

THE DEVELOPMENT OF  
PLANNING POLICY

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## ABSTRACT

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLICY PLANNING

By

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Policy planning has evolved in urban planning theory over the past fifteen to twenty years. Policy planning has been advanced as the means to make traditional, technical planning more effective. Policy development is the first step in the comprehensive planning process. Community goals must be evaluated, and policies determined prior to the development and implementation of any concrete plans for specific action.

The purpose of policy planning is to provide a framework within which conflicts can be resolved and new policy developed. The policy framework consists of generating alternatives, analyzing the diverse goals of the participants in the process, understanding the political process, and full citizen participation.)

The role of the planner in this process is changing. Earlier planners are traditionalists in contrast to the new normative planners.

In order that the theoretical aspects of policy development and their relationships to the decision-making process be more

completely understood, a review of the case of Meridian Township, Ingham County, Michigan is undertaken. Meridian is a suburban, Michigan township located in the Lansing metropolitan area. The group dynamics, the motivations, and the politics involved in this real-life situation provide a helpful context for understanding the process through which a policy plan is developed.

There is a great need for further research in the area of policy planning and decision making. In particular a method for measuring the successful implementation of policy is needed. This thesis presents a foundation for that further research and refinement of the theory of urban policy planning.



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## INTRODUCTION

The use of policy planning in urban planning is relatively new. Prior to 1970, the term did not exist in the index of the Journal of the American Institute of Planners--the key source of academic planning discussion. Prior to 1970, discussion revolved around goals and values, subjects more general than policies. Policy planning, however, has evolved in urban planning theory over the past fifteen to twenty years. Goodman points out that, "the policies plan has been advanced as the mechanism to make technical planning, which is the process of translating policy into specific plans and proposals, more effective."<sup>1</sup>

The problem to be discussed in this thesis recognizes that there is a continuing need to reevaluate the application of planning techniques. There also exists a continuing need to refine planning techniques, particularly in light of the fact that planning is not yet a precise science. Therefore, the problem to be addressed here will be the application of policy planning. This will be accomplished through a review of the literature pertinent to the topic and through a review of a specific example of the policy planning process in action. The example to be reviewed

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<sup>1</sup>William I. Goodman, ed., Principles and Practice of Urban Planning (Washington, D.C.: International City Managers' Association, 1968), p. 335.



will be the process as it occurred in Meridian Charter Township, Ingham County, Michigan, in 1969-1970.

Meridian Township is a suburban community. Much of the major policy planning which has occurred in the last ten years has been done on a regional, metropolitan, or major city basis. The sector of urbanizing or urbanized areas which has the greatest need for policy plan is likely the suburb. Suburban areas must daily face the onslaught of rapid development and population mobility which can drastically change the physical, social, and cultural environment of the communities involved.

Governments possess a wide range of tools for exercising control over the rate, direction, magnitude, and quality of urban growth. When unaware of the policy planning concept, governments develop and use policies which are implicit in their actions and usually unwritten. Such policies are usually understood and respected by those persons, particularly elected officials, who function within the political and administrative areas of local government. The policies plan "brings such implicit policies into the open. It assures that these policies are determined through democratic processes. It puts these policies on record and fixes responsibility for them on the council."<sup>2</sup>

Policy may consist of many elements. The two most obvious aspects of policy which relate to control of urban development

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<sup>2</sup>T. J. Kent, Jr., The Urban General Plan (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Company, 1964), p. 66.

are adopted or unadopted standards and ordinances. Standards governing construction of sewers, buildings, water systems, and similar facilities are policies of a kind. In a similar fashion, zoning ordinances, which are implementation tools, are specific interpretations of policy. The policy to be discussed in this thesis will be of a more general nature. It will be the aspect of planning which serves to tie together the vague values and goals of a community with the specific, detailed devices which are designed to bring about those goals.

The approach which will be used will first introduce the reader to the basic theory and definitions of policy planning and its several elements. It will discuss the process of goal formulation and show how policy planning can aid in that process. The valuable uses of policies in a planning framework will be discussed. With this information as background, the second section of the thesis will present various aspects of the practice of policy planning. This chapter will review methods and approaches to policy planning, the proper content of such plans, the role of citizen participation, the role of politics, and the role of the planner in the practice of policy planning.

The review of the actual practice of policy planning, specifically the development of the plan, will focus on the experience of Meridian Charter Township. The thesis will review the historical background of planning, the technical elements of the preparation of the plan, as well as present insights into the political process from which the plan was derived.

Recognizing the scope of the subject, concentration will attempt to focus on the elements of policy plan development as seen as a total process. Undoubtedly, it may be possible for others to elaborate on specific aspects of the process, however, that is not the goal of this thesis. It is hoped that in the course of this study it will be possible to identify areas where additional study would be valuable. The paper will attempt to do that and report in the concluding chapter.

## CHAPTER I

### THEORY OF POLICY PLANNING

This chapter will consist of a review of the basic concepts of policy planning. It will attempt to define terms, and describe the planning process and the role played by policy in that process. It will review the historical development of the policy planning concept. It is felt that a thorough review of the methods of goal formulation will be helpful in understanding the position of policy development in the planning process. Finally, a case is presented for the use of policy planning which emphasizes its values to the successful completion of the planning process.

#### Definitions

There are several basic words which must be defined in order to provide an understandable and consistent discussion throughout the balance of this thesis. The terms which will follow can be defined in a variety of ways, and they have been by numerous professionals in the planning field. This review will attempt to present the generally agreed upon meanings, as well as any substantially different interpretations of the same word which may appear to be significant.

As it shall be used in this thesis, the word goal means: A general statement of a desired end which reflects inherent human values.

Within the context of this definition of goals, the word value means relative worth, utility, or importance. Goals are generally considered the beginning point in the planning process. They can be totally utopian and idealistic, and determined prior to any comprehensive analysis of a system; in which case, they are known as peremptory goals, and function as measures of choice in the alternative testing process. In the traditional planning process, goals are determined after a thorough analysis of facts, problems, and trends affecting the system; these are known as meliorative goals.<sup>3</sup>

Goals can be viewed as they function within a system.

One goal may appear as superior to an alternative goal when they both are measured against a higher value; however, the alternative may appear as a better means of satisfying a system-wide set of ends. This suggests that goals can be compared in terms of both their intrinsic and their instrumental worth. Values exist in a hierarchy.<sup>4</sup>

Morris Hill presents a definition of requisites which is helpful in understanding the complexity of goals. Requisite is defined as "a category of values that are not specific goals of

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<sup>3</sup>Earl Marvin Blecher, "Goals, Values, and the Planning Process" (Unpublished Master's thesis, Michigan State University, 1964), p. 10.

<sup>4</sup>Paul Davidoff and Thomas A. Reiner, "A Choice Theory of Planning," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, XXVIII (May, 1962), p. 107.



plans but enable the planner and decision-maker to set guidelines."<sup>5</sup>  
 Requisties aid in establishing the hierarchy among goals. Examples of requisites include:

Feasibility: can existing fiscal, legal, political, and and social conditions facilitate the execution of the plan?

Immediacy: refers to priority to be assigned to the execution of the planned facility, given the existing political and social conditions.

Interdependence: refers to significant interaction between the sector under consideration and any other sector.<sup>6</sup>

Requisites are constraints which define the system or context within which we operate. They might be thought of as taboos. In any case, they constitute those "higher values" of which we spoke earlier.

A clear and concise definition of policy is, "A policy is a course of action adopted and pursued in attaining goals or achieving objectives."<sup>7</sup>

A second acceptable definition is suggested by Jerrold Allaire, as "those necessary steps, put into words, that amplify and implement broad community goals and relate them to

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<sup>5</sup>Morris Hill, "A Goals Evaluation Matrix for Evaluating Alternative Plans," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, XXXIV (January, 1968), p. 22.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>7</sup>William I. Goodman, Ed., Principles and Practice of Urban Planning (Washington, D. C.: International City Manager's Association, 1968), p. 335.

'short-range' decisions, specific recommendations, and detailed regulations."<sup>8</sup>

Allaire suggests that a hierarchy of problem-solving consists of orders which move from the general to the specific. The first order in the hierarchy is the goal, the second order is the policy or objective, and the third order is the action statement or standard.

The policies set the broad framework for action and form the basis upon which more detailed development decisions are made. They are a connective link between general goals and specific recommendations.<sup>9</sup>

A policy should be a measurable target, whose success or failure can be evaluated in terms of actions taken in the pursuit of goals. Policies can be designed as broad, strategic directions, or as implementing and tactical guidelines.

Chapin describes policies as guides that governing bodies "develop to achieve consistency of action."<sup>10</sup> In a similar vein, Nelson states,

. . .policies are normally used to alleviate the time-consuming task of deciding upon frequently arising problems and issues; they standardize the decision-making process for those types of problems which do not demand special attention. Policies thus free the decision-makers for problems which necessitate more deliberation due to their complexity or uniqueness.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Jerrold R. Allaire, Policy Statements: Guides to Decision-making (Chicago: American Society of Planning Officials, 1961), p. 5.

<sup>9</sup>Goodman, op. cit., p. 331.

<sup>10</sup>F. Stuart Chapin, Jr., "Taking Stock of Techniques for Shaping Urban Growth," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, XXIX (May, 1963), p. 80.

<sup>11</sup>Stephen Craig Nelson, "The Policy Approach in Urban and Regional Planning," (Unpublished Master's thesis, Michigan State University, 1964), p. 3.

The act of adopting a standard constitutes the establishment of policy. An appropriate definition of standard is a criterion established by general agreement for use as a basis of comparison in measuring needs in relation to the attainment of some level of performance. A standard applicable to the practice of urban planning might consist of a particular number of acres of land per person needed for a certain use which is determined by the community to be an acceptable minimum level for a livable environment.

In regard to a definition of policy plan, Chapin says,

Some view these policies plans as something akin to a statement of general principles for planning, and they are thus formulated before plans are developed. Others consider them to be embodied in the plans themselves, and when a plan is officially adopted, the proposals contained in the plan become official urban land use policies. Still a third usage considers them to be statements of the directions in which the urban area should move in order to achieve the objectives of, and implement the proposals contained in, a plan.<sup>12</sup>

For purposes of this analysis, the term policy plan is defined as, "a set of general statements that define the direction and character of future development and set forth actions necessary to attain the desired development."<sup>13</sup>

Herbert Gans presents a more comprehensive definition in his book, People and Plans. He says,

I would define goal-oriented planning as developing programs or means to allocate limited resources in order to achieve

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<sup>12</sup>F. Stuart Chapin, Jr., Urban Land Use Planning (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965), p. 349.

<sup>13</sup>Goodman, op. cit., p. 331.

the goals of the community (and its members) ranked in order of priority. The crucial elements in this definition are goals, the programs to achieve them, the consequences of achieving these, especially cost in relation to resources, and the criteria of ordering goals and programs in the priority of those to be achieved first, or later, and those to be given up.<sup>14</sup>

Other definitions or explanations of policy planning include Henry Fagin's idea that a policy plan is one "which is comprehensive with respect to time, space, and money; and which brings physical, social, and economic considerations into a common focus."<sup>15</sup> Finally, Goodman suggests, "A policies plan is a statement of the general intentions of the city and thereby serves as a guide to day-to-day decision-making on the part of public officials, administrators, and citizens." And, "The policies plan is the statement of the desired end, and the desired coordination will be achieved if all agencies concerned with development will act in accordance with the principles set forth in a policies plan."<sup>16</sup>

No thesis in the field of city, regional, or urban planning would be complete without an effort to define urban planning. Two definitions are particularly appropriate to the philosophies of planning contained in this thesis. First, "Urban planning is a method to appraise, anticipate, and direct human behavior in the

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<sup>14</sup>Herbert J. Gans, People and Plans: Essays on Urban Problems and Solutions (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1968), pp. 79-80.

<sup>15</sup>Goodman, op. cit., p. 347.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 331-334.

development of urban areas."<sup>17</sup> Second, "The total city planning process of which land-use planning is but one part, involves a continuing program of deriving, organizing, and presenting a comprehensive plan for the development and renewal of (the city) . . . The plans must be economically feasible, and must promote the common good, and at the same time (must) preserve the rights and interests of the individual."<sup>18</sup>

### The Planning Process

A typical approach to problem-solving and sometimes planning is what Lindblom calls "disjointed-incrementalism."<sup>19</sup> This basically involves making limited, short-term decisions on problems as they occur. This is crisis planning. "Rarely do cities formulate an overall policy framework that is capable of anticipating change and guiding decisions toward community needs and wants."<sup>20</sup> However, when they do, they are doing policy planning.

The traditional approach to conducting planning which consists of preparing background studies, analyzing community needs

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<sup>17</sup>Frederick H. Bair, Jr., Planning Cities: Selected Writings on Principles and Practice, Ed. by Virginia Curtis (Chicago: American Society of Planning Officials, 1970), p. 56.

<sup>18</sup>Alan A. Altshuler, The City Planning Process: A Political Analysis (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1965), p. 304.

<sup>19</sup>Robert T. Daland, "Public Administration and Urban Policy," in Urban Research and Policy Planning, Ed. Leo F. Schnore and Henry Fagin (Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, 1967), p. 514.

<sup>20</sup>Goodman, op. cit., p. 335.



in terms of people, then converting numbers of people to acres of land use, and applying universal standards to determine a plan has its shortcomings. Goodman points out that such planning tends to over-simplify the process. He says,

. . .it focuses on two-dimensional, physical plans; it is more concerned with quantitative problems (is the park large enough?) than with the performance of the system (are the public's leisure needs being satisfied?); and produces a static end product without determining how the city gets from 'here' to 'there.'<sup>21</sup>

The new direction of planning, says Goodman, is normative planning. This is understanding the elements that describe "where are we going" and "how do we get there." He says,

Normative planning is the activity of establishing rational or reasonable ends. It involves determinations concerning the objectives or ends which will guide subsequent actions. It involves decisions concerning the scope and content of action, decisions which must be ultimately based on an established values system. Normative planning develops the broad, general basis for action, whereas technical planning is concerned with specific established purposes and the procedures to be employed in achieving these purposes.<sup>22</sup>

The policies plan can justifiably be described by placing it within the framework of the planning process. It is for this reason that this review of that process is presented.

The generally recognized steps in the planning process include the following:

1. Define the Problem: finding the right question, setting objectives, determining the rules that will limit the ultimate solution.

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 329.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 330.

2. Policy Making: establishing general directions; proposition, formulation, and adoption.
3. The Plan: is the design for action.
4. The Program: or schedule of action.

Translating these steps into "planningese" results in the following steps in the planning process:

1. Research and analysis (population, economy, land use, etc.).
2. The Policies Plan (goals and objectives).
3. The general plan (long-term programs--land use, transportation, and community facilities).
4. Short-term implementation (zoning, capital improvements program, etc.).
5. Action (funding, enforcement, renewal, etc.).

Davidoff and Reiner, define planning as the process for determining appropriate future action. They say,

The choices which thus constitute the planning process are made at three levels: first, the selection of ends and criteria; second, the identification of a set of alternatives consistent with these general prescriptives, and the selection of a desired alternative; and third, guidance of action toward determined ends.<sup>23</sup>

In other words, the planning process has three steps: value formulation, means identification, and effectuation.

