

Progressive Land-Use Planning

by Harvey Jacobs

One of my major concerns as a member of Planners Network is that so few members appear to work in the area of land-use planning. This is not at all accidental; instead, it reflects the historical roots of contemporary progressive planning. Here, I want to argue the need to develop progressive land-use planning, and lay out preliminary thoughts for an agenda.

My thinking begins with two key pieces of information. First, most planning practitioners, approximately two-thirds, identify their area of practice as either land-use, environmental, or comprehensive planning. (This, according to an unpublished membership survey by the American Planning Association, reported in the September 1984 issue of *Planning*.) Second, if planners have any well secured organizational turf, it is in the area of land-use and environmental planning, especially the development of public policies, implementation techniques, and land-use controls.

If progressive planners want to have a greater impact on planning practice, theory, and pedagogy, then they need to do what most planners do, practice in the area most familiar to planners, and use the institutional and legal authority that exists as part of "traditional" planning practice.

Yet, many progressive planners are ambivalent or even antagonistic toward the practice of land-use and environmental planning. In the 1960s, reformist and radical planners largely rejected land-use planning and zoning administration. These activities represented, at best, planning without people, or, as in urban renewal and suburban exclusionary zoning, even planning against people.

As a response, social planning emerged, carrying on decades of progressive work in the areas of housing, economic development, and social service provision. These areas, not land-use and zoning, represented "real" progressive planning. Social planning focused on directly solving the problems of people wronged and oppressed by the political-economic system. What little attention was paid to land-use planning was usually as part of housing policy, and frequently focused on how regressive zoning policy prevented the implementation of progressive housing policy. The *Mt.*

Laurel fair-share housing decisions in New Jersey are among the best known examples of this.

This tension and ambivalence were well captured at the founding meeting for Planners Network in 1981. Among the eight working groups convened to discuss issues, only the environmental/growth management group was unable to present positions which satisfied the conference as a whole. This was partly because the exclusionary character of land-use and environmental planning policy was seen to conflict with the need to encourage economic development and keep down housing costs.

Progressive planners need to pay more attention to the opportunities offered by the "mundane" practice of, and research on, traditional land-use and environmental planning. Progressives should recognize that land-use policy and planning is fundamental to social welfare and social justice; it creates significant economic "windfalls" by designating intensive use zones and improving public infrastructure; and it establishes, justifies, and manages a pattern of land tenure and land-use.

As Chester Hartman, Peter Marcuse and others are doing in the area of housing, a detailed, integrated policy

agenda for progressive land-use planning, including, for example, progressive zoning, progressive subdivision control, progressive agricultural land protection, and progressive metropolitan area growth management, needs to be developed. We must turn our attention to what progressive planning means for the everyday practice of most present and, likely, future planners.

My ideas for an agenda include the following:

- Research on the social and distributional impacts of alternative approaches to land planning policy. What should a progressive planner recommend about the adoption of zoning to solve a particular problem? Does it vary by type of problem, by how a regulation is prepared, by who and how it is administered? How does zoning compare with alternative approaches to land-use policy, such as transfer of development rights, compensable regulations, unearned increment taxation, or public land ownership? Liberals have supported many of these approaches—should progressives?

- Identification and development of the information needed to assess the progressive implications of land-use policy. For instance, while all land use plans include information on soil conditions, few contain parallel information on land ownership. Progressive analysis requires these data to assess distributional consequences of alternative policies.

- Design of "model" progressive ordinances and administrative procedures. How is a progressive zoning administrator to do her/his job; for example, is anything different about how hearings are scheduled and conducted or the kinds of notices given?

- Development of progressive positions with regard to pressing land-use and environmental planning issues. These might include agricultural land protection, hazardous waste management, and the level of government that should initiate planning and policy implementation (the local versus regional control controversy).

- Design of new progressive approaches, such as land trusts and land conservancies.

These are important and strategic tasks for progressive planners. At the same time they are eminently do-able.

In my own practice, teaching, and research in this area I have found practi-

PN Special Feature

In response to criticism that there aren't enough "meaty" articles in the *Planners Network*, we have created the "PN Special Feature" section. Short essays, such as "Progressive Land-Use Planning," are to be a regular presentation.

We encourage Networkers with comments and criticisms and with ideas for short essays to contact Bob Beauregard (Dept. of Urban Planning, Rutgers Univ., New Brunswick, NJ 08903, 201 932-4053, 932-3822), who is editing the section.

Networkers' participation is central to making this aspect of the newsletter a success.

tioners and students eager for truly new perspectives on their work, and the problems that confront them. We cannot allow past prejudices about "right" work to blind us to an area of organizing which

could yield so much for the goals of progressive planners.

Land-use planning will not fade as the dominant area of planning practice. Can progressives meet this challenge?

