, privatization and withdrawal of assistance to low-income communi-

ties.

National / page 11

The Struggle for Our Cities: Putting the Urban Crisis on the National Agenda
Discussion Paper prepared for the Planners Network 96 Conference

by Peter Drieger

For years, urban scholars and activists warned that our cities were falling apart, that the clock was ticking to explode. When the Los Angeles riots erupted in April 1992 (the worst civil disorder in American histo-

ry) many hoped that it would catalyze a major national commitment to revitalize our cities in an urban Marshall Plan.

The timing seemed perfect. The Los Angeles riots coincided with the end of the Cold War. When the Berlin Wall fell, and the Soviet Union collapsed, there was much public discussion about the prospects for a "peace dividend" and the priorities and direction to long-term economic, social and political development.

But also at the impact of public policy, usually federal policy, on the conditions in our cities. We're all familiar with that thought. In the current era, far fewer government resources reach into our cities and pulled them into ruins. These included highway-building polices that opened up the hinterlands to sprawl and development; housing and tax policies that offered government-insured mortgages and tax breaks to whites in suburbs (but not in cities); and bulldoze urban renewal policies that destroyed working class neighborhoods, scattering their residents to blue-collar suburbs, to make way for downtown de-

velopment. Since the late 1970's, the federal government has been shrinking the social safety net. Most federal programs that serve cities -- whether health care, education, anti-poverty, public housing or transit -- have been cut back. Urban neighborhoods suffer from de-

tratic cuts. Revenue sharing. Subsidies. AFDC benefit levels.

There exists an alternative network of community-based organizations and planners that is helping to build community power, national reforms and global alternatives. We should join it.

This is a loose network like Planners Network that brings together professionals and communities struggling for a better quality of life.

The U.S. federal system is often seen as a model for decentralized gov-
ernment. Home rule is equated with democracy. Not discussed is how powerful central government policies support private growth. Nor are the racial and class divisions between central cities and suburbs that are reinforced by local home rule.

Local and national efforts to improve cities need to be informed by a global vision of urban development that is rooted in a new international agenda for decentralization and grassroots initiative. Progressive planners should find ways to support local efforts in community development and plan-
ing that are broad enough to break down national and global barriers. If we are not aware of the global trends and do not act to confront them, our local efforts can solidify the international structure of poverty and inequality.

Unsustainable Sprawled Growth

The urban agenda needs to be strongly linked with the global environ-

mental agenda by pointing to the wasteful process of urbanization prop-
agated in the West. This is an issue that planners should be especially concerned with for it directly connects the work we do in the U.S. to global challenges.

Urban development and planning in the U.S. are dominated by a pro-
growth mentality, spurred by the real estate market. Metropolitan growth is spurred to accommodate the private auto as the main mode of transportation. Urban sprawl consumes large amounts of land and encourages higher rates of energy consumption and waste than more compact forms of development. In large part because of its sprawl, metropolitan regions are the largest source of carbon dioxide in the world, and a major contributor to global warming.

Join and Build the Progressive Network

After Aflabast, new ways should be sought to build the network of pro-
gressive NGOs. Progressive planners in North America can play an important role in these efforts. We can question the behavior from the inside while building ties on the outside. We can learn from the experiences in countries, like Mexico and South Africa, where large coalitions of grassroots organizations play major roles in national deci-
sion-making. We can build ties to the women's, environmental and shel-

ter rights movements.

We can take some modest steps towards networking with progressive communities and planners in places close to home where we already have ties. A first priority should be to expand Network ties in Canada and Mexico. NN in the East Coast cities, the Caribbean, especially Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Jamaica and Cuba.

Tom Angotti is Co-Chair of Planners Network and will represent PN at the Habitat II Conference in Istanbul.
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Discussion Paper prepared for the Planners Network 96 Conference
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Thinking global thinking these days can make you giddy. All the progress we made empowering communities and making national governments more responsible is threatened by the latest wave of global-ization. Giant transnationalists are moving capital around the globe at lightning speed, beyond the pale of government regulation and local activism. The global teenagers--the Chinese, the Arabs, and their communities in the North; they pillage and pollute in the South. They seem to be accountable to no one. They are using new information technology to expand the global assembly line and conquer every corner of the earth without a fast food outlet and ATM.

The U.S. federal system is often seen as a model for decentralized government. Home rule is equated with democracy. Not discussed is how powerful central governments policy supports private growth. Nor are the racial and class divisions between central cities and suburbs that are reinforced by local home rule.

Local and national efforts to improve cities need to be informed by a global vision. We can use our knowledge for decentralization and grassroots initiative. Progressive planners should find ways to support local efforts in community development and planning that will broaden the social and political consciousness at the local and global levels. If we are not aware of the global trends and do not act to confront them, our local efforts can solidify the international structure of poverty.

Unsustainable Sprawl Growth

The urban agenda needs to be strongly linked with the global environmental agenda by pointing to the wasteful process of urbanization propagated in the West. This is an issue that planners should be especially concerned with for it directly connects the week with the weekend.

The stretching for Our Cities: Putting the Urban Crisis on the National Agenda
Discussion Paper prepared for the Planners Network 96 Conference
by Pierre Dreyer

For years, urban scholars and activists warned that our cities were on the verge of an urban crisis. The Los Angeles riots erupted in April 1992 (the worst civil disorder in American histo-ry) many hoped that it would catalyze a major national commitment to revitalize our cities -- an urban Marshall Plan. The timing seemed perfect. The Los Angeles riots coincided with the end of the Cold War. When the Berlin Wall fell, and the Soviet Union collapsed, there was much public discussion about the prospects for a "peace dividend." But priorities and allocations of resources were not the only issues. Moreover, the riots occurred in the midst of a national election for President and Congress. For a few weeks following the riots, America's urban crisis became a hot topic. But soon the plight of America's cities returned to political obscurity.

Urban Policy on the Margins

Today, more than four years after the L.A. riots, our urban crisis remains marginal to the political debate in this country. No other major industrial nation has allowed its cities to face the type of fiscal and social troubles confronting America's cities. Other industrial nations do not permit the level of urban dislocation and decay found in American cities. Compare, for example, cities in Canada -- which has a similar economy and distribution of wealth -- with our own. We see the conse-
quences every day, from the deadly levels of crime and violence, to the Third World levels of infant mortality, to the growing army of homeless people sleeping on park benches.

In seeking explanations for this condition, progressive scholars and activists tend to focus on large-scale economic forces. The globalization of the economy. The deindustrialization of our economy. The widening gap between rich and poor. The presence of racism, especially among lenders, landlords and renters.

We also look at the impact of public policy, usually federal policy, on the conditions in our cities. We're all familiar with that litany. In the postwar era, federal government policies routinized people out of cities and pulled them into suburbs. These included highway-building policies that opened up the outskirts to sprawling development and housing; tax policies that favored government-insured mortgages and tax breaks to whites in suburbs (but not in cities); and bulldoze urban renewal policies that destroyed working class neighborhoods, scattering their renters to blue-collar suburbs, making way for downtown renewal development. Since the late 1970's, the federal government has been shredding the social safety net. Most federal programs that serve cities -- whether for housing, health, education or transit subsidies -- have been cut drastically. Cutting services, squeezing government budgets, privatization and withdrawal of assistance to low-income communities.