Chapin expresses an explanation which might be termed traditional. He says:

Although there can be many variations in the way they are grouped and presented, in general the basic elements of the

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<sup>23</sup>Davidoff and Reiner, op. cit., p. 103.

study will include the following: A statement of local objectives; a discussion of existing trends in the use, nonuse, and misuse of land; a presentation of future land use requirements including a statement of the principles to be followed and the assumptions made; a description of each sketch land use plan among the alternatives presented; and the identification of proposals involved and policies implied in each. In a later stage in the progression of planning studies in which a general land use plan and transportation plan emerges, the content of this type of report includes recommendations for the implementation of the plan.<sup>24</sup>

The steps in the planning process according to Chapin are, therefore:

1. Determine Objectives (goals).
2. Background Studies: analysis and determination of community needs, assumptions.
3. Alternative Physical Plans Presented.
4. Alternatives Analyzed: implied policies explained.

While this traditional approach expresses a concern for community goals, it bears only slight resemblance to the policy planning process as we have and will present it. Gans defines "goal-oriented planning" and says,

The crucial elements in this definition are goals, the programs to achieve them, the consequences of achieving these, especially cost in relation to resources, and the criteria of ordering goals and programs in the priority of these to be achieved first, or later, or to be given up.<sup>25</sup> (Emphasis added by author.)

This is a definition of "normative" planning as Goodman has defined it. This is a process of establishing rational or reasonable ends. As can be seen there are definite contrasts in the traditional approach and the policy-process approach to planning.

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<sup>24</sup>Chapin, op. cit., p. 359.

<sup>25</sup>Gans, op. cit., pp. 79-80.

It is apparent that the theory of the planning process is in transition throughout time. An approach to policy planning which has evolved out of traditional planning, and this method is probably the most commonly used among urban planners at this time, includes the following steps:

1. Preparation of Background Studies.
2. Analysis and Synthesis of Information and Presentation of Alternatives.
3. Development of Policy Plan (goals, policies, actions).
4. Development of Comprehensive Plan (physical).
5. Implementation.

A theory of the planning process which appears to be evolving at this time is one which rejects the notion that background studies are necessary in order to understand community problems prior to determination of goals. Davidoff and Reiner say that objectives (goals) should be defined before research is done. They say,

Facts by themselves will not suggest what would be good or what should be preferred. To illustrate this point, a factual survey of housing conditions in a given area would not give rise to a value judgment or goal in the absence of an attitude about the way people ought to live in residential structures.<sup>26</sup>

This statement clearly illustrates the fact that planners have traditionally operated to a great extent on their intuition and have many times made "educated-guesses." There is obviously a need to refine the planning process and attempt to make it more scientific. If we can define our objectives at the outset, much time might potentially be saved which might be otherwise spent on unnecessary studies.

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<sup>26</sup>Davidoff and Reiner, op. cit., p. 111.

Frederick Bair says,

The first step in preparing a plan should not be immersion in basic studies, but careful preparation of a statement of major development objectives and policies. A great deal of planning begins as a complex organization of detailed information without much thought as to what the information is to be used for. This accounts for many of the thick planning documents with thin conclusions which were often obvious before the data was compiled and analyzed at great expense.<sup>27</sup>

Planning is evolving, and properly so, in the opinion of this author, away from an emphasis on physical plans and solutions to an emphasis on policy and goals. Planning is seen as a process which coordinates a series of related actions and decisions and which moves toward the accomplishment of goals. These goals are the basis for all planning and the planning process.

How does policy planning fit into the planning process?

It is the stage at which primary purposes and objectives of the planning process are decided upon. It is the stage when directions for action and guidelines for that action are determined. It is broad in scope from the general to the specific, but it does not become involved with specific land use locational recommendations. Policy planning is the framework around which all other aspects of the planning process must revolve. It consists of goals, and methods to accomplish those goals. The policy plan is used as a roadmap in the development of a physical plan, and as a guideline for operational decision-making.

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<sup>27</sup>Bair, op. cit., p. 19.



Policy planning consists of discovering alternative choices, analyzing the consequences of each alternative, and finally choosing the best alternative. It is the process of goal formulation which can be an extremely broad task.

It involves determination through research and political methods--including citizen participation, of the goals sought by various sectors of the population, philosophical-political evaluation of alternatives, choice among alternatives, and their translation into operationally feasible objectives which can then be fed back into the political process. Conversely, planners who work for nongovernmental agency, private, or special interest groups will formulate and operationalize the goals of their clients and, of course, criticize the goals of the particular establishments they oppose.<sup>28</sup>

Generally speaking, the planning process, or any problem-solving process for that matter, moves through three steps: determination of goals, determination of means to accomplish those goals, and actions using a particular means to accomplish the desired goals.

### Historical Background

Many planners currently see their profession in a state of transition from physical planning to a new discipline of social science combining social, economic, and physical approaches to problem-solving. Chapin states,

At the outset, it might be observed that while goals of planning have been at the forefront of planning thought since the early literature on utopia, only in relatively recent times has the identification of goals been made an integral part of the

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<sup>28</sup>Herbert J. Gans, "The Need for Planners Trained in Policy Formulation," in Urban Planning in Transition, by E. Erber, Ed. (New York: Grossman, 1970), p. 224.

technical work of planning. This spotlighting of goals bids well to be a characteristic of the sixties, not alone in planning, but pervading many fields.<sup>29</sup>

Herbert Gans presents a concise history of urban planning in the United States which provides valuable insights into the evolution of planning and the growth in importance of and demand for goals.

City planning grew up as a movement of upper-middle class eastern reformers who were upset by the arrival of the European immigrants and the squalor of their existence in urban slums and the threat which these immigrants, and urban-industrial society generally, represented to the social, cultural, and political dominance the reformers had enjoyed in small-town agrarian America. These early planners did not concern themselves much with explicit goals; they were a movement with missionary fervor to developing programs calling for a change in the physical environment, for they believed that physical change would bring about social change.

As reform groups and businessmen gave city planning increasing support, it became a profession. Its physical emphasis naturally attracted architects, landscape architects, and engineers; these developing planning tools that were based to a considerable extent on the beliefs which the movement had accepted. Thus, they made master plans which assumed that once land-use arrangements had been ordered "comprehensively," the social and economic structure of the community would also change.

In its brief history, planning has developed from a missionary movement to a profession based on the beliefs of that movement, but with a strongly architectural and engineering emphasis. In terms of the approach I have outlined, planning in its next phase would be a profession resembling in many ways the discipline of an applied social science. An art in formulating its special synthesis of these data.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>F. Stuart Chapin, Jr., "Foundations of Urban Planning," In Urban Life and Form, Ed., by Werner Hirsh (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, Inc., 1963), p. 225.

<sup>30</sup>Herbert J. Gans, People and Plans: Essays on Urban Problems and Solutions (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1968), pp. 80-82.

Another aspect of the historical evolution of planning is the way in which planners functioned within the decision-making system. Early planning seemed to perceive a division of labor which suggested that the "long-range, general and comprehensive" aspects of planning should be conceptually and organizationally separated from the "daily, the detailed, and the partial."

Pursuant to the stress on this kind of separation, many planners a generation ago justified a deliberate insulation of their brand of planning from the daily hurly-burly of politics, for any real responsibility for the steps from here to there, from a recognition of fine grain determinants of general policy, and from a close involvement and two-way interaction with the other planners working at different scales and in the specialized functions.<sup>31</sup>

Perhaps this was because, as Fagin puts it, "As late as the 1950's, planners were still working predominantly by rule-of-thumb, with mountains of assumptions backed by mole hills of solid knowledge."<sup>32</sup>

The essence of the traditional approach to planning has been to view the city as a large design project. Planning according to this view, "is the process of forming a picture of a future physical pattern and developing the control measures that are needed to move the community toward the goal."<sup>33</sup> This planning was not continuous except in the sense that new specific recommendations were made every now and then. This planning completed a

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<sup>31</sup>Henry Fagin, "The Evolving Philosophy of Urban Planning," in Urban Research and Policy Planning, Ed. by Leo F. Schnore, and Henry Fagin (Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, 1967), pp. 316-317.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 324.

<sup>33</sup>Goodman, op. cit., p. 328.

decision-making process rather than beginning it. The traditional urbanist approach still lingers on in the federal "701" urban planning assistance program.

Martin Meyerson, in 1956, spoke to the issue of needed changes in the concept and practice of planning. He pointed out in an article titled "Building the Middle Range Bridge for Comprehensive Planning" that the scope of planning was expanding and was beginning to be exposed to new concepts. He said, there are new functions and responsibilities which, if not performed by planners, will be performed by someone else. He suggested the following functions of the planner:

1. Central Intelligence Function
2. Pulse-Taking Function
3. Policy Clarification Function
4. Detailed Development Plan Function
5. Feed-Back Review Function--"a role which brings planning and policy closer together."<sup>34</sup>

Meyerson in particular points out the conflicting values in society, and the resultant competition which results. He suggests that while competition is expressed and settled through politics, planning can play a role in the development and analysis of alternative policies. The predictions made in Meyerson's article have come true, and planning has at least begun the transition out of its historical role of urban designer.

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<sup>34</sup>Martin Meyerson, "Building the Middle Range Bridge for Comprehensive Planning," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, XXII (March, 1956), p. 60.

The evolving thought is that,

. . .while the planner in our particular area of community development is properly concerned with physical programs, the physical plan must on the one hand be the reflection of pertinent social, fiscal, and economic policy and, on the other hand, must be an interacting influence in the making of social, fiscal, and economic plans.<sup>35</sup>

Undoubtedly the evolution of the mass media of communications in this country has done much to change the attitudes and awareness of people. People have become more aware of the social costs of projects "that disrupted neighborhoods, uprooted families and long-standing businesses, destroyed treasured views of favorite buildings and harbors and hills."<sup>36</sup> In fact, people have become as concerned about the gain or loss of intangible values as they had been about the potentially positive or negative economic impact of development. Meyerson had called for improvements in the planning process because he felt it had failed "to translate the remote goal-oriented master plan into meaningful and operative goal-action statements for decision-making within and without the government."<sup>37</sup>

As planners began to realize that the problems of society were becoming more complex, they could see the growing importance and need for nonphysical and program planning techniques of coordination. As a result, the scope of planning has expanded significantly

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<sup>35</sup>Frederick T. Aschman, "The Policy Plan in the Planning Program," PLANNING 1963 (Chicago: American Society of Planning Officials, 1963), p. 110.

<sup>36</sup>Fagin, op. cit., p. 328.

<sup>37</sup>Meyerson, op. cit., p. 61.

in recent years. As Fagin puts it,

There is room in the philosophy of planning for elements of urban life best handled by sponteneity, others by the competitive market, others by a pricing mechanism used more extensively for governmental services, and still others by non-governmental voluntary cooperative action.<sup>38</sup>

The beginnings of a recognition that the refinement of planning to a science is necessary if it is to be an effective process were expressed by Lichfield in 1960, when he said,

. . .because planning is so subjective it is difficult to be rational in the process, that is, to move by reason toward the optimum in attainment of goals. To assist in this it is necessary, as has been recognized [by Meyerson], to analyze the implications (consequences) of plans, policies, or actions, and of alternatives. Since goals cannot be reached without the use of resources, the analysis should bring out the implications in benefits (services) that would accrue to the community and the cost (resources) at which they would be bought.<sup>39</sup>

It must not be overlooked, however, that Lichfield, like many planners today, was attempting to apply economic values to intangible and subjective artifacts and states-of-being.

It has been pointed out that in the past, projections of trends were accepted as expressions of "anticipated change" and thus, have been used as though they were established community policies regarding growth.<sup>40</sup> This situation is possibly a reason for the

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<sup>38</sup>Fagin, op. cit., p. 319.

<sup>39</sup>Nathaniel Lichfield, "Cost-Benefit Analysis in City Planning," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, XXVI (November, 1960), p. 273.

<sup>40</sup>Warren Kahle, "Planning Techniques Related to Urban Growth and their Municipal Policy Implications" (Unpublished Master's thesis, Michigan State University, 1966), p. 98.

insistence by some planners that the formulation of goals come before the conducting of background studies.

While traditional planning had its beneficial points, contemporary planning must be practiced in a completely different political and social environment. This will require restructuring of government responsibilities. "Thus, the scope of planning becomes coterminus with the scope of governmental program development."<sup>41</sup>

We would be remiss not to notice the motivation for the change in planning and development organization in the political sense. Where reorganization has occurred, in most cases it has not been the municipal executive, typically the strong mayor. It is because urban politics have become development politics that urban planning goals have changed, and in their turn, organization for urban planning.<sup>42</sup>

In the past many planning programs have ignored policy planning. It was not because the theoretical need to define objectives was not recognized. Rather, the planning practitioners and their employers, the public bodies, were unable to resolve the various differences of groups and individuals in defining the public interest. And, through such definition establish a set of operational community goals. Policy planning must be an on-going process. Refinement and adjustments must be constantly made if policy is to be effective. Some of the issues noted by Goodman, which once resolved will signal the end of the present transitional process in planning are:

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<sup>41</sup>Fagin, op. cit., p. 315.

<sup>42</sup>Daland, op. cit., p. 518.

1. How to encourage citizen interest in the shape of the community 10 to 20 years in the future?
2. What role does the planner play in defining goals?
3. How can conflicts between competing interest groups be resolved?
4. Is it possible for a community to move beyond a local legislator's concept of the public interest?
5. Can it be assumed that legislators will make decisions that contribute to the accomplishment of long-range objectives, even when the decisions are in conflict with more immediate demands?
6. Is it possible to define development objectives and once they have been defined can they be applied in a meaningful way?<sup>43</sup>

Traditional methods in planning have reflected the client-architect relationship to a great extent; they have been oriented to a single-purpose, single-site type solution. This is in sharp contrast to more recent thinking concerning the need for true comprehensiveness in planning policy development. Most issues concerning a particular goal can now be analyzed (to some extent) through the use of computer programs and matrix algebra.

Every action throughout the system with which the planner is working, and with which he is trying to bring about certain actions or changes, has a reaction somewhere else within the system. The successful planner today must have a thorough understanding of all elements of the system and their relationships to each other. The policy which will stand the severest tests, therefore, is that which is totally comprehensive.

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<sup>43</sup>Goodman, op. cit., p. 327.



If we can assume that the transition to a new style of policy planning is well along, what does the immediate future hold in store? Alan Kravitz offers some interesting thoughts:

As we enter into the late sixties, we must enter into a post-advocacy age. The challenge is no longer what to plan or whom to plan for. The vital question has become who should plan and how should they go about it. It has ceased to be a matter of planning as programming or the selection of detailed courses of action. It is now a matter of control, a question of who should control the future.

For me it is clear: all men must share equally in authority over the future. Thus, the question has become one of how can all men gain the authority or power to participate equally in the planning of the future?

Planners have failed to include goals and values within the scope of their rationalistic planning. They neglect the normative side of planning, the establishment of goals and values, the making of social choices. They have retreated into the myth of public interest when no process exists in the society for the democratic establishment of structuring of goals and values. If you infer from this statement that I do not accept the results of political activity as "democratic" you do so correctly.

American planning is the child of a political tradition that includes reformism, liberalism, and representative democracy, and of an intellectual tradition that extends from pragmatism through operationalism and behavioralism. These have a place in a utopia where all the issues of equity, all the questions of value, have been resolved, where a process for resolution of the "public interest" exists. The gross inequalities, the injustices, and the lack of effective democratic processes demand that we go beyond "advocacy and pluralism" to participation. This is our challenge. If we wish to take our option, if we want to avoid violent revolution, we must succeed in this radicalization.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>Alan S. Kravitz, "Advocacy and Beyond," PLANNING 1968 (Chicago: American Society of Planning Officials, 1968), p. 42.