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Passing the Word *(continued from page 2)*

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BERKELEY PLANNING: A special double issue of *The Berkeley Planning Journal* (Vol. II, Nos. 3 & 4) is now available. Article topics include: comparable worth, urban planning in Cuba, the architectural work of Michael Graves, planning and divestment, a history of the neighborhood movement in San Francisco, analysis of social impact reviews, and several others. Copies may be ordered from the Institute for Urban and Regional Development, 316 Wurster Hall, Berkeley, CA 94720. Cost for the issue is \$10.

NICARAGUA SLIDES: From Networker Renee Toback (4 S. George St., Millersville, PA 17551, 717/872-0993): I have slides of housebuilding (traditional wood pole, thatched roof construction) in southern Nicaragua. Also some of Managua and a few others from my experience on the 1984 coffee brigade.

BLACK POLICY VIEWS: *Inside Black America*, by Tom Cavanagh, is an analysis of a cross-racial sample of 902 blacks and 1,365 whites which describes the startling disparities that still exist between black and white evaluations of American politics and public policy priorities. Copies are \$4.95, from: Joint Center for Political Studies, 1301 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W. #400, Wash. DC 20004, 202/626-3500.

MORTGAGE ACT STUDY: *A Tool for Community Capital: Home Mortgage Disclosure Act 1985 National Survey*, by Calvin Bradford and Paul Schertsen, is a 31-page working paper on the effectiveness of the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act in accessing private capital for community reinvestment. The Act gets generally high marks, despite some gaps in coverage and legislative shortcomings. Copies are \$5, from: Humphrey Institute, 301 19th Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55455, 612/376-9798.

NEIGHBORHOOD PAPERS: The National Neighborhood Coalition (20 F. St. N.W. 2nd Fl., Wash. DC 20001, 202/628-9600) commissioned a series of background papers for its November conference on the 20th anniversary of the antipoverty program. There are 16 papers covering housing, jobs, governance, empowerment, and other topics. The writers include Ron Schiffman, Andy Mott, and Barbara Blum, among others. The papers are \$3 each; a free list of papers and authors is available also.

FUNDRAISING: A 20-day free trial is possible with the 1985-86 edition of the *Annual Register of Grant Support: A Directory of Funding Sources* from National Register Publishing Co., 3004 Glenview Rd., Wilmette, IL 60091, 800/323-4601. Otherwise, it's \$90.50.

HOUSING FUND: The Elmwood Neighborhood Housing Service in Providence plans to create a housing bank through which to finance housing rehabilitation. Still in its planning stage, the housing fund will control \$2-3 million in seed money from the city and/or foundations. Elmwood NHS does not want the level of administration required for a credit union or neighborhood bank. If you know of any similar, existing efforts or can provide any advice, we would appreciate hearing from you. Please contact Irwin Becker, Elmwood NHS, 903 Broad St., Providence, RI 02907, 401/461-4111.

PLANNING ROUNDTABLE: The October issue of *Planning* magazine had a roundtable titled "Where Have All the Radicals Gone?" It was an edited transcript of a session held at the April 1985 American Planning Association conference in Montreal, which featured several PN members: Lew Lubka, Jackie Leavitt, Andy Melamed, Chester Hartman, Pierre Clavel, Charles Hoch, Ruth Price.

HOUSING NEWSLETTER: *Network News* is a monthly newsletter from the National Mutual Housing Network, a project of the Low Income Housing Information Service (1012 14th St. N.W. #1006, Wash. DC 20005, 202/662-1540). The November issue included an update on the Network's mortgage commitment project with the National Cooperative Bank, and a report on a 746-unit limited-equity co-op in Bucks County, PA. Subscriptions are \$15.

DEVELOPMENT HANDBOOK: A free publication, *Legal Handbook for Community Economic Development Corporations*, is available from: Local Initiatives Support Corp., 2100 M St. N.W. #601, Wash. DC 20037, 202/785-2908.

REVSON FELLOWS: The Revson Fellows Program on the Future of the City of New York, based at Columbia University, is taking applications for 1985-86 (to begin in September). It's designed for "mid-career" people (mostly but not exclusively from New York City) in urban affairs (broadly defined). There is a good stipend, plus courses at Columbia. The current set of Fellows includes Kim Hopper, active on issues of homelessness, and Tom Robbins, until recently editor of *City Limits*. The program seems to favor progressive activists. Applications (postmarked by February 1) from Revson Fellows Program, Columbia Univ., 420 W. 116 St. #A, New York, NY 10027.

Regional Roundup

NETWORK FORUM: The Network Forum of New York, continuing its film-and-discussion series, presented Roberto Chavez, advisor to the Nicaraguan Ministry of Housing and Human Settlements, in a December 6 program, "Help Build Not Destroy Nicaragua."

The spring series will include programs on housing dollars.