National / page 11

Global Action

There now exists an alternative network of community-based organizations and planners that is helping to build community power, national and global alliances. And we should join it. This is a loose net-work like Planners Network that brings together professionals and com-munities struggling against displacement and eviction, for better hous- ing, health care, and education, and for a better quality of life. Part of this new network has participated in the Habitat II -- the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements held in Istanbul in May/June 1996. During over a year of preparatory conferences and ses-sions, thousands of grassroots organizations (NGOs) from around the world came together to pressure governments and interna-tional agencies to pay attention to the needs of historically disaffirm- ed neighborhoods.

As a whole NGOs have helped to brake the neo-liberal escape from government responsibility. But not all NGOs, and the policies they advocate, are progressive. Indeed, some of them help reinforce the neo-liberal agenda of government downsizing by giving credence to the conservative myth of self-help. They offer the "solutions" that are a riddle of the myth that unsuspected self-help is the solution to urban prob-lems.

The Myth of Self-Help

At international forums like Habitat II, the U.S. is a major advocate of self-help. The many grassroots efforts in the U.S. are often dismissed as part of the merit of local action. They glorify grassroots activism -- not to help empower the poor but to deny them any assistance from the power-ful. This is a cover for national government disinvestment, downsizing and derogulation. It takes the pressure off international lending agencies (which are dominated by the U.S.) to back government expenditures that benefit the poor. Many planners need to confront this distorted view both at home and abroad.

The U.S. advocates of local action leave out any mention of the history of U.S. government policies for urban development. Through highway and infrastructure development, loan guarantees, and tax benefits, govern-ment intervention in the U.S. is plentiful and favors the wealthy. The public-private partnerships favor the private; the public is usually the junior partner.

In reality, self-help is a survival strategy for the majority of the world's urban population. It describes the way most poor people are forced to be agents because they do not have alternatives to buy urban ser-vices in the marketplace. It is telling that most progressive NGOs are in fact committed to political agendas that call for not self-help but for greater government aid and greater efforts.

Decentralization and Local Control

Another crusade led by the U.S. is for decentralization and local gov-ernment control. While real decentralization of power is surely needed everywhere, for the most part the U.S. and the global aid establishment prefer to see urban government downsizing, privatization and withdrawal of assistance to low-income communi-ties.

Join and Build the Progressive Network

After Habitat, new ways should be sought to build the network of pro-gressive NGOs. Progressive planners in North America can play an active role in forging such an alliance. We can question the behavior of the inside while building ties on the outside. We can learn from the experiences in countries, like Mexico and South Africa, where large coalitions of grassroots organizations play major roles in national deci-sionmaking. We can build ties to the women's, environmental and shelter rights movements.

We can take some modest steps towards networking with progressive communities and planners in places close to home where we already have ties. A first priority should be to expand Network ties in Canada and Mexico. FTN on the East Coast could learn from grassroot efforts in the Caribbean, especially Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Jamaica and Cuba.

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**ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

- **Bay Area.** The National Economic Development and Law Center is starting the Community-Based Economic Development Support Collaborative (CEDSCo), a regional support program for Bay Area nonprofit community-based organizations on economic development activities. For more information contact the Centers, 2201 Broadway, Ste. 815, Oakland, CA 94612; 510/251-2600.


- **Arts.** A paper entitled “How Do the Arts Build Communities?” documents the projects that Peoples Housing, a Chicago organization, engaged in, including renovation of an old movie theater, and the Tile Project, in which youth from the neighborhood manufactured ceramic tiles for use in the Peoples Housing office and for sale to the public. It’s available on the internet at http://net.msu.edu/~urban/comm-org, or from Thomas Tresser, Arts Partners, 1150 N. Lake Shore Dr., #133C, Chicago, IL 60611; 312/320-1160.

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- **Reexamining Suburbs.** The Spring issue of Planning Commissioners Journal takes a look at “Centering our Suburbs,” examining how existing underutilized shopping areas can be converted into mixed-use centers that help reduce dependence on the automobile. It’s available for $45 for a 4-issue, 1-year subscription from PCI, PO Box 4295, Garrison, VT 05146.

- **North Carolina.** The 20th anniversary issue of Carolina Planning looks back at twenty years of North Carolina’s economic development policies, technology and planning, and the environment. It’s available for $6 from Carolina Planning, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Campus Box #1140, New East Building, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-1340.

- **Policy Organizing.** The Center for Community Change has published “How — and why — to influence Public Policy: An Action Guide for Community Organizations,” a special issue of their regular publication Community Change. The 40-page booklet is available for $5 from the Center for Community Change, 1000 Wisconsin Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20007.

- **Overthrowing Corporate Power.** The theme of the March/April issue of Grassroots Economic Organizing (GEO) Newsletter is “Making the 21st Century Ours,” and focuses on “winning back our planet from corporate domination. It features some words from Ralph Nader, a piece about the New Party, and resource listings for resisting and transforming the ‘corporate plutocracy.’” It’s available from GEO Newsletter, POB 5065, New Haven, CT 06523 for $5 per year.

- **Planning Awards.** The April issue of Planning, the American Planning Association’s monthly magazine, features descriptions of two dozen award-winning planning projects from around the country. It’s available from APA, 122 S. Michigan Ave., Ste. 1600, Chicago, IL 60603-6107, for $4.

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- **Supermarkets.** “No Place to Shop: Challenges & Opportunities Facing the Development of Supermarkets in Urban America” addresses industry considerations on doing business in the inner-city & concerns on improving food access for low-income persons. $20 from Public Voice for Food & Health Policy, 1101 14th St., NW, #110, Washington, DC 20005; 202/373-1840.

- **Comprehensive Community Building.** “Core Issues in Comprehensive Community-Building Initiatives,” Rebecca Stone, ed., is available from the Chapin Hall Center for Children, University of Chicago, 1313 E. 16th St., Chicago, IL 60637; 312/753-5900, rstone@chmll.sp.suchicago.edu

**May 1996**

**Sustainability.** The Earth Times, a semi-monthly newspaper published (advertising-free) by the Earth Times Foundation, features international news on issues of sustainable development, poverty, and the environment. It’s available for $36 per year from The Earth Times Foundation, 205 E. 42nd St., Ste. 1316, New York, NY 10017.

- **Green Cities.** “The City In Bloom: Creating Parks, Markets, Gardens & Other Green Spaces” is the theme of the May/June issue of The Neighborhood Works, available for $3.50 from TNW, 2125 W. North Ave., Chicago, IL 60647.


- **Open Space.** “Municipal Open Space Acquisition: Preparing and Funding Special Projects” will be offered by the Lincoln Land Use Institute of Land Policy on June 25 at the Sturbridge Host Inn in Sturbridge, MA. The program will examine innovative and conventional techniques for planning, funding and acquiring land for open space conservation. Registration is $55. For more information contact the Institute at 800/LAND-USE.

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- **Lead Poisoning.** Subscriptions to Lead Info are now available. This quarterly newsletter provides information to childcare and healthcare providers about current lead poisoning prevention activities and resources. To subscribe, send name, address, and affiliation to National Lead Information Center, 1019 19th St., NW, Ste. 401, Washington, DC 20036; 202/833-1071.

- **Sustainability.** Ed Talk is the new newsletter of Sustainable America, Contact them at 350 5th Ave., #3112, New York, NY 10118-3199; 212/239-4221; sustainer@iga.apc.org.