### Goal Formulation and Policy

Determination of goals in the decision-making process is essentially an effort to conceptualize the values and goals of a community. It is the action taken by citizens, planners, and politicians to identify, examine, or promote specific ideas, values, or beliefs. In urban policy development, the formulation of goals generally encompasses human, economic, governmental, and physical policies. Inherent in these categories are such elements as environment, transportation, housing, and other specific urban development and management concerns.

The objectives of traditional planning, which continue as basic to the planning philosophies of today include such abstract goals as convenience, order, efficiency, economy, and beauty. This thesis has defined goal as a general statement of a desired end which reflects inherent human values. The definition of requisites as guidelines which aid in determining goals can be clearly seen as applying those values of the establishment within which planners are functioning. While requisites are generally not "inherent human values" they do represent the value structure of the participants in the planning process. Requisites are constraints, often more well defined than are basic values, which define the system or context within which planners operate.

"Values may be expressed as moral statements, or as statements of preference, of criteria, or of ends--more particularly

goals."<sup>45</sup> Davidoff and Reiner provide some helpful formulations of these types of value statements:

Moral Statement: X ought to be Y

Statement of Preference: X is preferred to Y

Statements of Ends or Goals: X is the end state sought

Statements of Criteria: When confronted with a choice  
between X and Y, apply rule M.

Precise values are difficult to define and therefore to comprehend. Since the decision makers cannot generally verify their interpretations of values, sometimes known as the public interest, their goal should be to increase assurance that the choice was at least reasonable, or more reasonable than an alternative. Some methods of identifying values, often used by planners include: market analyses, public opinion polls, anthropological surveys, public hearings, interviews with informed leaders, newspaper and press content analyses, studies of current and past laws, studies of current and past administrative behavior, and studies of current and past budgets.

Policy planning and goal formulation are essential if we are to avoid the incremental or competitive approach to problem solving. If, through the development of policy, decision makers are able to get a few steps ahead of the crises which are continually presenting themselves, decision making and planning will become far more orderly and coherent. Problem solving is generally carried out

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<sup>45</sup>Davidoff and Reiner, op. cit., p. 107.

in two ways. The decision makers can carry out, "a pervasive war of coordinating a great multiplicity of interacting things," or they can compromise through the political process, which has its limitations. However, "we are capable occasionally of an act of intuition, in which we conceive a new way of putting things together that solves simultaneously." There are obviously many viable alternatives not just one "right" answer. "Policy is arrived at successfully by the refinement of several generations of alternatives, each new set based on further knowledge than was available earlier."<sup>46</sup>

[ Normative planning is generally done by elected officials and their appointed administrators. Goodman seems to suggest that the policies planning process has more to offer than the conventional planning process because it offers a time for deeper citizen input into the decision-making process by allowing public debate of the means to the ends. [ Policy planning is made for today's "activist" citizens who, in contrast to the citizens of a few years ago, actually want to participate in the public debate of governmental decision making. ]

The development of general goals should result from the interaction of three groups: 1) the public and its voluntary organizations, 2) government as expressed by the elected representatives, and 3) technical aides and consultants who staff urban planning offices.<sup>47</sup>

Goals will invariably reflect the values of their makers.

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<sup>46</sup>Fagin, op. cit., p. 324.

<sup>47</sup>Goodman, op. cit., p. 330.

In a bureaucratic system every agency and individual has his own interpretation of the goal and movement toward goals can easily vary "off course" from what was originally intended by the decision makers.

Programmatic means are general and in their application to specific areas or individuals may cause injustice. A whole program may be jeopardized where such injustice is sufficiently grave. Variance procedures, for example, represent explicit recognition of the need to apply equity in certain specific circumstances, yet variances may cumulatively thwart program ends.<sup>48</sup>

It is obvious that decision outcomes reflect the values, goals, and interests of those individuals or groups who possess the most resources, occupy a favorable position in the decision-making structure, are the most capable at negotiating decision outcomes, and have the capacity for developing the best tactics and methods of influencing behavior. It is for this reason, as Bolan points out, that "an appointed body whose accountability is somewhat obscure is more prone to action than an elected body whose mandate is continually challenged at the polls."<sup>49</sup>

Public officials aware of the interest of their constituents and recognizing the potential impact of major development decisions, can no longer permit planning to exist outside their purview.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Davidoff and Reiner, op. cit., p. 113.

<sup>49</sup>Richard S. Bolan, "Community Decision Behavior: The Culture of Planning," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, 35 (September, 1969), p. 305.

<sup>50</sup>Goodman, op. cit., p. 333.

The planning commissioner or the planner must remember the sources of authority which are needed to establish policy in specific areas.

If he views the planning process as something larger than his own contribution, then the problem is complicated for he must then require higher goals which he has no authority to set, goals which will provide the purpose for his land use and circulation plans.<sup>51</sup>

The point which the author is attempting to make is that policy conflicts are settled through negotiation and political bargaining. Eventually, urban policies evolve from compromises among groups with the necessary power and energy to persuade other participants in the policy-making process of the desirability of a particular course of action.

The increased public involvement in planning points up the existence of a variety of life styles and value systems in society today. Note particular variations among differing social and economic groups. The obvious factors influencing value systems are race, income, occupation, political affiliation, present life style (urban, suburban, rural), education, and age.

[In addition, there are special interest groups with varying values and goals concerning the development process.] The development decisions which must be influenced in order to affect the process are unique to each group and its perceived goals in the process, "the household by basic needs and preferences, the

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<sup>51</sup> Robert C. Young, "Goals and Goal Setting," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, XXXII (March, 1966), p. 84.

developer-entrepreneur by the profit motive, the predevelopment landowner by a mixture of pecuniary and personal motives."<sup>52</sup>

Both Davidoff and Fagin, in particular, have called for greater citizen involvement in the planning process itself. While Davidoff's ideas on advocacy and pluralism are well known, Fagin says, "Intelligent choice about public policy would be aided if different political, social, and economic interests produced city plans. Plural plans rather than single agency plans should be presented to the public," politicising the planning process.<sup>53</sup>

Altshuler gives the planners a bit more responsibility when he states that the planners will be able to develop truly comprehensive plans if they "understand every important goal of each of society's members." Obviously a monumental, if not impossible task. It is usually difficult to get these, often informal, groups to surface without a crisis affecting them immediately at hand. Altshuler also points out,

. . .the abstract discussion of goals could seldom seem sufficiently immediate to spur them to organize and choose representatives. Even if the planners [in his case study] had been able to handle all the complexity of life, they would not have found laymen willing or able to evaluate their work.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>Goodman, op. cit., p. 331.

<sup>53</sup>Fagin, op. cit., p. 328.

<sup>54</sup>Alan A. Altshuler, "The Goals of Comprehensive Planning," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, XXXI (August, 1965), pp. 189-190.

In any case,

. . .it is necessary to decide whose goals are to be implemented, whose are to be set aside, and, where possible, whether conflicting goals can be combined in some way so that as many as possible are achieved. More often, however, conflicting goals force the community and its decision-makers to choices which will aid one interest at the expense of another.<sup>55</sup>

The goals adopted for a community must win support through the democratic political process. They cannot be goals of only the planners and not the people. If planners are to be successful in determining goals, or at least generating alternatives, they must develop methods of evaluating the goals and plans of all individuals and groups in society. It can be assumed that these groups and individuals will be developing plans either through advocacy or the opening up of the decision-making process to plural plans. In that process the planner, as a partner of the decision maker, must be the arbitrator of plural plans.

The market and political bargaining processes depend on the assumptions that only individuals have goals, that these normally conflict, and that the mysteries of bargaining yield the best results possible for men. The planner cannot rely on a hypothetical invisible hand; he must validate his claim to arbitrate, whereas the bargainer must only validate his claim to negotiate. Planners cannot claim to arbitrate on the basis of their own views of the public interest. If there are important conflicts of interest in a society that cannot be resolved to the advantage of all parties, then planners require the guidance of a strong political arbitrator.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>Gans, op. cit., p. 81.

<sup>56</sup>Alan A. Altshuler, The City Planning Process: A Political Analysis (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1965), pp. 314-15.



Since choice permeates the whole planning sequence, a clear notion of the ways in which choices are made, and of the ends pursued, must lie at the heart of the planner's task. Explication of all such determinants reduces arbitrariness.<sup>57</sup>

Robert Young suggests that the steps in the establishment of goals should consist of:

1. Establishment of the Perimeter of Concern: How will action affect which sectors of the community?
2. Establishment of the Range of Choice: Choosing from the infinite number of possible goals those which are most satisfactory.
3. Examination of the Relationships of Goals: To arrive at the best set of goals, understanding relationships is necessary.
4. Relative Evaluation of Goals or Sets of Goals: Attitude surveys; assigning relative values to goals.<sup>58</sup>

In addition, Davidoff and Reiner suggest that, "the final product of the value formulation stage of planning should be alternative sets of objectively measurable goals and criteria."<sup>59</sup> This process prevents arbitrariness, it helps to recognize whether ends are achievable, and in some cases, it is necessary to break down goals into objectively measurable ends in order to give precise directions to the implementors.

T. J. Kent adds that, during the plan evaluation stage of the decision-making process, the governing body

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<sup>57</sup>Davidoff and Reiner, op. cit., p. 103.

<sup>58</sup>Young, op. cit., pp. 82-84.

<sup>59</sup>Davidoff and Reiner, op. cit., p. 111.

. . .should study the proposed plan thoroughly, devote work sessions to it, and conduct formal hearings on it. During this period the proposed plan should be distributed to the citizens and to all private, civic and governmental groups and agencies active in community affairs.<sup>60</sup>

It must be remembered that values are personal. Institutions do not hold values. Suggestions that "the township" or some other governmental jurisdiction entity believes this or that cannot be either proved or disproved. Neither can a group "interest" be defined since individuals within the group may belong to other groups having conflicting values with the first. If the "interest" of a group is identified, it may frequently represent a majority view of only the individuals in that group.

It has recently become fashionable for some politicians to conduct well-publicised quests for consensual, nonoperational general goals. It is a rare politician indeed, however, who leads his constituents in formulating positive operational social goals.<sup>61</sup>

### The Case for Policy Planning

The practical advantages of policy planning are many. As has been noted, many policies employed by communities are unwritten "rules-of-thumb" or generally applied standards or precedents. Similar to the development of case law, accepted policies can evolve into positions of great respect and wide acceptance. The essential value of policy planning is the act of conducting that planning

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<sup>60</sup>T. J. Kent, Jr., The Urban General Plan (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co., 1964), p. 68.

<sup>61</sup>Altshuler, op. cit., p. 322.

itself. The mere fact of taking time to put policy down into words gives decision makers an opportunity to think about those rules upon which their decisions are based. They are aids to rationale thinking.

Policies have other values as well. A few basic qualities and values have been expressed by several writers in the planning field quite consistently. These characteristics of policy planning are presented in an attempt to show the great value and useful qualities of these planning tools.

As an aid to public understanding and participation, policy plans clearly expose the issues surrounding the achievement of proposed community goals or programs. The general pattern of citizen involvement is for interest to focus on one current issue for a short time, and then on another, and so on. The presentation of the policy plan affords citizens to view all local policy issues in context with each other, as well as, in context with the pressing issues of the moment. As Goodman puts it, "Policies planning enables the public to see the relationship between the general and the specific."<sup>62</sup>

Policy planning provides consistency in the planning and decision-making process. Arbitrary decision making is minimized through the adoption of clear policies. In addition, careful review of a comprehensive set of policies should eliminate inconsistencies or conflicting goals. Consistency implies stability in

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<sup>62</sup>Goodman, op. cit., p. 333.

the decision-making process which enhances the credibility of the process itself. Physical changes in the environment which require reevaluation of traditional physical plans need not render the policy plan obsolete. An error in a population projection, for example, will not normally affect the basic principles or relationships which are established in the policy plan. Nelson says,

Policies provide a useful tool for making planning a continuous decision process. They set a framework within which continuity and efficiency can be increased over longer periods of time and development.<sup>63</sup>

The third advantage of policy planning is efficiency. When a growing community is frequently confronted with problems of a recurrent nature, clearly stated policies may reduce the amount of time spent by decision makers on similar issues. Policies standardize the decision-making process to some extent, and thus free decision makers to deal with problems requiring more thought due to their complexity or uniqueness. Robert Bolan reviews this point with an illustration of how policies function. He says,

The ideological content of a proposal for change will influence the decision outcome. If there is little conflict over basic values implicit in a proposal, then it is hypothesized that there will be a greater tendency toward positive action. However, should a proposal seriously conflict with widely held values, then there will be a tendency for rejection.<sup>64</sup>

As we have noted earlier, ~~the~~ role of the planner in government is, and has, changed in recent years. While once a pure

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<sup>63</sup>Nelson, op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>64</sup>Bolan, op. cit., p. 307.

technician, the planner must now function to coordinate a variety of administrative entities. A further value of policy planning is, therefore, coordination. The policy plan creates a single framework within which all governmental departments and agencies may act in concert on development proposals. Planners are increasingly involved in interdisciplinary decision making in which consistent policies are invaluable.

As a guide to decision making and review, the policy plan "can be useful as a guide to legislative bodies responsible for adopting land use controls, and to the courts which must judge the reasonableness of the legislation and the fairness of its administration."<sup>65</sup> Policy planning provides the elected official with an opportunity to provide direction to the administration of programs which often evolve into policies by themselves.

Aschman suggests that the policy plan lends itself to the review process more readily than the conventional plan. He points out that it "can periodically or even continuously be subjected to legislative discussion and public reexamination."<sup>66</sup>

The importance of public policy in the development process cannot be overlooked. Development decisions are made in the context of basically two factors which are socio-economic and public policy, according to Edward Kaiser and Shirley Weiss.<sup>67</sup> Property

<sup>65</sup> Goodman, op. cit., p. 332.

<sup>66</sup> Aschman, op. cit., p. 110.

<sup>67</sup> Edward J. Kaiser and Shirley F. Weiss, "Public Policy and the Residential Development Process," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, 36 (January, 1970), p. 32.

characteristics are determined to be physical (topography, soils, etc.), locational (accessibility to employment, etc.), and institutional (zoning, etc.). The development process is dynamic; property characteristics can change throughout the development process. The influence of public policy on private decision making is profound, even though policy influence is often indirect. For example, the quality of a neighborhood depends to a great extent on how that neighborhood developed, and will develop in the future. Therefore, public policy in the areas of land use and design are vitally important to the long-term character of a community.

### Summary

Chapter one has presented a review of the basic concepts of policy planning and the theory of policy planning and decision making. Policy moves from the general to the specific, and must be understood within a context of values, goals, and policy. Policy is a course of action adopted and pursued in attaining goals or achieving objectives.

Traditional planning is gradually giving way to normative planning or policy-oriented planning. The policy-planning process has three steps: Value formulation, Means identification, and Effectuation. An evolving theory of planning holds that background studies are not necessary prior to determining goals. Planning is moving away from an emphasis on physical plans and solutions to an emphasis on policy and goals. Historically, goals have received

attention, but only recently has any amount of emphasis been placed on their use. The essence of the traditional approach to planning has been to view the city as a large design project. Meyerson was one of the early planners to see an expanding role of planning into politics and policy.

