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RESOURCE USE ISSUES
AND
THE PLANNING PROCESS

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FOREWORD

This publication represents a collection of papers which were presented before the Second Northeast Extension Seminar of The Northeast Regional Committees. The conference, which was held in Boston, October 11-13, 1966, explored the topic of "Resource Use Issues and the Planning Process."

The seminar was attended by professionals in rural and urban planning, economics, and sociology; landscape architects; educators, agricultural agents; and extension specialists in forestry and wildlife, area development, and public affairs.

Included in this publication are all papers which were presented before the four committees and those presented before the Northeast Regional Extension Public Policy Committee. They represent current thinking in the field of resource use and planning.

Much guidance and support was given by Henry M. Hansen of the University of Connecticut, and Joseph Ackerman and R. J. Hildreth of the Farm Foundation to the Boston Conference and the publication of the papers presented there. Financial costs were underwritten by the Farm Foundation and the Institute for Research on Land and Water Resources of The Pennsylvania State University.

Finally, we salute Jack Brown and Carroll D. Price, II who devoted many hours to the editing of this compilation of papers.

John C. Frey, Chairman
Northeast Regional
Extension Public
Policy Committee

THE PLANNING FUNCTION...(Harold F. Wise)

DISCUSSION
by Ervin H. Zube*

Mr. Wise has done an admirable job in presenting the relationships between the planning function and decisions on resource uses at the local, regional, and state levels. He has presented a firm basis from which this conference should develop in a meaningful fashion. His arguments relative to the region or metropolitan area constituting the governmental level at which direct action is to be expected are most convincing. I am in complete agreement with him in this interpretation. Certainly, in terms of resources, this is the smallest realistic planning unit. I know of no natural resource that has ever respected arbitrary political boundaries.

SOME DEFINITIONS OF PLANNING

The growing emphasis on the regional scale for planning presents very interesting and significant challenges to traditional Extension methods of operation. If the Extension Services are to contribute their talents in the area of natural resources to the planning process, they will be assuming a role that will be quite different from their role of the past.

Before pursuing this point further, I would like to refer back to the definition of planning that Mr. Wise gave us: "an organized intellectual exercise designed to permit the public policy maker to arrive at his decisions in a more informed and rational method." Also, "planning is comprehensive in nature," and "there must be a sense of the strategic." I would add to this definition, "planning is a continuing process." This is not only a definition, it is also a challenge; it is as much a description of what planning has not been as well as being a statement of what planning should be.

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Much of the early planning in this country failed because it did not provide the public policy makers with the knowledge that they needed to make sound decisions. It was not comprehensive, hence it did not have a sense of the strategic, and it was not a continuing process. The planning proposals of the City Beautiful movement during the first part of the Twentieth Century were, for the most part, lacking in both a firm socio-economic and an ecological base. They tended to approach city planning as an exclusively visual, formalistic problem. The visual pattern for the urban forms proposed was one derived from a different society with a grossly different economic structure. They also lacked continuity in that the planner's responsibility was considered fulfilled when his printed report with the beautifully delineated plans and perspectives was turned over to the city fathers, who then found an appropriate spot in the city archives for its interment.

Continuity in the planning process is also a contemporary problem. Many of the plans prepared under the Federal 701 Planning Assistance program have encountered a fate similar to that of the "City Beautiful Plans." The planner's work has been a "one-shot affair." He has not had, and sometimes has not wanted, the opportunity to continue working with and for his clients. Our political and social institutions are not static: the factors and forces that shape our institutions and our physical environment are dynamic, hence the planning process must also be dynamic -- a continuing process that is responsive to a changing society. The plans that are produced must be flexible to accommodate these changing patterns and demands.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

The concept of comprehensive planning with its present all-inclusive approach is a relatively new one. Not too long ago we talked about Master Planning. This change in title is, I think, an indication of a much more sophisticated understanding of the complexities of the planning process. The concept has already been enlarged as new data from related fields has been made available in useful format to the planner, but many more significant additions are still to be made. The utilization of scientific

findings related to natural resources has been a fairly recent addition. The major contributions in this area to date have been in the development and subsequent utilization of soils survey data for planning purposes. As a new planning tool, however, there is a tendency to place too great an emphasis on soils survey as the measure of the resource base. Soils are important in relationship to structural bearing powers on site sewage disposal systems, erosion problems, and agricultural land use. But it is only one of the resources involved in the total ecological matrix. There may be other resources or political or economic considerations that become the overriding determinants in a given land-use decision.

For example, within a single county or township the soils survey may be a most important planning tool because that particular governmental unit has never invested in a sanitary sewer system. In their future land-use decisions they will probably rely heavily on the soils survey to tell them which soils have good percolation rates and thus are suitable lands for residential development with on-site sewage disposal systems.