**Housing Advocates.** “1996 Advocates’ Resource Book” is available for $20 from the National Low Income Housing Coalition, 1012 14th St., NW, Washington, DC 20005; 202/662-1530.

- **Housing Organizing.** The March/April issue of Shelterforce: The Journal of Affordable Housing Strategies features articles about successful organizing campaigns, and how housing groups can make a difference in Campaign ‘96. Subscriptions are $18 for individuals, $30 for organizations, for a 6-issue, 1-year subscription, from Shelterforce, P.O. Box 3000, Dennisville, NJ 08214.

- **Housing Cooperatives.** The Hidden History of Housing Cooperatives, Allan Heskin and Jacqueline Leavitt, is available (ESB) from the Center for Cooperatives, UC Davis, California 95616; 915/752-2408.

- **Women’s Housing.** The Center for Community Change’s Spring Strategy Alert focuses on women’s housing issues, with articles from the McAuley Institute, a national, non-profit organization which assists local organizations in developing affordable housing projects. It’s available from the Center for Community Change, 1029 Vernon Ave., NW, Ste. 710, Washington, DC 20005; 202/628-2991.

- **Tax Credits.** PN’s Joe Guggenheim’s “Tax Credits for Low Income Housing: New Opportunities for Developers, Non-Profits and Communities Under Permanent Tax Act Provisions” is now in its ninth printing, and is available from Simon Publications, PO Box 229, Glen Echo, MD 20812; 301/320-5771. The softcover edition is $66 plus shipping, and the loose leaf edition with three supplements is $175 plus shipping.

- **Public Housing.** “Save the Brooke Amendment: Keep the Cap on Public Housing Rents” is a fact sheet and action kit available (likely free) from Deepak Bhargava, Center for Community Change, 1000 Wisconsin Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20007; 202/452-9519.

- **Housing and Children.** Housing America’s Future: Children At Risk,” by Tracy Kaufman (37 pp., 1996), is available ($25) from the National Low Income Housing Coalition, 1012 14th St. NW, #1200, Washington, DC 20005; 202/662-1530.

- **Housing Impacts.** “There Goes the Neighborhood? The Impact of Subsidized Multi-Family Housing on Urban Neighborhoods,” by Edward Goetz, Hin Kin Lam & Anne Heitlinger (94 pp., 1996), is available from the Ctr. for Urban & Regional Affairs, 333 HILL Center, 301-19th Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55405; 612/625-1551.
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**Housing Cooperatives.** The Hidden History of Housing Cooperatives, Allan Heskin and Jacqueline Leavitt, is available ($38) from the Center for Cooperatives, UC Davis, Davis California, 95616; 916/752-2408.

**Women’s Housing.** The Center for Community Change’s Spring Strategy Alert focuses on women’s housing issues, with articles from the McAuley Institute, a national, non-profit organization which assists local organizations in developing affordable housing projects. It’s available from the Center for Community Change, 1029 Vernon Ave., NW, Ste. 710, Washington, DC 20005; 202/628-2981.

**Tax Credits.** PW’er Joe Guggenheim’s “Tax Credits for Low Income Housing: New Opportunities for Developers, Non-Profits and Communities Under Permanent Tax Act Provisions” is now in its ninth printing, and is available from Simon Publications, PO Box 229, Glen Echo, MD 20812; 301/320-5771. The softcover edition is $66 plus shipping, and the loose leaf edition with three supplements is $175 plus shipping.

**Public Housing.** “Save the Brooke Amendment: Keep the Cap on Public Housing Rentals is a fact sheet and action kit available (likely free) from Deepak Bhargava, Center for Community Change, 1000 Wisconsin Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20007; 202/342-9519.

**Children and Housing.** “Children’s America: Future at Risk,” by Tracy Kaufman (37 pp., 1996) is available ($25) from the National Low Income Housing Coalition, 1012 14th St. NW, #1200, Washington, DC 20005; 202/662- 1530.

**Housing Impacts.** “There Goes the Neighborhood? The Impact of Subsidized Multi-Family Housing on Urban Neighborhoods,” by Edward Goetz, Hin Kin Lam & Anne Heitlinger (94 pp., 1996), is available from the Ctr. for Urban & Regional Affairs, 330 HH Center, 301-19th Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55455; 612/625-1551.
Gays and Lesbians in Planning. Gays and Lesbians in Planning (GALIP), a national network of 650 gay and lesbian planners and related professionals publishes a quarterly newsletter and sponsors networking functions at APA and other national events. They have about eight local chapters, including one in Washington, DC which sponsors discussions and tours. For more information contact Randy Gross, 1705 Lazer Pl., NW #402, Wash., DC 20009.


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Corporate Power: Tyranny of the Bottom Line: Why Corporations, Banks, and People Do Thing, American University Business Professor Ralph Eubanks (Dec. 1995) is available ($27.95) from Berrett-Koehler Publishers; or from the Center for Advancement of Public Policy, 1735 S St. NW, Washington, DC 20002; 202-797-6066.

New York Activity: Finding the Grassroots: A Directory of New York Social Organizations" is available ($13) from the North Star Fund, 666 Broadway, 5th fl., New York, NY 10012; 212/460-5511.

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Rural Development. "Rural Development Research: A Foundation for Policy," has been published as "an information base that can serve as a foundation for rural development policy," and deals with education, entrepreneurship, and physical and social infrastructure issues. It's available for $65 from Greenwood Publishing Group, 8 Post Road West, PO Box 5007, Westport, CT 06881-5007; 203-326-3571.

Rural Development II. "Creating the Countryside: The Politics of Rural and Environmental Discourse" has been published by Temple University Press. " Active regional environmentalists discuss the destruction, conservation, and creation of the countryside." It's available for $22.95 from Temple University Press, Broad and Oxford Streets, Philadelphia, PA 19122; 215/204-1099.


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International Planning. Over the last decade, Planning Practice and Research has carried articles on aspects of many different planning systems across the world. Over the coming years PP&R will be encouraging submissions of articles exploring the distinctive features of planning practice and policy in different countries and attempting to meet the demand for a transnational exchange of ideas on planning systems and practice. Articles on land use, housing, transportation, infrastructure, planning, environmental planning, and social services are particularly welcome. For more information or solicitation, contact North American Editor (and PN co-chair) Tom Angotti, Pratt Institute, Graduate Center for Planning and the Environment, 200 Willoughby Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11201; 718/999-4391.

Community Development Curricula. Victoria Minnich writes that she is compiling resources for community development curricula appropriate for students in grades 7-12. "I would appreciate your assistance in locating curricula, literature, and other materials on community organizing, urban studies architecture, and the built environment, environmental science, and community economic and social development. I am also looking for lesson and unit plans, as well as curricula that are interdisciplinarian." Contact Victoria c/o PICCED, 379 DeKalb Ave., 2nd Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11205; 718/636-3468, x6441.

Housing Segregation. For a study, commissioned by the Poverty and Race Research Action Council, of government's role in creating racially segregated housing patterns and their impact on schools, we are seeking copies of or references to relevant reports, theses, etc. Please contact Prof. Arnold Hirsch, Dept. History, University of New Orleans, New Orleans, LA 70148; 504/286-6884; arhish@uno.edu.