Policy planning plays a major role in the process of goal formulation. Precise values are difficult to define and, therefore, comprehend. Goals will invariably reflect the values of their makers. Goals are formulated through negotiation and the political process.

The values of policy planning can be expressed in several ways. These include: (1) As an aid to clear thinking, (2) as an aid to public understanding and participation, (3) for consistency, (4) for efficiency, (5) to improve coordination, and (6) as a guide to decision making and review.

## CHAPTER II

### PRACTICE OF POLICY PLANNING

This chapter will consist of a review of the ways in which policy planning is applied in the developmental decision-making process. It will review the application of policy planning and the basic approaches used. It will present ideas concerning the proper content of the policy plan. The role of citizen involvement in the planning process, particularly as it may relate to policy will be discussed. Carrying the concept of citizen participation one step further, a review of the effect of politics on the policy planning process is valuable to a thorough understanding of the concept. Finally, a review of the role of the planner in the practice of policy planning will be conducted.

#### Methods and Approaches

Basic to an understanding of the approaches to policy development is the realization that different people have different ideas about what policy planning should be or should accomplish. Most policy planners generally agree that the objective of policy planning is to bring diverse goals, values, and policies together in some sort of framework in which conflicts can be resolved, and new policies can be developed as necessary.



Goodman presents three methods or ideas as to how a policy plan should function. He suggest: (1) as a replacement for the general plan, (2) as a technique for guiding urban development, and (3) as a method of expanding the scope and authority of planning.<sup>68</sup>

This thesis has reviewed in earlier sections the differences in traditional planning and policy planning. As Bolan expresses it,

It is hypothesized that planning which deals with the immediate, focuses on means, and deals only with highly selective and narrowly strategic information is more likely to guide or direct action than planning which looks to a long-term horizon, is goal-oriented, and focuses on comprehensive and complex systems of information.<sup>69</sup>

It may be recognized that the present state of the art of policy planning leads one to the same conclusion as Bolan. However, this present weakness of the approach should not lead us to abandon it but rather to strengthen it. The success of the ways in which policy planning is applied will be the key to refinement of the process.

The most apparent level at which the transition between traditional planning methods and policy planning is occurring is the political process. Herbert Gans comments,

I suspect that political decision makers may already use an approach similar to the one I am suggesting. What one might call their 'political benefit-cost accounting' is not

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<sup>68</sup>Goodman, op. cit., p. 339.

<sup>69</sup>Bolan, op. cit., p. 306.

altogether different from goal-oriented planning, even though politicians make their decisions without explicitly formulating goals, determining what programs will best achieve their goals, or measuring the benefits and costs of alternative programs.<sup>70</sup>

This statement depicts what Gans believes should be incorporated into the policy plan. In addition, there is an example, though perhaps a crude one, of how policy is derived, and by implication, how formalizing the process through planning could aid in the decision-making process. Whether or not policy planning can be refined to accomplish this goal is unknown. This uncertainty is particularly acute if Rondinelli's premise is accepted that, "Policy making is an inherently political rather than a deliberative process."<sup>71</sup>

The attitudes of the constituents of the planning process often shape policy to an extent which prevents consideration of a full range of alternatives. For example, as Bair cautions,

It is only fair to warn you that there will be vigorous and often vicious opposition to anything proposed for the suburban residential environment which involves any kind of housing but single-family detached residences on large lots in conventional subdivisions.<sup>72</sup>

In general, the power structure of suburbia is embracing the status quo.

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<sup>70</sup>Gans, op. cit., p. 83.

<sup>71</sup>Dennis A. Rondinelli, "Urban Planning as Policy Analysis: Management of Urban Change," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, 39 (January, 1973), p. 13.

<sup>72</sup>Bair, op. cit., p. 10.

Rafsky and others have suggested that the best approach to policy planning is based upon the development of alternative choices. "The presentation of the planning program to the consumer should be done by posing of alternative strategies which clearly indicate the consequences of following a particular line of action toward a stated goal."<sup>73</sup> Therefore, a structure emerges which moves from the general to the specific, from goals to lines of action.

On the other extreme, an approach more closely allied with the traditional concepts of planning, is suggested by Charles Harr: "The plan should state the goals--the desirable maximum density of people per acre; the question of how to arrange them should be left to the implementing regulation."<sup>74</sup> Policy planning does not get involved with implementation specifically. However, through the lines of action, the steps in implementing policy are carefully structured.

Policy planning is, as stated earlier, in a state of transition.

Whenever a problem or an opportunity arises, planners today tend to look for the best combination of decision by competition and decision by policy--of spontaneous and relatively free bargaining and of coordinative, structure-imposing planning.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup>William A. Rafsky, "Checkpoints for Evaluating the Planning Program," Planning 1969 (Chicago: American Society of Planning Officials, 1969), p. 79.

<sup>74</sup>Goodman, op. cit., p. 341.

<sup>75</sup>Fagin, op. cit., p. 321.

Planners must be conscious of political realities. This idea will be discussed later.

In the development process which planning and planning policy are called to affect, "it is the moving and investment decisions by individuals and organizations that must be influenced if public actions and policies are to effect changes in the urban spatial structure."<sup>76</sup> This goal is basic to what urban planning policy should seek to accomplish. This is consistent with the land use traditions of planning.

Discussed earlier in this paper were ideas concerning what policy consists of in a range from values to actual mapping of desired future conditions. Policy planning seems to emphasize the values end of the scale. However, as Loeks notes,

We have failed to come clean on our view of the future, that is between the futuristic or utopian view on the one hand and the incremental or pragmatic on the other. Both are needed, one to loosen our minds and set broad directions, the other to determine immediately how to get from here to there. However, because we have not come clean on this, people view us as being in an ivory tower, but locked in its basement. It is too bad because the practice of good planning is enlightened pragmatism in its best sense. We needn't be apologetic or defensive about the ivory tower hangup.<sup>77</sup>

Policy is developed and implemented through a highly complex structure of public and private groups and individuals, in which there is both formal and informal delegation of responsibility

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<sup>76</sup>Kaiser and Weiss, op. cit., p. 37.

<sup>77</sup>C. David Loeks, "Underlying Causes of the Reconciliation Problem," Planning 1968 (Chicago: American Society of Planning Officials, 1968), p. 54.

and power. The number of possible alternative solutions or policies is infinite. Acceptable alternatives are derived through the application of requisites in the political process. While traditional planning suggests a systematic approach to the analysis of alternatives in order to make intelligent choices,

. . .in reality, the choice of alternative means is dictated by the possibilities evolving from political interaction rather than from deliberative, a priori design and analysis. Alternatives are gradually invented out of compromises among participants with different perceptions of the problem, interests, and criteria.<sup>78</sup>

Rondinelli presents a list of the processes of policy-making interaction. It includes, (1) tacit coordination and adaptive adjustment, (2) obtaining mutual consent, (3) reciprocal exchange, (4) bargaining and negotiation, (5) intermediation, (6) incentive and inducement, and (7) cooptation and coalition-building. These terms describe facets of the policy-development process and are methods through which policy can be derived.<sup>79</sup>

Policy which is developed by an appointed body, such as a planning commission, whose accountability is somewhat obscure is more likely to consist of bold and specific lines of action than is that of an elected body whose mandate is periodically challenged at the polls. However, the likelihood of the adoption of policy which will be implemented is vastly increased when it is derived through the political process.

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<sup>78</sup>Rondinelli, op. cit., p. 17.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

Chapin places great responsibility on the shoulders of the planner to affect the decision-making process when he says,

Clearly the effectiveness of policies as a means for shaping urban growth is dependent on whether such a framework becomes a recognized basis of coordinated action by all levels of government in policy decisions related to urban development.<sup>80</sup>

The effectiveness of policy planning is, as has been suggested, a political question. The desire of planners to open up the process and invite citizen participation reflects the growing awareness of planners that politics is participatory democracy in our society. Planning should be designed to reflect the values of the many, not only the values of those in power. The value of the planner is coordinative in the policy-making process. Planners must recognize that

. . . Each participant in policy formulation and implementation has limited evaluation capacity. Policy planning is done under conditions of uncertainty, risk, incomplete information, and partial ignorance of the situation in which problems evolve, the resources of interested groups, and the effectiveness of proposed solutions.<sup>81</sup>

The structure of government is critically important to the effectiveness of policy planning.

A highly competent and stable bureaucracy is more likely to produce positive influences on decision outcomes than those environments where bureaucracy is lacking or is relatively

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<sup>80</sup>F. Stuart Chapin, Jr., "Taking Stock of Techniques for Shaping Urban Growth," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, XXIX (May, 1963), p. 81.

<sup>81</sup>Rondinelli, op. cit., p. 18.

incompetent. A corollary hypothesis would be a structure with a highly articulated and respected hierarchy is more likely to produce positive action than a structure with no hierarchy.<sup>82</sup>

In a similar light, the character of the community can strongly influence the effectiveness of policy. "A populace relatively free of long-standing traditions is more prone to action than a mature, settled, and tradition-laden community."<sup>83</sup>

The formats of policy plans reflect the philosophies of the planners who created them. As has been noted, several variations have been used. A brief review of these approaches can be of some value.

The policy plan prepared by Dade County, Florida, is traditional in approach. It first presents background information containing basic facts and trends. It then presents several "key objectives" which, according to our definition, constitute goals. These are followed by five basic policies of a vague and general character. Alternative plans are presented; however, they are graphically portrayed and constitute only degrees of the same alternative, sprawl.

The Howard County, Maryland, policy plan is certainly a technician's idea of planning policy. It simply states the generally accepted standards for planning urban development and terms them

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<sup>82</sup>Bolan, op. cit., p. 305.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., p. 305.

policies. This thesis makes a distinction between standards and policy in definitions.

The report, Selecting Policies for Metropolitan Growth, prepared for the Minneapolis area, provides concise, written alternative development policies for evaluation by the public. In the introduction to the report, they state,

The Metropolitan Development Guide will include similar maps and sketches, but as an illustration of development goals rather than prescriptions. The prescriptions come in the policies designed to pursue the development goals and the recommended programs designed to carry out the policies.<sup>84</sup>

The Comprehensive Plan of Chicago pays lip service to policies and goals; however, it is basically a graphic plan accompanied by some descriptive text.

The policies developed by the National Capital Planning Commission for Washington, D.C. are organized into two areas. First, following an introduction of problems, potentials, and trends, and general goals, policies for specific areas of concern are presented. These policies are termed "basic" and "specific" and are for such things as: residential areas, recreation, and institutions. Secondly, the plan presents policies for specific, geographically defined planning districts. Generally speaking, however, the policies are again descriptions of graphic plans which are presented in the report.

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<sup>84</sup>The Joint Program: An Inter-Agency Land Use-Transportation Planning Program for the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, Selecting Policies for Metropolitan Growth (Minneapolis: The Joint Program, 1967), p. 10.



The Plan prepared for Santa Ana, California, has one of the better organizational schemes of plans which we reviewed. Issues and impacts are first reviewed. Next, ten basic "policies" are presented, each followed with additional information concerning background and rationale for proposing the goals. The goals are presented by area of concern, not geography, and are followed by "Programs" which are designed to implement the goals. The final section of the report entitled "Recommended Actions and Next Steps" is directed at specific governments and agencies and suggests actions which must be taken by these groups in order to implement the plan. Since this plan, prepared in 1971, is the most recent of those plans reviewed, this suggests that perhaps the art of policy planning is evolving and becoming refined, at least by way of technical presentation.

Finally, the policies plan prepared for the Central Connecticut Planning Region is organized in a most effective manner. The plan first presents a basic goal for all planning, and then several sub-goals organized by "functional" areas. The planners who prepared the plan have devised a standard form for presentation of each policy. The form includes such information as: a policy name, the statement of the policy, a code which relates the policy to functional area (it may affect more than one) and to "component" areas, which include management, financial, human, and physical, a priority, and schedules time of action on the policy, and, the geographic area affected as well as the specific organization(s) to take action. This approach is an exceptionally coherent method

which constitutes a major step in refinement of a method in the field of policy planning. The balance of the report utilizes the above-described information in such a manner that each concerned agency can plot their progress toward implementation of policy and can, most likely, evaluate the reasons for failure of the policy far more easily than can those using a more traditional format.

This section on methods and approaches has attempted to illustrate that policy problems are complex, and the action of policy planning must be designed to reflect that complexity if it is to be effective. There are a wide variety of approaches to policy planning. Systematic evaluation of policy is complicated by the difficulty in determining real policy output. Policy formulation is a political process in which planners can play a role.

### Content of the Plan

Henry Fagin's definition of policy planning is an appropriate one with which to introduce a discussion of the content of the policy plan. Fagin says that a policy plan is "comprehensive with respect to time, space, and money; and . . . brings physical, social, and economic considerations into common focus."<sup>85</sup> This definition encompasses most elements of community with which the planner might possibly be concerned. If read liberally, it can be taken to include anything. This definition is appropriate to our

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<sup>85</sup>Goodman, op. cit., p. 347.

needs, since it seems that planners do like to include almost anything in the preparation of a policy plan.

The policy plan is generally composed of three levels of policy. The first level or general policy deals with alternatives for development, rates of growth, character, levels of service, intensity of development, and generally statements that say "we would like. . . ." Level-one policy deals with the question of "where do we want to go?" The second level of policy deals with the ways to reach level-one goals. These are implementing policies, which are specific design proposals or action recommendations. The third level of policy is the means, or method by which policy is achieved. These are also implementing policies, but are detailed and easily translated into specific design proposals or action recommendations.<sup>86</sup>

When a planner begins to prepare a policy plan, the first step which must be taken is to gather together the existing policies of the community. These may consist of explicit statements in the comprehensive plan, may be maps or plans, they may be adopted standards, or generally accepted "rules of thumb," or they may be unwritten guidelines (requisites) that control decisions.

Goodman suggests that the proper contents of the policy plan should include:<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>86</sup>Ibid., p. 336.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., p. 348.

1. A review of the state of the area which includes the existing situation, trends, problems, opportunities, and so forth.
2. Statements of goals, including assumptions, constraints, and the major policies plans, projects and proposals that express desired direction.
3. The comprehensive physical development plan and a financial plan or budget.
4. The instruments that will be used to implement the policies plan.
5. The more detailed policies on each department of unit of government.
6. Technical notes on methodology and sources of data.
7. Any exposition of policy alternatives that were considered but discarded.

Goodman's proposal is by far the most comprehensive idea of what the contents of the policy plan should include. He is attempting to integrate policy into the planning process almost completely. There are those who would isolate it from the actual physical plan. Aschman says, "The policy plan may be an 'aspect' of the comprehensive plan or it may be a 'stage' of the planning program dealing exclusively with policy."<sup>88</sup> Aschman accepts the latter approach. The writer tends to agree with Aschman, and would exclude the element of a comprehensive physical development plan and financial plan from the desired content of the policy plan. While this phase is important to the planning process, if not the most apparent aspect, it is felt that it should be derived from a policy plan rather than functioning as a phase of the plan.

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<sup>88</sup>Aschman, op. cit., p. 110.

Policies are generally expressed, or organized, by functional area. The most common topics for which policies are normally derived include: land use, open space and recreation, natural resources, economy, transportation, public facilities (including utilities and services), schools, finance, regulation or methods of government, and sometimes, design. These topics reflect the technical traditions of the planners. They are concrete, readily defined subject areas.