Let us now take our hypothetical example and consider the region rather than the county or township as our planning unit. It is just possible that this same soil that has the high percolation rate may overlay the major recharge area for the ground water supply for a large portion of the region. Residential development would not only limit infiltration of surface water, because of buildings and pavements, but also contribute pollutants to the ground water from the sewage disposal systems.

This conveniently contrived example not only points up the shortcomings of the use of a single resource in arriving at land-use decisions but also the necessity of utilizing planning units that are of a scale commensurate with the human-ecological and the resource-ecological base. It also points up the absolute necessity for expanding the resource-ecological base data for comprehensive planning. Presently there is great interest in water resources, brought on by both the enormous problems of pollution of our surface water supplies and the prolonged drought in the Northeast. Obviously, a lot more work is urgently needed in the delineation of our ground water supplies and their recharge areas.

DEVELOPMENT VS. ECOLOGICAL BALANCE

Another area of great interest to me, an area crying for the attention of our scientists, is that of the degree of tolerance of specific ecosystems to the activities of man. How much or how little development can a given landscape absorb before its ecological balance is so altered that a new set of organism-environment relationships come into being? We have some general indications for specific landscape types such as salt marshes and a few other relatively rare ecological communities, but for the most part our information is most incomplete. This becomes a very important consideration in reference to the amenity resources which Mr. Wise mentioned, particularly those related to many forms of recreation activity. This factor of environmental tolerance is important at the regional scale as it relates to basic land-use decisions and at the local scale as a tool in assessing the feasibility of specific land-development proposals.

INVOLVEMENT--GOVERNMENT

Mr. Wise pointed out "that the local government is most usually the one that is going to follow traditional patterns," and is "more prone to maintain the status quo and create the future in the image of the past." He presented, to me, a very convincing argument that the controls that will be required will of necessity emanate from a level of government higher than the local level, probably at the state or federal level. He also stated, however, that the region or metropolitan area would constitute the direct action level because of its relative proximity to the people and at the same time its desirable distance from the immediate pressures of the local governmental unit. I would add to his argument the fact that the region is a far more logical planning unit from the standpoint of the resource base.

EXTENSION'S ROLE

Before concluding my remarks, I would like to return to a point made earlier: namely, that the growing interest in the natural resource base in the planning process will present the Extension Services with interesting and significant challenges. The traditional Extension program as I understand it was a "grass roots program." The Extension Specialist worked

with the individual farmer or producer in response to a particular problem he had, be it with pest control, soil fertility, crop production, livestock breeding or any of a dozen others. Anyone who knows anything at all about this program cannot help but be impressed by the fantastic results it has achieved. The thought of achieving similar results within the broader context of the resource component of comprehensive planning is indeed exciting.

TEAM WORK

Comprehensive planning, however, including resource planning, is not a one man, one problem job; it involves team work, a team of diverse specialists and generalists tackling problems on a greatly enlarged scale. I do not mean to imply that team work has not been a part of the Extension role, but rather that the team I am talking about must concern itself with more than the agricultural industry and its attendant land uses. Resources at this scale of involvement will as often as not involve urban problems as their focus.

POLITICIANS AND PLANNERS

The policy and decision makers will also be different. The farmer or producer is able, within limitations, to set the policy and make the decision on his own activities. But now we are talking about the regional or metropolitan, the state and the federal levels. Who are the policy and decision makers we must reach at these levels to be effective? Senator Gaylord Nelson addressed the annual meeting of the American Institute of Planners in Detroit, Michigan in November 1961. At the time he was governor of the State of Wisconsin. His answer to this question was straight and clear:

"It is not possible, in my judgment, to accomplish the kind of broad planning necessary in the public sector without effective political leadership and understanding both by the planners and the politicians. The politicians must understand the importance of planning while the planners must understand the importance of politics in planning. It may make you feel good to assert that planning is good and politics are bad, therefore you will have nothing to do with politics. If this is what you really think, you may as well draw your fancy plans and file them with the Smithsonian Institute for whatever curiosity

value they may have for future generations. Incidentally, if it is your view that politics is bad and planning is good, you are wrong anyway. Neither is better nor worse than the people in it. I have rubbed elbows with a fair number of planners and politicians. Quite frankly, if you wanted to barter your bad planners for our bad politicians we could engage in a lively business for quite some time before either side ran out of trading stock."

"This is all by way of saying that we, the politicians and the planners, are tied together in this enterprise and we had better recognize it sooner than later."

POTENTIAL RELATIONSHIPS
AMONG COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE RESEARCH
AND EXTENSION COMPETENCIES
AND THE PLANNING PROCESS