FUNDING / FUNDRAISING

Community and Economic Development. "Funding Sources for Community and Economic Development: A Guide to Current Sources for Local Programs and Projects" has been published by Orx, and has been updated for 1996 with over 300 funding opportunities. Contact Orx, 4041 North Central Ave., Ste. 700, Phoenix, AZ 85012-3397; 602/279-6799; 800/279-6799, (R)FUNDING/05/06/96.

Community Development. The Lincoln Filene Center at Tufts University presents the Management and Community Development Institute at the Tufts University Campus in Medford, MA, June 2-7. This conference, now in its thirteenth year, offers technical support and training to organizations and individuals in the nonprofit sector. For more information or an brochure and registration materials call 617/627-3549.

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Homeownership. The National Homeownership Summit will be held June 6-7 in Washington, DC. It's free. Registration info. from 301/251-5650; pharris@aspenyss.com.

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Sustainable Communities. The E.F. Schumacher Society Decentralist Conference will be held June 28-30 at Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts. The conference will focus on the how-tos of community based processes of building sustainable communities. More information is available from E.F. Schumacher Society, 140 Aug End Rd., Great Barrington, MA 01230.

Jobs. Jobs with Justice will hold their annual meeting June 28-30 in Seattle, Washington. The weekend is full of skill-building workshops, speakers, direct action, and open discussion; all focused on forging solidarity and building Jobs with Justice. For more information, contact Jobs with Justice, 501 Third St., NW #877, Washington, DC 20001-2797; 202/434-1106; fazcastar@cwhkq.netcompute.com.

Domestic Violence. The 7th National Conference of the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence will be held Aug. 4-7 in Charleston, SC. Info. from the Coalition, PO Box 18749, Denver, CO 80218; 303/839-1455.

Eco-Cities. The Institute for Bioregional Studies, located on Prince Edward Island, Canada, will host "Eco-Cities Design Colloquium: Designing Sustainable Communities," August 18-21. E.F. Schumpeter will work with participants to develop a model eco-city along the Charlottetown waterfront, on lands the city is currently soliciting proposals for. For more information contact Phil Ferraro, Dir., Institute for Bioregional Studies, 449 University Ave., Ste. 126, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Canada, C1A 8K3; 902/892-9578.

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May 1996 PLANNERS NETWORK

Conferences and Workshops


**PLANNERS NETWORK**

**May, 1996**

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**MISCELLANEOUS**

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- **New York Resources.** The Community Service Society of New York has published the third edition of "Resources: A Directory of New York City Directories." The 69-page directory is available for $9 from The Community Service Society, Office of Info., 105 East 22nd St., New York, NY 10010.

- **Save Tranet.** Tranet, "a bi-monthly digest for people who are creating the new cyber-society - people who are going to change the world by changing their own lives - people who are adopting appropriate technologies and lifestyles," may not make it past its next issue, as 20-year, 100-issue editor Bill Ellis takes a break to write a book. If you're interested in helping keep this valuable publication alive, contact the intern team at Box 567, Rangely, ME 04970-0567; 207/864-2252; tranet@igc.apc.org.

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Progressive Planning in our Communities
June 14-16, 1995 • Pratt Institute • Brooklyn, NY
Draft Conference Program
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8:00 am - 8:00 pm Registration
Exhibit of community plans
Pre-Convention walking tour (Advance registration req. - $10 each)
9:00 am - 1:00 pm Harlem • Lower East Side • South Bronx
5:00 - 7:00 pm PN Steering Committee Meeting
6:00 - 7:00 pm Facilitator Orientation
8:00 - 9:00 am Opening reception
9:00-10:30 am Videos: Squatters: The Other Philadelphia Story Holding Ground

Friday June 14
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Exhibit of community plans
9:00 am - 2:00 pm Community workshops
3:30 - 5:30 pm Plenaries: Presentations of working papers
7:00 Keynote speaker: Luis Garcia Acosta, El Puente Academy
9:00 - 11:00 am Movie: Delivered Vacant

Saturday June 15
8:00 am - 6:00 pm Registration / Exhibit of community plans
9:00 - 10:45 Workshops
11:00 - 1:00 pm Workshops
2:30 - 3:30 Movie: Borderville
3:30 - 4:00 Movie: The Global Assembly Line
2:30 - 4:50 Strategies for Progressive Planners Today: Follow-up discussions of working papers
4:15 - 6:00 Workshops
6:30 - 9:00 Keynote Speaker: Ruth Messinger, President, Union of Manhattan

Please let us know if you have accessibility or child care needs.

Workshop presenters include:
Chris Tilby, Russell Sage Foundation
Ron Shiffman, Pratt Institute
Sarah Anderson, Institute for Policy Studies
William Tabb, Queens College
Eddie Bautista, NY Lawyers for the Public Interest
John Keshen, Transportation Alternatives

Video Screenings will include:
Troublemakers
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Borderville
The Global Assembly Line
Building Hope
A Practical Man

Close to 40 workshops are being organized for the three sessions on Saturday, including:
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• Regionalism and the Distribution of Race and Class in the American Landscape
• Racial Conflict & Government Responses
• Developing Success Measures in Community Development
• Mutual Housing Associations and Community Land Trusts

Facilitators wanted
Some planners are notorious for their ability to talk. Others just listen. We hope to encourage everyone to do some talking and listening by having discussion facilitators everywhere and by promoting a culture of participation and inclusion.

If you have abilities and/or interest in facilitating productive discussion and you are willing to spend a little time during the conference helping it happen, please call Billie Bramhall at 303/329-6964, or Yvon Pittoc at 718/636-3461.

Name:

Title/Organization:

Address:

City: State: Zip: Country:

Phone (days):
Fax:
E-mail:

Registration Fee
(full registration includes all conference events and some meals)

General: $95 per person
Student/Unemployed: $50 per person
One day registration: $25 per person per day

Tours: $10 per person for Thursday or Sunday tours (circle below) (___ tours x $10) $

Thursday 6/13 Walking Tours
Harlem (9a.m. - 1p.m.) • Lower East Side (9a.m. - 1p.m.) • South Bronx (10a.m. - 3p.m.)
Saturday 6/16 Tours (all 2 - 5p.m.)
Bicycle Tour • Brooklyn Bus Tour • Subway Tour

Total: $

Full payment must accompany registration. Please make checks payable to Planners Network. Send to: Planners Network/Pratt GCPE • 379 DeKalb Ave. • Brooklyn, NY 11205

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL WINTON AT 718/636-3461

Room reservations

There are a limited number of single and double dormitory rooms available on campus at Pratt.

Single rooms:

Total persons: ___ Arrival date: _____ Departure date: _____ Number of nights: ___
@ $35 per person, per night, amount enclosed: $

Double rooms:

Total persons: ___ Arrival date: _____ Departure date: _____ Number of nights: ___
@ $75 per person, per night, amount enclosed: $

Linens: (sheets, towels, blankets) @ $10 per set, duration of conference, amount enclosed: $

If there is someone else registering for the conference who you would like to room with, please let us know who:

If not indicating a specific roommate, please let us know your preferred roommate characteristics: Gender (M / F) Smoker (Y / N)
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                                        President, Board of Manhattan
                                        Tribute to Mel King
9:00 - 11:00 Music and dancing with La Boricua

Sunday June 16
9:30-10:30 Plenary discussion:
How to promote progressive planning in the 1990s
10:30 - 11:00 PN Steering Committee Report
11:00 - 12:30 PN Action Agenda Workshops
2:00 pm Post Conference Tours
(Advance registration required - $10 each)
Brooklyn Bicycle Tour • Brooklyn Bus Tour • Brooklyn Subway Tour

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Rural / continued from page 10

though we, the minority, are being invaded by foreigners here bent on parlaying, commodifying, and destroying our customs and cultures, and usurping our lands.