An approach, used in the Connecticut Plan, deals more directly with the problems or issues through the way in which it is organized. Many of the same sorts of policies and specific actions appear in the plan, but they are organized around a structure of basic goals rather than functions of the urban system. Instead of developing a goal and policies for the area of public facilities, for example, policies are developed to promote health, safety, culture, social services. Such an orientation seems to be far more relevant to the planning concerns of today.

In recent years, policy plans have begun to take on this structure of goal orientation. In the process, planners have become aware that there are areas of community concern which can properly be considered to be within the framework of the policy plan. Some of these areas include environmental quality, manpower, criminal justice, aesthetics, culture, and citizen participation. In order to provide relevant services, the planner must begin to function as the community's "renaissance man." The concerns toward which the planner must address himself are those within the

socio-cultural system to which man attaches meaning. This is to say that within our environment there are organic and inorganic systems which change in predictable fashion and are deterministic. There are also elements of the environment which invite subjective interpretation by man. These elements are as important to the success of the socio-cultural environment as anything. As it has been expressed by Farness, "We need to theorize about a higher logic--a higher, multi-valued rationalism that can integrate truth, beauty, and goodness in concrete environmental forms."<sup>89</sup>

In a recent ASPO newsletter, Frank Bangs reports on a conference held in Washington, D.C. He says,

. . .it is possible to discern four major issues around which the panelists' policy proposals tended to group: (1) the urgent need to develop and implement techniques to control and rationalize growth at the urban fringe; (2) the basically unmet need for adequate housing of low-income persons; (3) the effect of exclusionary zoning on housing, and litigation as a means of overcoming it; and (4) the absolute necessity of reforming the system of real property taxation.<sup>90</sup>

These issues reflect the growing concern of planners in those areas of policy which are subjective, and difficult to define, but of the utmost importance to a well-balanced community and society, the basic goals of urban planning.

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<sup>89</sup>Sanford S. Farness, "Policy Problems Related to Planning and Managing Our Environment," Unpublished paper presented at the National Agricultural Policy Conference, Estes Park, Colorado, September 15, 1967, p. 2.

<sup>90</sup>Frank S. Bangs, Jr., "Urban Land Policy: Some Proposals for Change," Planning, May, 1972, p. 79.

### Citizen Participation

Citizen participation is a categorical term for citizen power. As Arnstein expresses it,

It is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future. It is the strategy by which the have-nots join in determining how information is shared, goals and policies are set, tax resources are allocated, programs are operated, and benefits like contracts and patronage are parceled out. In short, it is the means by which they can induce significant social reform which enables them to share in the benefits of the affluent society.<sup>91</sup>

While Arnstein is referring to "have-nots" in a socio-economic sense, the concept can be taken to include political outcasts as well. In many political situations where one point of view is held by a minimal, yet solid, majority, it is possible for a vast number of people to be unrepresented and even alienated by those in power.

Goodman seems to suggest that the policy planning process has more to offer than the conventional planning process because it offers an opportunity for deeper citizen input into the decision-making process, assuming it allows public debate of the means to the ends. Policy planning is made for today's activist citizen who, in contrast to the citizens of a few years ago, actually wants to participate in the public debate of governmental decision-making.

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<sup>91</sup>Sherry R. Arnstein, "A Ladder of Citizen Participation," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, 35 (July, 1969),

Citizen interest has come about in many communities primarily because, as Goodman puts it, "plans rapidly become projects, [and] citizens interest is [then] no longer casual or academic."<sup>92</sup>

The question then becomes "who are the citizens, and what are their goals?" Citizens, like the public interest, are difficult to define.

The increased public involvement in planning has highlighted the existence of multiple urban life styles, with distinct goals that vary widely between different social and economic groups.<sup>93</sup>

The planner is caught in the middle in his relationships with citizens and the decision makers by whom he is employed. If the planner is to successfully provide the decision maker with a full range of alternatives, he must identify the values of all groups and individuals and weigh them against each other. The planner faces an ethical question, assuming his goal is to properly reflect the public interest, since, in reality, he has two clients--the immediate client (or the planner's employer), and the ultimate client (those affected by the proposals).

Paul Davidoff, and other planners have answered the question of who is the citizen by stating that all segments of society should have an equal opportunity to participate in the pluralistic contention over the setting of public policy.<sup>94</sup> The responsibility,

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<sup>92</sup>Goodman, op. cit., p. 332.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., p. 332.

<sup>94</sup>Kravitz, op. cit., p. 41.



then, lies with the planner to "spur adequate discussions of their goal statements" since, if they do not, the decision makers cannot come to informed choices among them.<sup>95</sup>

To know who the citizens are is often the same as knowing what their goals are, particularly if they identify with a group which has clearly, publicly, expressed its goals. However, there is no easy way to know if most people like the present performance of government in the pursuit of goals. As a result, planners are increasingly finding themselves in awkward positions with both the public and the decision makers.

While only a few planning commissions have disappeared completely, their functions have been receding rapidly. Frequently they have been relegated to an advisory role. In addition, there has been a rapid proliferation of citizen groups and metropolitan affairs nonprofit corporations, which have sometimes exercised strong leadership in planning. These competitors to official planning bodies contribute even further to the weakening of the planning commission.<sup>96</sup>

Moreover, as Bolan points out,

The existence of strong private interest groups that dominate local politics means such groups will tend to influence decisions (in ways which coincide with their interests) much more than in circumstances where private interests are apathetic or dispersed. Similarly, programs that are designed to change the individual circumstances (such as social security) tend more toward action than programs that attempt massive changes in aggregate societal behavior (such as prohibition).<sup>97</sup>

So, the problem becomes, how to get citizen participation integrated into the planning process. The key is involvement in the

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<sup>95</sup>Altshuler, op. cit., p. 321.

<sup>96</sup>Daland, op. cit., p. 517.

<sup>97</sup>Bolan, op. cit., pp. 305-306.

actual policy formulation. Too often in planning, "there is nothing between the general abstraction [goals] which everyone must agree with, and the finished product [that is the land use plan]."<sup>98</sup>

General goals are usually phrased in such a manner that they can neither be fully comprehended, nor can they be opposed, since that would be like being against the "flag" or "motherhood."

Altshuler expresses this concern in his case study on the planning process in Minneapolis. He says of the plan,

No one showed any interest in discussing it. The reason seemed to be that the Plan's stated goals were too general. No one knew how the application of these goals would affect him in practice.<sup>99</sup>

I wonder how many planners have experienced the same response from citizens.

The paradox with the struggle for citizen participation on the part of planners seems to be that the comprehensive, long-range approach which planners typically take is either too general or not understood by citizens. "The abstract discussion of goals could seldom seem sufficiently immediate to spur them to organize and choose representatives." As in Altshuler's case, planners too often find that they can "carry on a continuing discussion only with men whose jobs require them to spend time on the study and discussion of civic affairs."<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Goodman, op. cit., p. 332.

<sup>99</sup> Altshuler, op. cit., p. 306.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., p. 309.

The planners are subjected to an interpretation of the public interest in much the same way as legislators are from lobbyists. As a result, the businessmen can talk abstractly about the public interest, but they cannot claim any special qualifications to represent any particular interest but their own.<sup>101</sup> The paradox arises as the planner is caught in the middle, between the organized citizens and the unorganized citizens, who object to the planner even talking with "special interest groups." Again, Altshuler illustrates this point well:

Downtown businesses are, according to these objectors, organizations in being. Their owners are accustomed to watching the civic scene and searching for issues likely to affect their interests. They enter the discussion of any proposal at a very early stage and understand its potential impact on their interests relatively early. Other members of the public, however, tend to become aware that something is afoot and then to conceptualize their interests. After the perception begins to dawn, most take quite some time to organize.<sup>102</sup>

Again, it should be clear, the problem is how to get citizens involved.

A somewhat vague attempt at answering this question is put forth by Kravitz. He speaks of "a new generation of planners" when he says,

We feel that participatory democracy can and should replace the procedural democracy of liberalism as the basic principle of social order. Participation calls for new, broadly conceived planning that is first and foremost a basic community role of catalyst and facilitator. He could be the one who makes

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<sup>101</sup>Ibid., p. 309.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid., p. 310.

both the normative and technical aspects of this process work. We must come to recognize the fundamental connection of planning and action, and seek to reintegrate them within the planning process going on in our communities. What we are calling for is the politicization and normatization of planning.<sup>103</sup>

The role of citizen participation in policy planning becomes exceedingly important to the success of that planning. This role can be seen in many ways, depending upon who is looking. Craig puts it quite clearly. He says, "To see the plan, look at the people."<sup>104</sup> On the other hand, many politicians, and planners, must face the question of how much attention to give to which citizens.

Good planning requires good politics--despite the recent great pressure on both planners and politicians to give in to groups small in number but highly articulate who wish to seek control to the exclusion of other groups. . . .<sup>105</sup>

Now, the author of the previous statement is referring to a specific case; however, the content can be applied to almost any political situation. The question, then, becomes, assuming some citizen participation is desirable, how much is acceptable.

Arnstein makes a basic point in her discussion of citizen participation. She says,

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<sup>103</sup>Kravitz, op. cit., p. 46.

<sup>104</sup>David W. Craig, "The 'Personnel Criterion' in the Planning Program," Planning 1969 (Chicago: American Society of Planning Officials, 1969), p. 85.

<sup>105</sup>M. Justin Herman, "Planners and Politicians: A Machiavellian Team," Planning 1968 (Chicago: American Society of Planning Officials, 1968), p. 57.

. . . participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless. It allows the powerholders to claim that all sides were considered, but makes it possible for only some of those sides to benefit. It maintains the status quo.<sup>106</sup>

Arnstein's "Ladder of Citizen Participation" best illustrates the issue of degree of participation.

The bottom rungs of the ladder are (1) Manipulation and (2) Therapy. These two rungs describe levels of "non-participation" that have been contrived by some to substitute for genuine participation. Their real objective is not to enable people to participate in planning or conducting programs, but to enable powerholders to "educate" or "cure" the participants.

Rungs three and four progress to levels of tokenism that allow the have-nots to hear and have a voice: (3) Informing and (4) Consultation. When they are proffered by powerholders as the total extent of participation, citizens may indeed hear and be heard. But under these conditions they lack the power to insure that their views will be heeded by the powerful. When participation is restricted to these levels, there is no follow-through, no "muscle," hence no assurance of changing the status quo.

Rung (5) Placation, is simply a higher level tokenism because the ground rules allow have-nots to advise, but retain for the powerholders the continued right to decide.

Further up the ladder are levels of citizen power with increasing degrees of decision-making clout. Citizens can enter into a (6) Partnership that enables them to negotiate and engage in trade-offs with traditional powerholders. At the topmost rungs, (7) Delegated Power and (8) Citizen Control, have-not citizens obtain the majority of decision-making seats, or full managerial power.<sup>107</sup>

It seems logical to assume that any powerholder will be reluctant to give up any of that power. It is for that reason, recognizing that politics requires that voters believe that the people they are electing are responsive to their wishes, that powerholders have

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<sup>106</sup> Arnstein, op. cit., p. 216.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p. 217.

created a variety of methods to avoid actual citizen participation, while giving the appearance of the opposite. However, citizens are organizing and demanding a role in the decision-making process. This is desirable and critical to the successful, expeditious implementation of policy and planning.

Unfortunately, government cannot move slowly enough, or present all the issues clearly enough to provide everyone with the opportunity to participate. If it tried to, nothing would ever get done.

It is fair to assume that only when government moves at a snail's pace and deals with issues of rather direct and immediate impact can a significant proportion of the great multitude of interests express themselves. Therefore, comprehensive democratic planning is virtually impossible.<sup>108</sup>

Today there must be some new dimensions to planning and policy development. Society today is people-oriented. Rep. Shirley Chisholm recently said, "Instead of thinking about people, or of people, we should be thinking with people." Planners, policy makers, and decision makers must begin to open up the power structure to the people through meaningful participation. They must begin to think "with" the people.

### Policy Planning and Politics

The development and adoption of policy is the essence of politics. The role of the planner is to provide the politician with as many options as possible from which to choose.

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<sup>108</sup>Altshuler, op. cit., p. 311.

Planners and politicians do have something in common. Both are enmeshed in providing solutions to the explosive decline and growth in urban areas, to increasing problems of physical and economic survival, and to social changes occurring in this century.<sup>109</sup>

The planner in generating alternatives for the politician must provide some politically realistic solutions. If he does not, he is of no value to the decision makers whom he serves.

As to the politicians, there is no use disguising the fact that our political system does not permit careers for those who go against the popular, short-range prejudices and convictions of the electorate. From time to time there are outstanding politicians who are capable of it but don't count on finding many.<sup>110</sup>

The job of the planner is to bring about (or prevent) change through governmental action; therefore, it is clear that his job must be a political one.

Traditionally, planning has been somewhat anti-politics. "Until recently, city planners have felt that because the policy maker could not, or would not, adopt the planner's view, community decision making represented something less than optimum rationality."<sup>111</sup> This attitude reflects the difference between the planner's idea of rationality and the actual political process through which policy is developed. While the planner's goals may revolve around efficiency and orderliness, the politician must consider what is most expedient and consistent with current public opinion.

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<sup>109</sup>Herman, op. cit., p. 55.

<sup>110</sup>Ibid., pp. 57-58.

<sup>111</sup>Richard S. Bolan, "Emerging Views of Planning," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, 33 (July, 1967), p. 233.

The apparent conflict between planning and politics comes about to some extent, because

. . .the traditional plan is a product and all the decisions [concerning it] are made by the planners. Public officials can either make the decisions that the plan demands or they can ignore them and be against planning and progress.<sup>112</sup>

In this way planning seeks to become more powerful than the elected officials, and since planners are only appointed, this is democratically undesirable. Instead the planners should work with the elected officials to achieve a general policy which may be a compromise to the specificity of the comprehensive plan, but does not compromise the basic planning principles. In this way, a diplomatic solution to the conflict can be derived which results in better planning and a healthy relationship between elected officials and planners.

In the past,

Planning constituted studies of all possible means of maximizing specific goals and the selection of that combination of means which produced the greatest social utility. Political processes only interfered with this rational-scientific method of planning. Planners admitted that it was proper for political authorities to take the product and adopt it or not, but the making of the plan itself was not a part of the political process.<sup>113</sup>

Planning must become an instrument for achieving political consensus, rather than an opposing force to keep politicians in line. Planning must play an advisory, rather than a determining role.

As Goodman notes,

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<sup>112</sup>Goodman, op. cit., p. 333.

<sup>113</sup>Daland, op. cit., p. 513.



. . . planning is often an either-or proposition. Either they (public elected officials) accept the advice or they don't. This has forced policy makers into difficult positions where they must agree in principle with the advice and then try to develop a justification for a contrary decision.<sup>114</sup>

According to Altshuler,

It has recently become fashionable, moreover, for some politicians to conduct well-publicised quests for consensual, nonoperative general goals. It is a rare politician indeed, however, who leads his constituents in formulating positive operational social goals.<sup>115</sup>

There is an opportunity for planners to assist politicians in the development of these goals. However, as has been noted earlier in this paper, it is difficult to stir public interest in long-range goals. The result has been a lot of usually inadequate, crisis planning. That is, developing a solution which solves the immediate problem but does not deal with the causes of the problem.