Over the past five years my country has grown by 15%— faster than Africa. Over the past ten years, use of our adjoining National Forest has exceeded projections by 300%. Better than 3,000 acres per year (around 38,000 cumulative) are being logged, most recently to 35-acre building sites for the very rich who are able to retain a preferential agricultural tax rate. Endless roads have been blazoned across our hillyard; castles built on our river banks and fragile ridgelines, in the midst of our critical wildlife habitat. Under our state’s statutes, enacted primarily by urban legislators, we have little power to do much about it. So, we battle live-stock-harassing dog packs, cut fences, ditch destruction, flagrant trespass, proliferating noxious weeds— as well as the normal hazards of fluctuating markets, agribusiness conglomerates, and a welter of regulations. Relegated, as the value of our land for trophy homes far, far exceeds its value for agriculture, we capitulate to the 35-acre projects it is, however, the concomi-tant crippling and local national economic factor that may be, in the long run, but most insistuously destructive. As Rural America is “discovered” by the affluent, Services America, too. One can talk about urban corporate layoffs; the past ten years have seen virtually all of our good-paying mining jobs disappear. For agriculture itself-- a century-long symbiosis between the two has been ensnared. For those whose forefathers were miners and who themselves have been miners all their lives, the loss is severe. Along with no historical memo-ry, Urban America is shifting its “cornfields” and “lone eagles” being no jobs but low-wage jobs for those with rural skills. If one chooses not to sell out, what jobs are there in the increasingly high-priced tourism/recreation-oriented core, many miles away? And the socio-economic cost to labor of their labor is not calculated by employers. The small dots, once our social, cultural, and modern economic supporter, are becoming rising-bed-room towns of the core. Our schools are hard becoming over-crowded, our roads increasingly ill- maintained, and the county’s “tax reform” budget follows the demands of urban money and power—it cannot keep up with our growing rural needs.

And rural America needs. Above all, we need the assistance of those who are not urban graduates of urban planning programs conceptualizing in terms of urban solutions for urban problems -- and there doesn’t seem to be a Department of Rural Planning around. Although much can be learned from urban planning, there is much urban planners need to unlearn when they come to rural areas — primarily that rural planning is not about design, and that rural customs and cultures are surely not those of the urban world. If Rural America is to be functionally saved, if our customs, cul-tures, lands and children are not to be ousted by “foreign- ers,” rural planning foremost needs to be about resistance mechanisms and about acquiring the time to accom-modate change with dignity, hope, and economic resilience. It needs to be about fundamentally rethink-ing regulatory schemes for the benefit of those who are here rather than coming. It needs to be about job retain-ing and economic develop-ment unrelated to exploitative industries. And, it needs to be about advocacy in the public arena and above all about sensitivity and balance. For us all, it’s a formidable challenge.

Above all, Rural America needs the assistance of urban specialists in urban planning programs conceptualizing in terms of urban solutions for urban problems -- and there doesn’t seem to be a Department of Rural Planning around. Although much can be learned from urban planning, there is much urban planners need to unlearn when they come to rural areas -- primarily that rural planning is not about design, and that rural customs and cultures are surely not those of the urban world.

Jean Garren has spent about half her life in rural environments. She has a master’s degree from UCLA, has taught in the arts and humanities and other fields, has owned her own business, and is presently enrolled in the University of Colorado’s M.A. Urban Program. She’s been active in planning and land use issues affecting her county for about ten years and a member of its Planning Commission for over four, representing an almost wholly rural district.

PLANNERS NETWORK

May, 1996

National / continued from page 2

Many progressive activists hoped that Bill Clinton’s victory in November 1992 would usher in a new era of hope for the nation’s cities. His victory was viewed as a mandate for a more activist government. But Clinton had been elected without a majority mandate. He received only 43% of the overall vote. Equally important, his own party, while captur-ing a majority of the seats in Congress, was deeply divided, with many members closely tied to big businesses who oppose progressive tax- ation, Keynesian pump-priming, and social spending. Early in the Clinton Administration, the president’s efforts to enact a modest public investment plan, universal health insurance, and even a child immunization program. The Republican takeover of Congress November 1994 and the political isolation of cities, symbolized by Clinton’s proposal a month later to dramatically cut the HUD budget is too easy to dismiss this reality. It is, indeed, a scar on our national conscience. But if progressives want to address America’s urban crisis, we must be clear-eyed about the basic causes of our cities’ plight as well as about the political obstacles and opportunities involved in putting urban America closer to Agenda.

Equally important, we have to ask ourselves some very hard questions about two things: political strategy and urban policy. What lessons have we learned in the last 20 years that we should apply to these issues? What should we-- plaintiffs, organizers, activists, scholars, teachers-- be doing differently?

Rethinking Suburbia

We have to face an important reality: America is now a suburban coun-try. This has tremendous conse-quences. Today, more than three-quarters of all Americans live in metropolitan areas. Two-thirds of them—in other words, about half the nation’s pop-ulation—live in suburbs. Moreover, in every region of the country—even where city populations are increasing—the fastest-growing part of the metropolitan areas are the surrounding suburbs.

As a result, America’s cities new face is shrinking tax base and fiscal trauma. In the postwar era, the disparity of median incomes of cities and suburbs has widened. In the 1960’s, the median income of cities was 3% higher than the surrounding suburbs; by 1989, it had fallen to 84% of suburban income. In some metropolitan areas, the economic disparities between cities and suburbs are exacerbated as suburban jurisdictions, often highly regressive, reduce their corporate tax rates and tax abatement programs and increase their sales taxes and real estate taxes in order to make cities more unattractive for suburban residents.

Demystifying Capital Mobility

All progressive urban activists face a serious dilemma: Businesses can move, but politicians usually stay in one place. If local public officials move too aggressively to tax or regulate the private sector, business owners threaten to pull up stakes and take their jobs and tax base with them. Federal laws are actually promoting shifting wars and competition between cities to lure new businesses. The threat of “national policy” and federal policy, the question: Should we change some of the groundrules that allow companies unfettered capital mobility? Should our tax laws, environmental laws and policy, be used to make it harder for cities and other to be more difficult for companies to play Russian roulette with our cities? The answer is to enact a national standard and create a more level playing field.

Converting the Military Industrial Complex

We will never solve our domestic problems, including our urban crisis, as long as we continue to spend such a large part of our federal budget on national defense. But today, several years after the end of the Cold War and all talk of war is at an all-time low, our country has not significantly reduced its reliance on military spending. This has two seri-ous consequences. First, there isn’t enough money in our federal budget for domestic economic and social programs, such as housing, education, infrastructure, etc. Second, our private economy is still dominated by military contractors and production, which means we divest much of our scientific and technical expertise and invest too little in civil industries. Rather than employing research and development funds to help modernize the nation’s basic manufacturing industries, for example the steel and automobile industries, or developing new civil industries to make the U.S. more competitive internationally. For example, high speed rail, the Pentagon’s priorities helped undermine key industrial sectors and the cities where they were located.