By entering the political process through the back door, so to speak, the planner has an opportunity to work within the system to bring about the sorts of long-range changes which are needed to solve today's problems. Since political decisions are likely to continue to be made on an issue-by-issue basis, there is even more need for the special coordinative and organizational abilities of the planner in the decision-making process.

The planner must remember that it is the politician, and not he who is making the decisions. As such it is important to

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<sup>114</sup>Goodman, op. cit., p. 333.

<sup>115</sup>Altshuler, op. cit., p. 322.

note that the motivation for change in planning and development organization comes from the politician.

Where reorganization has occurred, in most cases it has not been the planner who has instigated it. Rather, it has been the municipal executive, typically the strong mayor. It is because urban politics have become development politics that urban planning goals have changed, and in their turn, organization for urban planning.<sup>116</sup>

This discussion suggests the question of how should planning be conducted within the political process? Bolan suggests that, "The guiding hypothesis is that action strategies which little disturb the status quo are more likely to be adopted by a political system."<sup>117</sup>

Planning, in dealing with some rather complex policy matters for the urban community, has all the attributes of a legislative process, even if only in an administrative, or advisory capacity. As Bolan puts it,

Skill in inducing motivation in coordinating others' actions, and in building consensus in a contextually appropriate coalition (without recourse to coercion) is demanded of those who wish to see a proposal through to a favorable decision outcome.<sup>118</sup>

Altshuler advises the planner that one way to win political acceptance for new ideas is to challenge the theoretical

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<sup>116</sup>Daland, op. cit., p. 518.

<sup>117</sup>Richard S. Bolan, "Community Decision Behavior: The Culture of Planning," Journal of the American Institute of Planning, 35 (September, 1969), p. 306.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid., p. 309.

foundations of older ideas with which they conflict. The other way is to adapt one's own arguments and objectives to the beliefs, attitudes, and political customs already prevalent.<sup>119</sup>

Since planning is essentially deciding in advance what to do, it should provide essential input for any political choice involving future events. Planning must be seen as a means rather than an end in this process of decision making. Politicians regard planning, according to Loeks, as

. . . somewhat of an 'air-conditioner,' a means of quick transfer of political heat--a source of justification and hopefully approbation on controversial matters. 'Don't fence me in' is also their cry. In this view, planners should speak only when spoken to and exhibit a high degree of diligence in the pursuit of the status quo, or where change is clearly in order, the ratification of the inevitable.<sup>120</sup>

Planning and politics must be reconciled in order to produce better plans in the future. The planning process as it has traditionally been practiced has some basic conceptual deficiencies which are in need of correction. Planning has not been applied in a manner which fully takes advantage of the coordinative skills of the profession within the political process.

City planning is a means for determining policy. Appropriate policy in a democracy is determined through political debate. The right course of action is always a matter of choice, never of fact. Planners should engage in the political process as advocates of the interests of government and other groups.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>119</sup>Altshuler, op. cit., p. 319.

<sup>120</sup>Loeks, op. cit., pp. 52-53.

<sup>121</sup>Paul Davidoff, "Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, XXXI (November, 1965), p. 331.

### The Role of the Planner

Throughout this thesis the writer has attempted to show the transition which he believes is occurring in the role of the planner. As the concept of policy planning evolves, it is apparent that changes are necessary in the role of the planner from a traditional to a normative approach. The traditional planner has been a specialist, a technician, and a bureaucrat. The policy planner must be a normative thinker, and a goal-oriented, politically conscious personality.

As Daland says, "the myth that policy and administration are basically separate processes is still voiced in responsible quarters."<sup>122</sup> Those who believe in such separation are traditionalists. However, those who see greater possibilities for planning would agree with Daland when he says, "Since the job of the planner is to produce (or prevent) change through governmental action, his function by its very nature is a political one."<sup>123</sup> Traditionally, planning has been oriented to goals and standards developed within the profession. The early "city beautiful" movement is a prime example of this approach. The belief of planners was, and some still do believe, that by planting trees, flowers, and painting storefronts, it was possible to rejuvenate a central business district. Later the traffic patterns were seen as a solution. Unfortunately, these planners never thought to ask the question, should

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<sup>122</sup>Daland, op. cit., p. 495.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid., pp. 506-507.

the central business district be preserved at all? A similar issue is apparent today when the "growth-no growth" philosophies clash. For years planners have been projecting growth trends based upon the assumption that growth is natural, good, and desirable. Today some people are beginning to ask the question, how much growth is desirable? Only after answering questions such as these can planners prepare appropriate plans and studies. The first step in the planning process, and the new orientation of planners must, therefore, be to goals and policy.

Altshuler says that in order to develop truly comprehensive goals for planning, the planner must "understand every important goal of each of society's members."<sup>124</sup> Here we see the emphasis which must be placed on politics in the planning process. However, Altshuler cautions, "If he must deal in practice with groups rather than individuals, he should not limit himself to constellations of interest that maintain permanent formal organizations."<sup>125</sup> As we have discussed earlier, the average citizen does not respond to government in the same way, or as rapidly, as do members of an organized group.

Most planners recognize that the implementation of their plans is up to the elected body of government. In order to be implemented, therefore, plans must be politically acceptable. The

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<sup>124</sup>Alan Altshuler, "The Goals of Comprehensive Planning," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, XXXI (August, 1965), p. 189.

<sup>125</sup>Ibid., p. 189.

role of the planner in this political process must recognize the values of his immediate client, but also consider the values of his ultimate client, the general public. "The general public, as we have said, is the planner's top boss."<sup>126</sup>

The planner must never forget that his primary role is to resolve conflicts among goals in expert fashion. He does this, as has been said, by examination and presentation of all alternatives.

If, however, he views the planning process as something larger than his own contribution, then the problem is complicated for he must then require higher goals which he has no authority to set, goals which will provide the purposes of his land use and circulation plans.<sup>127</sup>

Young does not feel that the planner should set these goals, he must instead be totally knowledgeable in the political process in order to prepare politically feasible alternative goals. The setting of these goals must come about through the political process.

To the extent, then, that comprehensive planning is possible, the correct law for a society is something to be discovered, rather than willed, by public officials. The role of the politician who ignores consistency or constructs grand schemes to placate interest groups is hard to defend. So is the concept of the majority will, and the idea that party conflict is desirable.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>126</sup>Bair, op. cit., p. 49.

<sup>127</sup>Young, op. cit., p. 84.

<sup>128</sup>Alan Altshuler, The City Planning Process: A Political Analysis (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1965), p. 303.

Therefore, the planner must play an essential role in the development of policy. The planner must help the elected representatives in the process of goal determination by

. . .analyzing their present activities to show them what implicit goals they are pursuing, and with what consequences, and by making studies of the behavior patterns and attitudes of the citizenry that would provide data on the goals of the various sectors of the community's population.<sup>129</sup>

As Goodman has expressed it,

The planner exists in a middle zone between the politician (the normative planner) and the bureaucrat (the technical planner). The planner is a bureaucrat administering the programs which have been instituted by the politicians; in addition, he has a special competence and training which makes him invaluable in establishing goals.<sup>130</sup>

His role must be that of an intermediary, an arbitrator, and a consensus builder. To successfully accomplish this responsibility, the planning function must be located in "either or both the executive and legislative branches and the scope . . . broadened to include all areas of interest to the public."<sup>131</sup> The potential value of planning in government is so great that it should not be relegated to a secondary role, or a role as a fancy zoning administrator.

Concerning the responsibility of the planner as a professional policy planner, it should be clear that he cannot impose his

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<sup>129</sup>Gans, op. cit., p. 80.

<sup>130</sup>Goodman, op. cit., p. 330.

<sup>131</sup>Davidoff, op. cit., p. 331.

own ideas of what is right and wrong. "If an ultimate objective of planning is to widen choice and the opportunity to choose, then the planner has the obligation not to limit choice voluntarily."<sup>132</sup>

As Davidoff and Reiner have explained it,

. . .our contention rests on the thesis that goals are value statements, that value statements are not objectively verifiable, and, therefore, that the planner, by himself, cannot reasonably accept or reject goals for the public. This is crucial: We maintain that neither the planner's technical competence nor his wisdom entitles him to ascribe or dictate values to his immediate or ultimate clients.<sup>133</sup>

The role of the planner is to identify values within a group or groups, and to analyze how these values are weighed against each other. It is plainly the understanding of his various roles and those of the decision maker which makes for an effective planner. "The planner is a professional looker, the best we have been able to develop, and his job is to advise as to what is likely to happen as the result of various possible leaps."<sup>134</sup>

### Summary

Chapter two has presented a review of the practice of policy planning. The purpose of policy planning is to provide a framework within which conflicts can be resolved and new policy developed. It is essentially a political process which utilizes

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<sup>132</sup>Davidoff and Reiner, op. cit., p. 108.

<sup>133</sup>Ibid., p. 108.

<sup>134</sup>Bair, op. cit., p. 48.



alternative choices. Alternatives are gradually invented out of compromises among participants with different perceptions of the problem, interests, and criteria. Planning should be designed to reflect the values of the many, not only the values of those in power.

Policy problems are complex. There are a wide variety of approaches. Systematic evaluation of policy is complicated by the difficulty in determining real policy output. Policy formulation is a political process.

The content of the policy plan is generally organized by functional areas. A better way which is evolving is an organization which emphasizes goals rather than functions. Policy should reflect all aspects of community concern and should be as broad as possible.

The policy planning process provides more opportunity for citizen input into the decision-making process. Citizen goals are diverse and reflect many different philosophies and life-styles. Strong private interest groups will tend to influence decision making far more than will disorganized, and apathetic groups. A serious problem is how to get citizens interested enough to participate. At the other extreme, are the issues surrounding the unresponsiveness of government. Arnstein's "ladder of citizen participation" illustrates degrees of citizen involvement from worst to best. It includes the following degrees: (1) Manipulation, (2) Therapy, (3) Informing, (4) Consultation, (5) Placation, (6) Partnership, (7) Delegated Power, (8) Citizen Control. Planners, policy makers, and

decision makers must begin to open up the power structure to the people through meaningful participation.

Policy making is a political process. Traditional planning has been anti-politics and favoring a technical approach to policy development. Planning must become an instrument for achieving political consensus rather than an opposing force to keep politicians in line. Politicians are prone to short-range decisions which result in the necessity of "crisis" planning. The increased use and refinement of policy planning can assist in reducing the necessity for crisis planning.

The role of the planner is changing from a traditional to a normative approach. The planner is the man in the middle. The planner must understand society's goals. He must also help politicians to understand what their goals are, and what the consequences of those goals might be.

CHAPTER III

POLICY PLANNING IN THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF  
MERIDIAN, INGHAM COUNTY, MICHIGAN

This chapter will review the policy-planning process as it has been applied in a suburban, Michigan township. It will review the historical development of planning which led to the preparation of a policy plan. It will discuss the technical approach to preparation of the plan, and will present insights into the significance of citizen participation, politics, and the roles of the participants to the planning process. A brief review of the content of the plan, along with a discussion of the rationale for that content will conclude the chapter.

Introduction

Policy planning is a decision-making process. In order to fully understand the concept of policy planning, therefore, we must examine the environment in which decision making occurs. We have chosen to present a discussion of the policy-planning process as it has been conducted in Meridian Township primarily because of personal familiarity with the community. However, Meridian is, perhaps, an unusually typical example of a medium-sized suburban community. In addition, its social and physical characteristics

are unusually diverse. The geographic area of the Township (32 square miles) has resulted in several sub-communities within the governmental jurisdiction of the Township. In general, it is felt that the lessons to be learned from this community have broad appeal to those interested in planning for small town and suburban America.

Much of the major policy planning which has occurred in the last ten years or so, since the concept achieved popularity, has been done on a regional, metropolitan, or major city basis. The sector of our urbanizing or urbanized areas which probably needs policy planning the most is the suburb. Suburban areas must daily face the onslaught of rapid development and population mobility which can drastically change the physical, social, and cultural environment of the communities involved.

A variety of factors concerning the community should be considered in any in-depth analysis of the decision-making process. In the scope of this paper it will be impossible to do justice to all aspects which may be relevant to a thorough understanding of the policy-planning process in Meridian Township. This thesis will attempt to present a complete, though general picture of the community.

Robert Daland suggests that some of the factors which should be considered in analyzing the decision-making process of a community include: location; historical development; socio-economic composition; size and stage of development; structure of influence (centralized or dispersed power); formal and informal

decision-making characteristics of agencies, institutions, individuals, and their goals; and, the "group dynamics" of the people involved in making decisions (techniques of debate, methods of transmitting influence, etc.).<sup>135</sup>

It is in the areas mentioned by Daland that this discussion will concentrate. However, it is felt that a review of some of the technical aspects of the process will be of value.

Policy planning has been suggested as a more suitable approach to planning for areas which are undergoing intense development pressures for the first time. Hugh Pomeroy has said, "I have found it preferable in dealing with [lightly developed] communities such as this to indicate development policy by statement rather than attempting to put them down on maps."<sup>136</sup>

For some communities, including Meridian Township, the role of local government is seen to be providing and securing life's amenities. Policies which are designed to accomplish this goal are oriented to the residential, rather than the working, environment. Meridian Township can be characterized as a "bedroom" community which is within the sphere of the City of Lansing (State government and Oldsmobile major employers), and that of Michigan State University.

Williams and Adrian offer great insight into the character of the suburban community and the small town.

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<sup>135</sup>Daland, op. cit., p. 514.

<sup>136</sup>Allaire, op. cit., p. 9.

The demands of the residential environment are safety, slowness of traffic, quiet, beauty, convenience, and restfulness. The rights of pedestrians and children take precedence over the claims of commerce. Growth, far from being attractive, is often objectionable. That growth which is permitted must be controlled and directed, both in terms of the type of people who will be admitted and the nature of physical changes. It is essentially a design for a community with a homogeneous population, for civic amenities are costly, the population must have an above-average income.

Amenities are also likely to become a dominant concern of local government in the traditional small town threatened by engulfment from a nearby major urban complex. Such a town will not be characterized by the homogeneity of the suburb, nor will its particular kind of amenities require costly expenditures, for the amenities being secured are simply those which are a function of small-town life. A sudden population influx threatens both styles of life and the cost of maintaining that style. However, all small-town civic policies can hardly be characterized as the desire to preserve amenities, for conditions in many small towns make a mockery of that term.<sup>137</sup>

The foregoing statement provides a vivid interpretation of the essence of Meridian Township. Even though the discussion considers both the suburb and the small town, since both exist in the Township, the statement is doubly relevant.

Planner Frederick Bair presents a rather harsh, yet realistic, indictment of suburban attitudes. He says,

Three troublesome subdivisions of the freedom to ignore are these: (1) Freedom to ignore those outside our community, (2) Freedom to ignore the unborn, and (3) Freedom to ignore the lessons of experience concerning probable consequences.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>137</sup>Oliver P. Williams, and Charles R. Adrian, Four Cities: A Study in Comparative Policy Making (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1963), pp. 26-27.

<sup>138</sup>Bair, op. cit., p. 105.

Planning in Meridian Township has, because of the very nature of the community, had to operate to a great extent as an educational process for its citizens. Policy planning presents a natural opportunity for this to occur from the highest levels of the government to the individual citizen living in the community.

Meridian Township is located near the State Capital and a major mid-western university--Michigan State. One employment center is the largest concentration of political decision making, and the other is the center for culture and academic thought in this part of the State. The presence of these centers has a profound effect on the attitudes and approaches of both the residents and the governments in the area. Meridian Township, and its immediate neighbor on the west, East Lansing, attract a high proportion of their residents from these two sources.

As a result, the population is well educated, has high average family income, is highly mobile, and desires a life style emphasizing the residential aspects of the community. The Township has grown from a population of 13,884 in 1960 to a 1970 population of 23,817. Many of the new residents in recent years have been even more mobile than previous residents. These new residents live in apartments primarily, and many are students attending Michigan State. There are areas of the community, however, which are far from the typical examples of suburban America. While these areas are small, two major concentrations of moderate to low income, blue collar workers exist in the Township. In addition, the degree of affluence varies from place to place throughout the community.

The entire thirty-two square miles of land in the township have been planned, however, only one-third has as yet been developed. Of that, the vast majority of the land is being used for residential purposes, primarily single family homes. While prior to 1965, Meridian could have been referred to as semi-rural, and small town, today the Township is in the midst of a sort of suburban adolescence. The community has not yet grown, some though not many irrevocable decisions concerning development have been made, population has increased to a size which requires many additional services, and people are beginning to become aware of the fact that they exist as a community, rather than as a widely scattered collection of residences.

The structure of influence has changed. While as late as the mid-sixties the "old time" establishment "ran" the township, today it is the newcomers who are in charge. The former community leaders had been born in the Township. They were from pioneer stock. They were farm and small-town in their orientation. This orientation held true in both those elected to run the government and later in those who were appointed to operate in staff positions. Interestingly enough, it was probably planning which served as the catalyst for change in the political structure. The planners were drawn from the "new" professionals moving to the community who were primarily concerned with protecting their investment in the "country." As development continued, those elected were more and more selected from the growing list of newcomers to the township. The Board became younger, as did the staff. While in the early days it was



easy to "read" the power structure, today it is far more difficult due to the diverse political base which now exists.

### Historical Background

Meridian Township is a suburban community of approximately 25,000 population which is located east of and immediately adjacent to the City of East Lansing, Michigan. The Township contains thirty-two square miles within which are several sub-communities including: Towar Gardens, Wardcliff, Lake Lansing, Haslett, and Okemos. Each of these areas is unique in its land use distributions and population characteristics. These communities are unincorporated neighborhoods under the jurisdiction of the Charter Township of Meridian government, as well as the Haslett, Okemos, and East Lansing School Districts.

Persons living in these sub-communities of the Township identify strongly with their own neighborhood, fairly strongly with their school district, and hardly at all with the Township. The postal districts of East Lansing, Haslett, and Okemos, also play a strong role in creating locational identity for residents of this township.

Meridian Township first adopted a zoning ordinance in 1948. At that time the population was about 6,500, and the Township was experiencing rapid post-war growth. A full-time zoning administrator was hired in 1951 to handle the enforcement duties and the increasingly heavy number of zoning matters. In 1956

there were 8,602 registered voters in the Township and a new growth boom was beginning which has not yet stopped today.

In 1956 the incumbent Republican township supervisor was ousted from office by a Democrat, who was also highly trained in political science. It should be understood that Meridian Township has traditionally been a Republican stronghold. The new supervisor, while only lasting two years, established the first planning commission in late 1957. In 1958 the City of East Lansing annexed 1.5 square miles of the Township containing almost one-quarter of the population. It is possible that the motivation to establish a planning commission was in some way influenced by the "threat" of annexation. Undoubtedly the vote to become a Charter Township in 1959 was an attempt to avoid any future annexations by establishing a more capable form of government.

In 1959 the planning commission adopted a Master Plan for Major Streets and Highways. This action was little more than an academic exercise since Ingham County constructs and maintains all public streets within the township. However, this adoption was necessary before the Township could adopt subdivision regulations under the provisions of Act 285 of 1931 under which the Township planning commission was established. In 1960 subdivision regulations were adopted in an attempt to cope with the rapid growth which was being experienced throughout the community.

Among the early members of the planning commission was a professional planner and professor from Michigan State University. With the help of intelligent, and dedicated planning commissioners,

he was able to draft a new, modern (if not radical for that time), zoning ordinance. This highly sophisticated ordinance was adopted by the Township in 1960. A civil suit soon thereafter resulted in the entire ordinance being held illegal by the court. However, in 1963 a new ordinance was prepared which eliminated the difficulties in the earlier law, while retaining the bulk of the new concepts contained in the first ordinance.

In 1962 the voters approved the construction of a township-wide system of interceptor sanitary sewers. As is characteristic when such improvements occur, soon thereafter an even greater building boom descended upon the community. In 1965 the first of what were to be many apartments began construction. Eight years later, apartments make up more than thirty-five percent of all living units in the township.

In 1965 the Township hired its first full-time, professional planner. Prior to that time, members of the planning commission had done most of the staff work with the aid of part-time student planners and the building inspector/zoning administrator. In 1966 the planning commission prepared what is generally considered to be their first land use plan. The plan, known as "A Master Plan for Parks and Recreation" contained a schematic plan for "neighborhood units" throughout the township. This plan was probably an afterthought, since the primary purpose of the plan, which was prepared in three weeks by members of the planning commission, was to justify the purchase of 100 acres of "park" land near the center of the township. A major, regional shopping center was secretly

being planned at that time immediately adjacent and south of the site.

In 1958 a Republican supervisor was elected who was to serve during the period in which the planning commission and planning efforts of the township were growing to maturity. This man was strongly in support of the planning efforts, and during the time he was in a leadership position the planning commission was over-ruled only once by the elected Board of Trustees.

In 1968 the Township received a "701" planning grant to aid in the development of studies and plans for the community. The initial phase of the studies included inventories and analysis in the areas of: land use, natural conditions, economic base, population, public facilities, transportation, public utilities, regulation and finance. In the middle of the first grant year, the planning director resigned and left the Township. The new planning director had been working for the Township during the previous year on a part-time basis, was generally familiar with the program and, therefore, able to carry on. About the same time, the Supervisor, who had by then served eleven years, also resigned. A new supervisor was appointed by the Board, but on a part-time basis, and the Board began to seek a full-time administrator, superintendent. For the balance of the year, the Treasurer served as acting-superintendent and the immediate superior of the planning director.

Growth at that time was excessive. The Board of Trustees was in a consolidation period, having lost a very strong leader,

and the planning commission was facing a variety of complex issues arising from the rapid growth. Due to these factors, as well as the desire of the planning director for direction, the inclusion of a development policy element in the "701" second year planning program was proposed and approved. In November of 1969 a draft plan was completed and presented to the planning commission and the Board. The next section of this chapter will discuss that process in detail.

To further offset the possible "threat" of annexation, petitions were presented in October of 1968 for an election on cityhood. The election was held in November, 1969, and Township voters approved the proposal by a substantial margin. A charter commission was established to prepare a charter for a future vote of approval or denial. In November of 1970 and again in 1971 the voters refused to approve the charter. During the time of the first vote, the character of the planning commission began to change. One commissioner died, four others, including the first professional planner, retired from the commission, and later in the summer of 1970 the remaining strong leader on the commission retired.

These changes resulted in a turnover of two-thirds of the planning commission during the time that the policy plan was under discussion. In addition, the man who was to become the superintendent for the following three years did not participate in the policy discussions. In effect, a majority of those who were responsible for the political decisions behind the policy plan left just prior

to its adoption. However, just enough continuity was provided that the plan was adopted by the new planning commission in January of 1970 and later that year by the Board of Trustees. Throughout the entire process the impetus to complete the plan seemed to come more from the fact that it was an element of the "701" contract, than from any particular desire on the part of either Board or Commission to develop the document.

Following the adoption of the policy plan, its implementation fell mainly to the planning staff and the new superintendent. The planning staff was at that time immersed in completing the balance of the "701" planning studies which included: a comprehensive plan, zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations revisions, capital improvements program, housing studies, and citizen participation plan. The superintendent was involved in getting his feet on the ground with his new job. As a result, while many elements of the policy plan appeared in the comprehensive plan, few were implemented on a programmed basis.

As time passed, the planning commission became established once again, as did the Board, with its new membership. However, new philosophies and new personalities on both groups led to a widening of the gap between the planning commission and the Board. The specific proposals made in the policy plan were forgotten by most of those responsible for their implementation. In November of 1972 three new members were elected to the Board of Trustees resulting in a situation in which some of the new members didn't even know that a policy plan existed. At the time of this writing, the

Supervisor, a 10-year Board member, and the Superintendent have just resigned. If this sort of political uncertainty and rapid change is typical of suburban communities, with their rapidly changing populations, it is a wonder that any consistent planning can be done at all.

### Insights into the Approach

This section will first attempt to present additional background and a review of the mechanical, technical steps which went into the creation of the Meridian Policy Plan. With this information as a context, it will review the significance, from one viewpoint, of citizen participation, politics, and the roles of the participants to the process.

In the summer of 1969, the planning staff set about to prepare a policy plan. The purpose was to develop goals, and, therefore rationale, for the comprehensive plan to be prepared the following year. The planning staff at that time consisted of two full-time planners and two part-time (for the summer) planners, not including the Director. These planners were all either just out of, or almost finished with graduate degree programs in planning. Only the Director had had any experience in a planning office other than that of the township, and that had been as a part-time summer assistant with a regional agency. As such the approach was "by the book." The most valuable references at the time were Principles and Practice of Urban Planning, edited by Goodman (fourth edition), and Urban Land Use Planning, by Chapin (third edition).

The first step in the process was a synthesis of the information contained in the background studies, inventories which had just been completed. As the information was reviewed, many conditions, trends, apparent problems, and potentials became more obvious.

The planning staff then sought to inform and solicit response on the issues from the general public. This was attempted through the publication and distribution of a newspaper supplement, entitled "Our Town." The publication presented the reasons for planning in the Township, a brief history of the planning in the Township, and then summarized in some detail the findings of the background studies on the community. This paper appeared in August, 1969, as a supplement to the Towne Courier, a local weekly newspaper. Soon after, the newspaper published an opinion survey which was designed to obtain public reaction to several possible goals or "most important problems." In addition, the questionnaire was placed in a variety of public buildings and popular local businesses as were "drop boxes" for responses.

Some of the questions contained in the questionnaire were: Do you think Lake Lansing should be developed as a community recreation area? Do you think more low-cost housing should be located in the Township? Should Meridian support the formation of a limited-function regional Council of Governments which could coordinate area-wide public facilities?, and so on.

Slightly more than one hundred responses were received to the survey. At that time there were about 6,500 households,



therefore the response was inconclusive. In any case, there were comments from citizens that the questionnaire was too abstract, "it was difficult to react to and elicited responses which to be against would be like being against 'the flag' and 'motherhood'," and so on. One letter criticized the questionnaire as "rigged" to obtain the desired response. Perhaps the criticism was valid; however, it would seem that those who objected viewed the community as a homogeneous suburb. Since the responses were analyzed by "neighborhood," it was quite apparent that this was not the case.

Upon receipt of the questionnaires and tabulation of the results, the planning staff then prepared a draft policy plan. The report presented the issues by functional area in much the same way that the background studies had been organized. It presented a review of problems, trends, and potentials, followed by a general goal statement for that subject area. It next presented several policies designed to show direction for the particular goal, and finally suggested specific actions to be taken to implement the policies. A detailed review of these elements is presented in the next section.

The draft plan was presented to the Planning Commission and the Board of Trustees for their review. During these review sessions, of which there were three or four, both the planning commission and the Board met with the planning director to review each proposal in detail. It was at this point that many alternative policies which had been rejected by the staff as impractical were raised and considered. Hindsight suggests that it would have been

of great value if these alternatives had been put down on paper. Several modifications to the draft were made, mainly in the area of wording to avoid a political issue. As a result there are many "should" and "encourage" types of words. No new functional areas were added to the plan by the politicians.

Following these review sessions, the planning staff made the requested modifications and prepared a "Proposed Policy Plan." A slide presentation was also prepared describing the policies and the issues. This proposed plan was then presented by the staff in three different areas of the Township with the planning commission in attendance. The meetings began with a presentation of the plan and concluded with questions and comments from the audience. Practically no opposition was heard, with the exception of the comment from a leading local realtor that the plan should not be used as a club to force developers to do some of the things suggested in the plan. Not one word in the Policy Plan was changed as a result of the hearings. The plan was adopted soon thereafter.

Citizen participation and interest was at that time practically nil. Since then the last straw has been placed on the homeowner's back, and it is seen to be more multiple housing. As all the "talk" gradually materialized in the form of apartments, the citizens' interest began to increase. While policy planning may be the opportunity that today's activist citizens clamor for, to participate in the decision-making process, the Meridian Plan apparently lacked excitement at the time it was presented. In any case, the Township government was practicing tokenism citizen

participation, on Arnstein's "ladder" somewhere between "informing" and "consultation."

Those such as real estate developers and chronic complainers, familiar with township government had an opportunity to be heard. However, they represent a very small portion of the entire population. The average citizen just wasn't well enough informed concerning the consequences of the policy plan to bother to attend the "hearings." Or, perhaps, the average citizen was tired of playing the tokenism game of citizen participation.

The intelligence of the Township population suggests the latter may be the case. In the past year, though too late for input into the basic plans of the Township, a citizen's "lobby" has been organized which does care enough, and in fact demands, the opportunity to be informed and to participate. A variety of changes have occurred as a result of this group, from methods of notification to actually granting citizens affected by a proposed development the opportunity to participate in the heretofore private discussions and debate with developers. It can be assumed that if a new policy plan were proposed today, it would most certainly receive a lot of attention from the citizens.

Politics could be said to have played a major role in the successful adoption of the plan. On the other hand, partisan politics played almost no role at all in the process. Meridian Township has been a "one-party" system for so long that few of the persons involved in the planning function or on the Board of Trustees were even conscious of any sort of political ideology which may have

contributed to the plan. If anything, political attitudes could be said to have been "suburban," or somewhat "status quo."

Among the participants in the process, however, personality politics played an important role. Bolan says,

. . .the character and origin of issues or problems that a community undertakes to solve, have a bearing on the nature of the decision-making process. Issues that create substantial ideological tension, that have significant and widespread impacts of costs and benefits, that suggest substantial changes in the distribution of power or wealth, or that entail high levels of risk are generally debated with greater intensity and over longer periods of time than are issues that are more incremental or of lesser consequence.<sup>139</sup>

Assuming that Bolan is correct, this suggests that either the Meridian decision makers did not see any great ideological difficulties in the policy plan, or they did not take it seriously. At any rate, the time spent to review it and approve it was minimal.

There may be other reasons for this apparently quick success at reaching consensus on a policy plan. Remember that in the beginning of the process, during the time of review, the long-time establishment of the planning commission and the Board of Trustees was still intact. These groups had developed a symbiotic relationship which served to benefit both. When the time came to review the policy plan, the two groups met together without concern for "being prepared" prior to the sessions. They both "let it all hang out." Without doubt the proposal from the staff, under the guidance of the planning commission, was a politically acceptable plan for the Board.

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<sup>139</sup>Bolan, op. cit., p. 303.

Interestingly, the planning commission occasionally made an effort to go against the short-range prejudices of the citizens. This activity was supported by the Board for the most part, and resulted in some far-sighted planning for the community which might have been impossible in a less congenial political atmosphere. However, the citizens were less interested in development issues then, or at least it seems so now, and did not apply the types of pressure so common today. It is not unusual for the planning commission to appear to act more politically than the Board these days.