Disclosing Our Success Stories

Progressives have to seriously address Americans’ skepticism or hostility about government and about our capacity to solve urban prob-lems. When conservatives attack “big government,” they aren’t talking about the Pentagon. When they talk about the federal budget deficit, they don’t focus on the key role that the Reagan military build-up played in putting America in the red. When Bob Dole complains about the “last bastion of socialism,” he’s talking about public housing, not defense contracts who depend on federal contracts. When they talk about welfare reform, they aren’t talking about corporate welfare for Boeing, Lockheed, and Raytheon.

Developing a Progressive Political Strategy

For the past several decades, progressive activists have made significant headway in urban politics. They have generally three, often overlap-ping, strategies: community organizing, labor organizing, and electoral politics. In the mid-1970s, hoping that a combination of community organizing and electoral work could kick start growing progressive pres-sure that would somehow jell into a national movement, some of these activists created several networks, including the Conference on Alternative Strategies and Local Policy (CALS) and the Planners Network. After a few years CASLP folded its tent, while the Planners Network continues primarily as a newsletter linking urban activists.

Policy works like to debate urban policy prescriptions. The truth is, these strategies are intertwined so long as we lack the political will to address the urban crisis. The reason that cities have long been off the policy agenda is not because urban policy experts have lacked good ideas for programs and policies. It is because cities -- where most poor, working class and minority people live-- lack political power. The bottom line is that we need to create a Congressional majority to address the problems of cities. We need new and campaigns that can help unite the diverse progressive activist struggles around the country. I call these “mobilizing reform” -- changes that will help level the political playing field and build a critical mass of support to sustain a national and governing majority to help America’s cities. These include: Campaign Finance Reform: We need to reduce the legalized bribery system that currently makes it impossible to deal constructively with urban problems.

Expanding the Urban Electorate: Using the Motor Voter Law, mayors, counties and labor organizations, and the Democratic Party need to mobilize potential voters among us.

Labor Law Reform: A key goal of urban policy should be to increase the incomes of the growing sector of the “working poor” concentrated in central cities and inner suburbs.

Peter Dreier is E.P. Clapp Distinguished Professor of Politics and director of the Public Policy Program at Occidental College in Los Angeles.

Don’t Forget!

PN ’96 June 14-16 • Brooklyn, NY

(registration materials are one page back)
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Converting the Military Industrial Complex

We will never solve our domestic problems, including our urban crisis, as long as we continue to spend such a large part of our federal budget on national defense. But today, several years after the end of the Cold War and all talk, our country has not significantly reduced its reliance on military spending. This has two serious consequences. First, there isn’t enough money in our federal budget for domestic economic and social programs, such as housing, education, infrastructure, etc. Second, our private economy is still dominated by military and defense contractors, which means we divest much of our scientific and technical expertise and invest too little in civil industry industries. Rather than employing research and development funds to help modernize the nation’s basic industries in manufacturing, for example the steel and automobile industries, or developing new civil industries to make the U.S. more competitive internationally. For example, high speed rail, the Pentagon’s priorities helped undermine key industrial sectors and the cities where they were located.

Telling Our Success Stories

Progressives have to seriously address America’s skeptical or hostile views about government and about our capacity to solve urban problems. When conservatives attack “big government,” they aren’t talking about the Pentagon. When they talk about the federal budget deficit, they don’t focus on the key role that the Religious war build-up played in putting America in the red. When Bob Dole complains about the “last bastion of socialism,” he’s talking about public housing, not defense contractors who depend on public housing. When they talk about welfare reform, they aren’t talking about corporate welfare for Boeing, Lockheed, and Raytheon.

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Campaign Finance Reform: We need to remove the legalized bribery system that currently makes it impossible to deal constructively with urban problems expanding the Urban Electorate: Using the Motor Voter Law, mayors, community and labor organizations, and the Democratic Party need to mobilize potential voter turnout.

Labor Law Reform: A key goal of urban policy should be to increase the incomes of the growing sector of the “working poor” concentrated in central cities and inner suburbs.

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(Restricted materials are a one page back)
Transformative community planning: Empowerment through community development

Discussion Paper prepared for the Planners Network 96 Conference
by Marie Kennedy

What is community development?

I’m going to share some thoughts about some of the elements of effective planning for community development—a practice that planners (and sometimes) call transformative community planning.

I see real community development as combining material development with the development of people. Real development, as I understand it, necessarily involves increasing a community’s capacity for taking control of its own development—building within the community critical thinking and planning abilities, as well as concrete skills, so that development projects and planning processes can be replicated by community members themselves. A good planning project should leave a community not just with more immediate “products”—e.g., housing—but also with an increased capacity to meet future needs.

Effective community development planning takes a comprehensive approach to meeting community needs—an approach that recognizes the interconnectedness of economic, physical and social development. Community development is linked to empowerment and to valuing diversity of cultures. This ties into whether you are talking about planning in materially underdeveloped communities in the United States or in the so-called developing world.

Manning Marable, an African-American scholar and commentator, in his 1992 book, Crisis of Color and Colonialism, offers a concise definition of empowerment, one that I think is particularly apt for planners:

Empowerment is essentially a capacity to define clearly one’s interests, to confront those interests, to define one’s power in those interests. It’s the ability to create a plan or a program to change one’s reality in order to obtain those objectives or interests. Power is not a “thing,” it’s a process. In other words, you shouldn’t say that a group has power, but that, through its conscious activity, a group can empower itself by increasing its ability to achieve its own interests.

And, Kari Polanyi Levitt, an economist working in the Caribbean, in a lecture a couple of years ago to the Association of Caribbean Economists, talked about the commonality of certain values of what she calls the “market magic” paradigm, arguing that:

Any meaningful notion of “sustainable development” must begin with the recognition of the diversity of cultures which nourish human creativity as is proven an inheritance of nature in the diversity of plant and animal life.

She goes on to say:

Development cannot be imposed from without. It is a creative social process and its central nervous system, the matrix which nourishes it, is located in the cultural sphere. Development is not a property of money or physical capital, or foreign exchange, but of the capacity of a society to tap the root of popular creativity, to free up and empower people to exercise their intelligence and collective wisdom.

Role of the planner

Unfortunately, in most places, public policy and planning practice don’t reflect this understanding of community development. And, in my view, that’s why we have so little of it, especially in materially underdeveloped communities.

Most of my experience has been on the community level and it is at this level that you will find most of the practitioners who are trying to work in a transformative way. However, what often blocks success for transformative planners at the community level is the fact that decisions taken by planners at the city, state, national or even international level. For transformative planning to work on the community level, planners at all levels, who are often in charge of setting policies, writing legislation, designing governmental programs, prioritizing funding targets for private foundations and governmental agencies, or preparing requests for proposals, have to share an understanding of what constitutes community development.

Measuring success

Measuring success primarily, or even exclusively, by the numbers—the number of houses built or the number of clients served or the number of jobs created, or the number of people whose income has risen above the poverty level, the increased number of high school graduates, the number of rivers cleaned up—describes important outcomes, but outcomes insufficient for community development in the sense that I have defined it. If we measure success by the numbers alone, no matter how laudable our long-range goals, we’re going to plan, research, and design and then support our projects and programs that we think are going to be successful in terms of those numbers. Rational, right? Circular, too. If we don’t include less measurable goals (or at least presently less measured goals) in our criteria for success, the goals that have to do with empowerment as Marable defines it—we’re likely to meet our goals while our communities are increasingly underdeveloped.