The fact that the staff members were new to the community and had not developed preconceived notions about how the community should develop, may have made it easier for them to work within the existing system and political realities of the Township. At least they could not presume to know what the "public interest" was, they had to draw a feeling for these attitudes out of the various participants in the planning process.

The ability of one planning commissioner to induce motivation on the part of the Board, or at least on the part of the leaders on the Board, is an example of the political savvy needed to accomplish progressive planning goals. The point to remember about the Meridian situation is that the planning commission understood its role in government, and was willing to act as the "air conditioner" for the elected officials when it was obviously necessary.

The roles played by the participants in the planning process are a significant element of that process. In the time that

the policy plan was under development and review, the role of the planner was as a technician. The political system was cohesive, power was centered in only three or four people, there was general consensus concerning community goals. The role of the planner was simply to review the political goals and devise mechanisms to attain them.

After the plan was adopted, the role of the planner gradually changed, as did the other players in the game. The rapid turnover on both elected and appointed boards, changing citizen attitudes, and increased pressure from developers all contributed to this change. The consensus was lost, thus making the implementation of the policy plan very difficult, if not impossible.

As the power base began to diffuse, the planner began to function as a broker. Power was fragmented, there was competition for leadership, there were new faces to be reckoned with. It was then necessary for the planner to propose a large number of alternatives and then seek consensus. It is unfortunate that the policy plan could not have been developed in this atmosphere, since, though it would have been far more difficult, it also might have been far more relevant to the concerns of the Township.

The fact that the planner was new, and an outsider to the political system may have further value. Daland has said, "as the planner develops into a political power within the administrative arm of government the planning commission tends to lose power."<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>140</sup>Daland, op. cit., p. 517.

At the time the policy plan was being developed in Meridian the planner had almost no political power at all. As time passed, his political power seemed to increase. However, by that time it was too late for him to bias the policy development process, which is fortunate.

The role of the planner as concerns his approach to planning is important to the success of a policy plan. A technician cannot provide the depth needed in the policy planning process in the same manner that a normative-thinking planner can. At an early time, when policy was still under development, it was possible for the planner to be goal oriented. At this time the administrative head was still a political official. However, as time passed and the administrative head became a professional, the role of the planner had to change. The new administrator was implementation oriented and used the planner in a technical fashion in sharp contrast to the earlier political approach. As such the policy plan stagnated. While certain aspects of it were implemented, it became a static plan which the new superintendent ably followed but made no effort to improve upon.

Planning was conducted in an unstable atmosphere, with the planner in the middle zone, as Goodman suggested, between the politician and the bureaucrat. However, in this role it would seem that the development of policy could be more effective once adopted.

We have alluded to the roles played by the citizens, the politicians, and the planning commissioners to some degree in earlier comments and will not attempt to repeat them here. Suffice

it to say that the roles of the participants in the planning process, and the group dynamics are complex. The smallest change in the system seems to be able to rewrite the script to a great extent. The planner is the man in the middle who must keep track of the changing relationships and adjust his policy proposals accordingly.

### Content of the Plan

The Meridian Township Policy Plan is organized in a fairly traditional fashion. It begins with a brief review of the values and uses of the policy plan. The first element of the plan is a general, overall goal termed the "growth objective." In this case it states:

Meridian should seek to retain its basic residential character while encouraging development of selected non-residential activities which will ease the tax burden on individual homeowners, and make provision of needed services more amenable, without detracting from the residential character of the community.<sup>141</sup>

As can be seen, the dominant emphasis has been placed on the "residential" character of the community in typical suburban fashion.

Following the growth objective, several assumptions are listed which are intended to act as requisites to the plan. For example, the plan assumes that:

New employment opportunities will be generated throughout the Lansing Metropolitan Area; Non-local sources of funds such as federal and state aids will continue to be available;

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<sup>141</sup>Meridian Charter Township Planning Commission, Development Policy Plan, 1970 (Haslett, Michigan: Meridian Charter Township, 1970), p. 3.



Proposed freeway extensions and other scheduled roadway improvements will be constructed in the Township,"<sup>142</sup>

and others. Who could have imagined in 1969 that in 1972 John Bean Division of FOMOCO would be phased out, or that President Nixon would freeze all federal funding programs, or that the "cross-campus" roadway would not be built? Assumptions are generally safety valves for planners who are just a little unsure of the total stability of the environment in which they are planning. Naturally, should an assumption prove invalid, the plan itself will come into question.

The body of the policy plan for Meridian is organized in stages from the general to the specific. There are eleven sections determined and organized by functional area including: economy, land use, housing, natural resources, public school facilities, parks and recreation, public service facilities, public utilities, transportation, aesthetics, and regulation and finance. Each section begins with a review of the trends, problems, and potentials identified in the background studies or inventories of the community. For example, a trend might be,

Regional services-producing activities have grown at a slightly faster rate than the goods-producing activities. Meridian is an excellent position to take advantage of this regional trend.<sup>148</sup>

An example of a problem in the same functional area (economy) is: "Although many areas of the Township are zoned for

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<sup>142</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>143</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

industry, they are not properly located to serve the needs of modern production and distribution activities."<sup>144</sup> A potential listed in this same area is:

While the Lansing region contains the basic assets necessary to attract science-based industries, no large scale development has occurred to date. The establishment of a medical school at Michigan State University may provide the needed stimulus to create a demand for research facilities in the region. Meridian could play a large part in this growth because of its geographical proximity to this research center of the region.<sup>145</sup>

Following the introductory material, which is basically an analysis and synthesis of the factual information collected, the general goal for the specific functional area is listed. The goal for the housing area is: "To ensure adequate housing for all residents in healthful, safe, convenient, and attractive neighborhoods."<sup>146</sup>

The goal is followed by three to five basic policy statements amplified by several specific "actions" related to each policy. For example, one of the housing policies is "Meridian should mount a broad attack on existing blight, and more efforts should be made to prevent future blight."<sup>147</sup> Related to that policy are eight different actions recommended to achieve the goal. These actions are specific enough that they can be measured objectively and thereby determine the success or failure of the policy plan. Some examples of actions include:

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<sup>144</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>145</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>146</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>147</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

- (1) A workable program should be adopted which would qualify the township to receive federal aids.
- (2) Stricter enforcement of housing codes and the zoning ordinance should be promoted.
- (3) Active encouragement and assistance should be given to groups organizing for self-help and neighborhood improvement projects.
- (4) Meridian should support state tax-reform legislation which would penalize rather than reward property owners who allow structures to deteriorate.<sup>148</sup>

While the policy plan attempted to incorporate policies which were accepted though unwritten, those which were rules-of-thumb, and those implicit in the past actions of the Township Board, undoubtedly not all policies of the Township are contained in the plan. Notable in their absence are the precise, specific policies inherent in the ordinances of the Township, and in the adopted standards. For example, the Township has adopted sewer and water construction standards, and recently the planning commission adopted standards for improvements in multiple housing projects.

One aspect of the Meridian policy plan which is different from traditional urban development policies is that it goes beyond the normal land use issues. The plan discusses some broad range governmental management policies which are loosely tied to land use but not as closely as traditional planning would like to limit the plan. For example, the Lansing Tri-County Regional Plan is far more limited in its scope than is the Meridian Plan.

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<sup>148</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

### Summary

Meridian Charter Township is a typical suburban community with typical suburban fears of urban sprawl. The policy plan which has evolved in this community reflects this suburban bias adequately. Important to the successful development of the policy plan was the political power structure and the group dynamics existing within that structure.

The Meridian policy plan is structured with a framework which moves from the general to the specific. The elements of the plan include: problems, trends, and potentials statements; general goals; policies; and specific actions.

The success of the plan is strongly affected by continuity within the power structure and the maintenance of power in a small group within the government. The relevance of the plan is strongly affected by the degree of citizen participation. In the Meridian example this amounted to little more than tokenism.

It appears that "planning adopted on schedule to qualify for federal loans and grants may not only be ignored after adoption, but may condition the city against future planning."<sup>149</sup> Very little long-range planning has been done by the Township since the "701" program planning elements were completed. The policy plan was apparently adopted to satisfy a requirement of the federal government planning grant program. It may also have been the result of the

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<sup>149</sup>Bair, op. cit., p. 58.

need at a specific time for a coherent policy statement in a rapidly changing governmental structure. In any case, it served as the foundation for Meridian's comprehensive plan and a great amount of administrative decision making.

## CHAPTER IV

### A BROADER PERSPECTIVE: LESSONS FOR PLANNERS (AND OTHERS)

The preceding chapters have traced the concept of policy planning in respect to the basic theories, and application and practice, and an examination of the environment in which policy planning may occur. Discussed were the relationship of policy making to decision making, and the context of values and goals within which policy must be interpreted. The transition from traditional planning to policy-oriented planning was reviewed, as was the historical evolution of policy planning. The role of policy planning in the process of goal formulation was presented. In addition, an explanation of the values of the policy-planning method was expressed.

The purpose of policy planning is to provide a framework within which conflicts can be resolved and new policy developed. We have reviewed the several elements which play an important part in the construction of this framework including: the generation of alternatives, the diverse goals of the participants in the process, the political process, and citizen participation. The role of the planner was traced from a traditional to a normative approach to planning.

A review of the policy plan development process in the Charter Township of Meridian, a suburban community in the Lansing area, was undertaken in an attempt to examine the group dynamics, the motivations, and the politics involved in a real-life situation. The structure and content of the Meridian plan was reviewed to provide a proper context for the practical discussion.

#### Opportunities for Further Research

The broad area of measurement of values and evaluation of policy is to a great extent unexplored. The tendency has been for traditional planners to evaluate their proposals using strict economic cost-benefit analysis. Interpretation of subjective values amounted to the planner applying his personal judgment to a problem, and attempting to measure success through application of general planning rules (requisites). The intuitive manner in which many of the rules were derived in the first place did little to refine the process of analysis. Two likely methods for evaluating and measuring values are suggested which merit further study. Morris Hill suggests a "goals evaluation matrix" and appears to suggest that with his method he can quantify, at least to some extent, the intangible costs and benefits of such things as aesthetics. Davidoff and Reiner specifically state that they do not feel that a value statement can be verified by empirical data, but they suggest that it can be seen in context with other values when placed in a values hierarchy. It would seem that the key to

successful development of the policy planning concept is a method of measuring the success of the process.

The authors reviewed in the process of preparing this thesis suggest a variety of "measures" of quality which should be included in a successful policy planning process. Our purpose in presenting some of these ideas at this time is simply to provide a base for future research. However, through a careful review of the list it would seem that the practicing planner could improve the policy-planning process. All authors are cited following these paraphrased statements.

#### Technical:

- (1) Policies should be general rather than specific. - Goodman
- (2) A clear presentation of alternatives should be made. - Aschman
- (3) It must be based on a realistic understanding of the development process. - Kaiser and Weiss
- (4) Policies should be clear and not subject to frequent revision or change. - Kaiser and Weiss
- (5) Planning must move away from technical planning and embrace normative planning. - Goodman
- (6) Plans should reflect an even distribution of land appreciation. - Schmid
- (7) The market forces must be shaped in the same direction as broad public policy, or private incentive will tend to frustrate policy implementation. - Schmid

#### Content

- (8) A policy plan must have a "full-range of policies covering every typical or imaginable problem. - Goodman



- (9) Policy cannot be derived solely based on traditional economic cost-benefit analysis, people are just as concerned with the intangible values affected by decisions.  
- Young
- (10) Policy must reflect multiple goals present within a diverse society. - Goodman
- (11) Do not base long-term policies on current fiscal expediency. - Bair

#### Citizen Participation

- (12) To see the plan, look at the people. - Hahn
- (13) Different political, social, and economic interests should all produce plans. - Davidoff
- (14) Goals can be derived by placing values in a hierarchy.  
- Davidoff
- (15) Goals must win approval from a democratic political process. - Altshuler

#### Politics

- (16) To see the plan, look at the people. - Hahn
- (17) Policy should be adopted by the governing body. - Hill,  
- Goodman
- (18) Policy must be made into a framework for steering decision making, and that framework must be recognized by all levels of government. - Chapin
- (19) The best total body of policy is the result of the interplay of policy development throughout the hierarchy of government. - Fagin
- (20) Short-range policies must reflect political realities, long-range policies can reflect utopian ideals. - Davidoff
- (21) Goals must win approval from a democratic political process. - Altshuler
- (22) No planning program will be effective unless it is being led by the mayor. - Craig

Education

- (23) Educate the citizens concerning the planning principles and process in order to get cooperation in the implementation stage. - Altshuler

Implementation

- (24) Policy making and administration must be a part of the same process. - Daland
- (25) The manager plan appears to demand an established consensus of general community goals. - Williams and Adrian
- (26) Attempt to achieve "middle-range" goals that are general, but are also operational. - Altshuler
- (27) Policy should be adopted by the governing body. - Hill, - Goodman
- (28) We endanger any plan when we load it with more elements than we currently have the dexterity or the power to manage. - Lindblom
- (29) Policies must be implemented if they are to be effective. - Davidoff
- (30) Judging the effectiveness directly can only be done by seeing the results. - Craig

Epilogue for Meridian Township

The preparation of a policy plan in the Charter Township of Meridian was a valuable and worthwhile project. However, if the plan does not reflect a consensus of opinion, at least on the part of the decision makers, it needs revision. In light of the fact that several of the assumptions upon which the plan was based have been changed, it would appear that the plan is out of date. A desirable method for updating the plan might follow the format used

in the Central Connecticut Regional Plan. Through the use of this organizational tool it would be easier to determine just which policies have been acted upon and what some of the possible consequences of that action have been. In developing a new policy framework, all alternative policies should be presented in writing in the initial review stage.

Citizen participation, beyond mere tokenism, must play a part in the review of alternative policies. Finally, periodic reviews of the progress of the implementation of the policy plan should be made. An appropriate time for this would be in conjunction with the development of the annual capital improvements program and budget. Policy should become a prime concern of the administrative arm of township government. While the Board must, as the politicians, lead the way in the formulation of policy, the staff must keep the politicians informed concerning all possible alternatives and the consequences of all actions.

#### What of the Future?

Planning can be made more responsive, more coherent, and generally more successful through the application of policy-planning methods. However, at this time refinement of the process into a more scientific approach is needed. This refinement is occurring slowly in the field of planning today. Policy planning is needed now, not another ten years from now. The curriculum taught in our planning schools is basically traditional planning. Urban problems are vastly more complex than they once were.

Planning tools must keep pace or planning will no longer be needed as we presently know it. Dennis Rondinelli has recently suggested that the skills and knowledge needed by planners in order for them to conduct policy planning properly include:

- Persuasion and manipulation
- Information collection and communication skills
- Client analysis
- Mediation and negotiation skills
- Resource mobilization ability
- Advocacy and organizing ability
- Interpersonal relations
- Small group decision making
- Organizational behavior
- Intragroup dynamics
- Social psychology
- Coalition management
- Entrepreneurial experience
- Techniques of conflict resolution
- Sociopolitical exchange processes
- Opportunity cost analysis
- Quantitative analysis and forecasting techniques
- Contingency analysis
- Performance evaluation
- Simulation, gaming, and strategy design.<sup>150</sup>

The areas in which Rondinelli calls for expertise must be, in my opinion, a part of the educational curriculum of all planners. With tools such as these, planning and policy planning will be valuable and effective elements of our decision-making processes.

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<sup>150</sup>Rondinelli, op. cit., p. 20.

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