If, on the other hand, we have a different version of what constitutes success:

- that does include products of development, but which rests primarily on power and control being increasingly vested in community members;
- that is measured by the number of people who have, in the planning process, moved from being an object of planning to being a subject;
- that is measured in terms of increasing numbers of confident, competent, cooperative and厝升pelyy community members;
- that is measured in terms of the ability of people involved in the planning process to replicate their achievements in other situations;
- that is measured in terms of movement towards realizing values of equity and inclusion;

then, we’re going to have very different sorts of policies, programs and practices. And, our roles as planners will also be very different.

Transformative planning joins with participation action research in the assumption that possession of knowledge is the critical basis of power and control.

and control

There’s a tension built in here for the transformative planner to work with.

A central dilemma for the transformative planner is the task of finding a balance between assuming that oppressed people fully understand their own oppression and the planner does not, or conversely, that the planner fully understands the truth (or has the research and analytical tools to get at the truth) about people’s oppression and that the people do not.

The process of achieving this balance isn’t mystical, but it does mean gaining an understanding of the actual circumstances in each community planning project undertaken. And it requires a real commitment to community development as I outlined at the beginning of this paper.

A successful transformative planner must carefully listen and respect what people know, help people acknowledge what they already know, and help them back up this “common sense” and put it in a form that communicates convincingly to others. The planner’s role in this type of process is critical, but so is the role of the indigenous population—their “common sense” about the situation and their ability to mobilize for change.

Successful transformative planning also means planners who are willing to acknowledge that in each planning situation we bring with us our own supporting biases—biases that flow from our own class background and location, our own gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and so forth. And, along with acknowledging the baggage we bring with us, we must recognize the biases and values for certain planning and development outcomes are typically based, at least in part, on these bases, and that they are not always (or even often) about being “right.” It’s not about “right way”—our preferences are just that, they’re our preferences.

Successful transformative planning means wielding our planning tools in a way that frames real alternatives, that elaborates the trade-offs in making one another choice—that pits real control in people’s hands. It does not mean making everybody a professional planner—a possessor of the singular set of skills that planners have developed through professional education and practice. It does mean using our skills so that people can make informed decisions for themselves. And it means including in the trade-offs the consequences of different decisions in terms of overarching community values. It means challenging people on exclusionary, narrow-mind thinking; having enough respect for people to challenge them. It means framing alternatives that include organizing strategies, political strategies, education strategies, as well as the more traditional planning outcomes programs, buildings, businesses and so forth.

Successful transformative planning means extending our definition of the planning process to include a capacity building and education/outreach phase on the front end and an evaluation period on the back end. And, it means fighting for funding for this extended process.

In short, it means working with communities in a way that’s sensitive, supportive, inquiring and carefully analytical, challenging but not directive or patronizing. Although this may sound like "moon and apple pie", it’s all too rare in practice.

This paper has been presented in various versions in lectures at Cornell University (September 1993), the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (May 1993), and the Grupo Para el Desarrollo Integral de la Comunitat Havana, Cuba (July 1993). Published versions are forthcoming in New Solutions (summer 1996) and Indigenous Planning Times (fall 1996).

Marie Kennedy teaches community planning at the University of Massachusetts in Boston. Combining the roles of activist and scholar, she has taught, worked on and written about community development, planning education and participatory action research.

Transformative / continued from page 13

May 1996

PLANNERS NETWORK

At least ten PN members will be attending the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) in Istanbul May 30 to June 14. PN has proposed to host four workshops on the following dates between 11:00 am and 12:45 pm.

June 4 - Community Planning from a Global Perspective
June 6 - Housing as a Right
June 7 - Housing Segregation and Ghettoization
June 11 - The U.S. National Urban Policy
Location has not been determined. PNers who plan to be at Habitat II and want to participate, contact Tom Angotti (718-399-4391) before May 30.

PLANNERS NETWORK

Disneyworld, the headquarters for bottom-line land use planning, hosted the American Planning Association annual conference this year. Surrounded by Mickey Mouse and Michael Graves, the nation’s leading planners probed issues of serious moment. A modest but surprisingly significant number of Planners Network sympathizers decided to check out the environment inside the belly of the beast. A hundred or so went to the reception co-sponsored by PN and Pratt Institute’s Graduate Center for Planning & the Environment.

During their business meeting, the APA Executive Committee approved a resolution affirming the right to housing, and called on the United States delegation to Habitat II to do the same. APA Executive Director Norman Knoblauch expressed his gratitude for the work done by PN and ADPSR (Architects Designers Planners for Social Responsibility) on the issue of housing rights.
Transformative community planning: Empowerment through community development
Discussion Paper prepared for the Planners Network 96 Conference
by Marie Kennedy

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I’m going to share some thoughts about some of the elements of effective planning for community development – a practice plan that I sometimes call transformative community planning.

I see real community development as combining material development with the development of people. Real development, as I understand it, necessarily involves increasing a community’s capacity for taking control of its own development – building within the community critical thinking and planning abilities, as well as technical skills, so that development projects and planning processes can be replicated by community members themselves.

A good planning project should leave a community not just with more immediate “products” – e.g., housing – but also with an increased capacity to meet future needs.

Effective community development planning takes a comprehensive approach to meeting community needs – an approach that recognizes the interrelationship of economic, physical and social development.

Community development is linked to empowerment and to valuing diversity of cultures. This is true whether you are talking about planning in materially underdeveloped communities in the United States or in the so-called developing world.

Manning Marable, an African-American scholar and commentator, in his 1992 book, Crisis of Color and Democracy, offers a concise definition of empowerment, one that I think is particularly apt for planners:

Empowerment is essentially a capacity to define clearly one’s own interests, to recognize the obstacles and issues those interests. It’s the ability to create a plan or program to change one’s reality in order to obtain those objectives or interests. Power is not a ‘thing’; it’s a process. In other words, you shouldn’t say that a group has power, but that, through its conscious activity, a group can empower itself by increasing its ability to achieve its own interests.

And, Kari Polanyi Levitt, an economist working in the Caribbean, in a lecture a couple of years ago to the Association of Caribbean Economists, talked on the individualism, selfishness and typical characteristics of what she calls the “market magic” paradigm, arguing that:

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Role of the planner

Unfortunately, in most places, public policy and planning practice don’t reflect this understanding of community development. And, in my view, that’s why we have so little of it, especially in materially underdeveloped communities.

Most of my experience has been on the community level and at this level you will find most of the practitioners who are trying to work in a transformative way. However, what often blocks success for transformative planners at the community level are decisions taken by planners at the city, state, national or even international level. For transformative planning to work on the community level, planners at all levels, who are framing policies, writing legislation, designing governmental programs, prioritizing funding targets for private foundations and governmental agencies, or preparing requests for proposals, have to share an understanding of what constitutes community development.

Measuring success

Measuring success primarily, or even exclusively, by the numbers – the number of houses built or the number of clients served or the number of jobs created, or even the number of people whose income has risen above the poverty level, the increased number of high school graduates, the number of people cleared up – describes important outcomes, but outcomes insufficient for community development in the sense that I have defined it. If we measure success by the numbers alone, no matter how laudable our long range goals, we’re going to plan, research, and design and lend our support to projects and programs that we think are going to be successful in terms of those numbers.

Rational, right?

Circular, too. If we don’t include less measurable goals (or at least presently less measured goals) in our criteria for success, then we need to re-state what those goals have to do with empowerment as Marable defines it – we’re likely to meet our goals while our communities are increasingly undermined.

If, on the other hand, we have a different version of what constitutes success:

• that does include products of development, but which rests primarily on power and control being increasingly vested in community members,
• that is measured by the number of people who have, in the planning process, moved from being an object of planning to being a subject,
• that is measured in terms of increasing numbers of confident, competent, cooperative and purposeful community members,
• that is measured in terms of the ability of people involved in the planning process to replicate their achievements in other situations; and
• that is measured in terms of movement towards realizing values of equity and inclusion;

then, we’re going to have very different sorts of policies, programs and practices.

And, our roles as planners will also be very different.

Transformative planning joins all participating action in the assumption that possession of knowledge is the critical basis of power and control.

There’s a tension built in here for the transformative planner to work with. A central dilemma for the transformative planner is the task of finding a balance between assuming that oppressed people fully understand their own oppression and the planner does not, or, conversely, that the planner fully understands the truth (or has the research and analytical tools to get at the truth) about people’s oppression and that the people do not.

The process of achieving this balance isn’t mystical, but it does demand an ongoing process of evaluation of the actual circumstances in each community planning project undertaken. And it requires a real commitment to community development as I outlined at the beginning of this paper.

A successful transformative planner must carefully listen and respect what people know, help people acknowledge what they already know, and help them back up this “common sense” and put in it a form that communicates convincingly to others. The planner’s role in this type of process is critical, but so is the role of the indigenous population—their “common sense” about the situation and their ability to mobilize for change.

Successful transformative planning also means planners who are willing to acknowledge that in each planning situation we bring with us our own ideas and biases—ideas that flow from our own class background and location, our own gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and so forth. And, along with acknowledging the baggage we bring with us, we must recognize that the languages used for certain planning and development outcomes are typically based, at least in part, on these biases and that they’re not always (or even often) about being “right.” It’s not about “right” versus “wrong”—our preferences are just that, our preferences.

Successful transformative planning means wielding our planning tools in a way that frames real alternatives, that elaborates the trade-offs in making one another choice—that puts real control in people’s hands. It does not mean making everybody a professional planner—a possession of the peculiar sort of skills that planners have developed through a professional education and practice. It does mean using our skills so that people can make informed decisions for themselves. And it means including in the trade-offs the consequences of different actions in terms of overarching community values. It means challenging people on exclusionary, narrow-minded thinking; having enough respect for people to challenge them. It means framing alternatives that include organizing strategies, political strategies, education strategies, as well as the more traditional planning outcomes—programs, buildings, businesses and so forth.

Successful transformative planning means extending our definition of the planning process to include a capacity building and education/outreach phase on the front end and an evaluation period on the back end. And, it means fighting for funding for this extended process.

In short, it means working with communities in a way that’s sensitive, supportive, inquiring and carefully analytical, challenging but not directive or patronizing. Although this may sound like “more and apple pie,” it’s all too rare in practice.

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Nancy Kennedy teaches community planning at the University of Massachusetts in Boston. Combining the roles of activist and scholar, she has taught, worked on and written about community development, planning education and participatory action research.
Housing Rights in Danger with New Legislation

The US House of Representatives has passed a disastrous bill (HR 2406) that would remove the 1937 Housing Act, raise rents on working families, completely deregulate 300 PHAs, and establish time-limited leases. The Senate bill (S. 1260), which is less radical than the House bill, passed the full Senate in January. A conference committee will meet to negotiate a final version of the bill, possibly as early as the week of June 3, but may not begin until mid-June.

The conference committee is: Republicans - Lazio [NY], Leach [IA], Castle [DE], Baker [LA], and Berouter [NE]. Democrats - González [TX], Vento [MN], Kennedy [MA]. The Senate conference has not been officially appointed yet, but are likely to be: Republicans - Mack [FL], D'Amato [NY], Bond [MO]. Democrats - Sarbanes [MD], Kerry [MA].

Housing advocates met in early May with Senate Banking Committee Democratic staff, who indicated that the Senate Democrats are committed to fighting to improve the bill. They indicated that it will be difficult to push for better than the Senate position on the Brooke Amendment (the Senate bill repeals Brooke for those above 50% of area median income) without Clinton Administration support or specific examples of the impact of partial repeal in key districts. However, the Dems will fight for income targeting provisions for tenant-based section 8 that are better than either bills’ provisions.

The threshold issues for Senate Dems that will determine whether they hold the bill or let it be voted on are: section 8 targeting, minimum rents, the Brooke Amendment, self-sufficiency contracts, and repeal of the 1937 Housing Act. They indicated that other areas of concern are: public housing targeting, deconcentration, fair market rents, portability, labor standards, CDBG sanctions, Indian housing, manufactured housing, occupancy standards, food stamps/income exclusion, and pets. Also, there is a possibility that Republicans will attempt to add some sort of mark-to-market/portfolio re-engineering plan for project-based section 8 to the final bill.

Housing advocates also met with top HUD staff, and expressed their dismay that Secretary Clinton appeared to publically show support for the House bill. HUD staff indicated that the agency supports the Senate version of the bill, and specifically opposes the 300 PHA demonstration project and the self-sufficiency contracts (also called PIPs - personal improvement plans). Advocates called for a strong communication from the White House specifying the conditions for a presidential veto.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Lisa Randelli at the Center for Community Change, 202/342-0567, lrandelli@changenetwork.org


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The Planners Network

The Planners Network is an association of professionals, activists, academics, and students involved in physical, social, economic, and environmental planning in urban and rural areas, who promote fundamental change in our political and economic systems.

We believe that planning should be a tool for allocating resources and developing the environment to eliminate the great inequalities of wealth and power in our society, rather than to maintain and justify the status quo. We believe that planning should be used to assure adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, jobs, safe working conditions, and a healthful environment. We advocate public responsibility for meeting these needs, while the private market has proven incapable of doing so.

The Planners Network Newsletter is published six times a year as the principal means of communication among Network members. Annual financial contributions are voluntary, but we need funds for operating expenses. The Steering Committee has recommended the following amounts as minimums for Network members: $15 for those with incomes under $25,000, students, and unemployed; $25 for those between $25,000 and $50,000; and $45 for those over $50,000. Organizations may subscribe for $30.

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Send us your:
Resource listings • Job Postings
Article ideas (or articles, even) • Suggestions, comments, critiques of the newsletter.
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PLEASE WRITE!

The surest sign of an effective network is as much participation as possible. As we strive to strengthen Plans Network each month with information and resources, we do so only with your help.

Send us your:
- Resource listings
- Job Postings
- Article ideas (or articles, even)
- Suggestions, comments, critiques of the newsletter.
Moving?

Please make sure to let PN know if you're moving. It saves us money and helps ensure that you don't miss an issue!

Don't forget to register for the 1996 Planners Network conference! Information and registration materials are on pages 8-9.

Next Issue

ARRIVAL DEADLINE FOR PLANNERS NETWORK #118 COPY:
MONDAY, JULY 1, 1996.

All materials should be sent to:
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As always, our thanks to those who can type their notes. It reduces our chances of misreading what you write. Feature articles of 500-1,500 words are always welcome; a diskette is greatly appreciated.