



Northern Section Newsletter
 american planning association
 california chapter

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MARCH MEETING

WINE AND CHEESE SEMINAR

Topic: New Methods for Financing Public Services - The Rationale and Controversies of San Francisco's Transit Development Fee and Transit Assessment District

Date: Thursday, March 18, 1982

Time: 7:00 - 9:00 PM

Place: EDAW
 1725 Montgomery Street; 2nd Floor
 San Francisco, California

Panelists: John Jacobs, Executive Director, San Francisco Chamber of Commerce
 John Sanger, Commissioner, San Francisco PUC
 Tom Rauch, Senior Consultant, Touche Ross & Company
 Suzanne Lampert, Economist, Gruen Gruen & Associates

R.S.V.P.: Send \$5.00 to:

Chi-Hsin Shao
 2447 32nd Avenue
 San Francisco, California 94116
 Phone: 415/558-5423 (work)

Make checks payable to APA.

Reservation Deadline: March 15, 1982 (Reserve now - maximum room capacity of 60 people)

WINE AND CHEESE SEMINAR - MARCH 18, 1982

Name _____ No. in Party _____
 Amount Enclosed _____
 Address _____
 City, State _____ Zip _____

UPCOMING EVENTS: APA'S APRIL DINNER...

The next APA dinner is scheduled for Thursday, April 21st, and will be co-sponsored by the Association of Environmental Professionals. The proposed topic will deal with planning and environmental hazards. Look for more details in April's newsletter.

...AND A HELICOPTER SEMINAR IN MAY

APA members are invited to the first Northern California Planners' Seminar and Helicopter Show, to be held Friday, May 14th at NASA Ames Research Center in Mountain View. This event is in conjunction with the 1982 Moffett Air Show. Sponsored by the San Francisco Bay Area Chapter of the American Helicopter Society, the seminar will discuss ways to incorporate helicopters, as an increasingly important mode of transportation, into the local planning process. In addition, there will be free helicopter flights for planners, and guided tours of the Ames Research Center Facilities. For additional information, contact Mr. Milton Gregory at 408/263-3971. More details will be presented in the next newsletter

SAN JOSE'S URBAN SERVICE PROGRAM: PROVIDING CITY SERVICES ON A LIMITED BUDGET

By Gary J. Schoennauer, AICP, City of San Jose Planning Director

For most Bay Area residents, the mention of service delivery problems in San Jose brings to mind the recent difficulties with sewage treatment at the Water Pollution Control Plant. The Plant is certainly the most-publicized aspect of San Jose's service problems; however, it is not the only area with difficulties. Faced with budget constraints and increasing costs, the level of almost every service provided by the City has declined in recent years. The need to address the issue of service provision was apparent to our City Council, who have directed that the Planning Department and the Office of Management and Budget, in conjunction with the operating departments, conduct an Urban Service Program.

Work Plan

As stated in the Work Plan adopted by Council last September, the Urban Service Program is intended to "relate the City's current fiscal condition and service levels to projected future development and desired service levels." The first phase of the program is a technical analysis which assesses the actual levels of service now being provided, develops tools for measuring services and costs, and then projects the service needs of future development projected by our adopted General Plan. Following this technical phase, meetings will be held with citizens and community groups in order to inform them about service needs and costs and to define the community's service priorities. The third phase of the program will integrate the service analysis with the City's major policy and decision-making documents: the General Plan and the Budget. For Fiscal Year 1981-82, the Council has allocated \$100,000 to carry out the first two phases; the last phase is scheduled to begin in FY82-83 coincident with a major revision of our General Plan.

There have been other efforts at estimating the demand new development places on certain services, and "pay-as-you-grow" development fees are common in many Northern California cities. The Urban Service Program is unique in its efforts to precisely quantify costs for a wide range of services, and to then use this information as the basis for Budget decisions, as well as decisions on land use issues and the General Plan.

Initial Results

At this time, we have completed much of the technical work in the first phase of the Urban Service Program, and have produced some interesting results. As part of the evaluation of service levels, the Police Department recommended a staffing level of 2.0 sworn officers per 1000 population. When the budget implications of

this recommendation were assessed, it was found that a decision to provide police staffing at that level would require a 69% reduction in the budget for Library, Parks and Recreation, and General Government! The Urban Service Program will enable the Council to consider such proposals for major staffing increases in the context of all City services and needs.

On the technical side, the Urban Service Program is providing the vehicle for increased use of the computer in San Jose's planning. A cost-revenue model is being developed to simulate the City's costs and revenues, giving quantitative projections of factors such as the cost of providing library staff to serve the San Jose of 1990. Also, the City has just completed the transfer of our base maps to a computer graphics system (quite a task, since the maps to be digitized covered 150 square miles). Our Public Works Department will use this graphics system to assess the service provided by our existing sewer system; the Planning Department will utilize it to simplify use and update of our Vacant Land Inventory. A third computer project, the Development Tracking System, was developed in order to project sewage flows from anticipated development and contains detailed data on projects beginning at the Zoning stage. Designed as part of our effort to manage demand on the Water Pollution Control Plant, the Development Tracking System will be tied to the graphics system, and will also provide input to the cost-revenue model.

Program Benefits

A program such as San Jose's Urban Service Program goes beyond traditional land use planning to address service issues previously the sphere of Budget Offices and operating departments. Planners can bring several valuable skills to this decision-making process: a knowledge of projected development, experience working with citizen groups, and a broader perspective of service needs. We expect the Urban Service Program to provide an increased interaction between land use policies, service provision decisions, and budget allocations. In this age of fiscal limits, such interaction gives planners a role in the critical budget decisions which determine whether plans and policies can be implemented; it also gives a more quantitative, practical basis for future plans. For both immediate and long-range decision-making, the Urban Service Program helps to answer the question of how to "get the most service for the money" - an answer most City leaders and residents would like to know.

The City of Salinas is participating in a HUD-sponsored project to develop a guidebook on "fast tracking" the development permit process. Planners interested in finding out more about Salinas' streamlining procedure can call or write the City's Community Development Department and ask for a copy of "Summary: Development Review Streamlining in the City of Salinas". Phone 408/758-7206.

Plan - To bother about the best method of accomplishing an accidental result.

Future - That period of time in which our affairs prosper, our friends are true, and our happiness is assured.

Ambrose Bierce
The Devil's Dictionary
Published 1911

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

This Spring is shaping up to be a busy one with regard to APA activities. In April we'll be having a joint dinner meeting with the Association of Environmental Professionals, and Joan Lamphier is planning a June dinner to be held in Palo Alto - hopefully dealing with housing issues. And, of course, there is the wine and cheese seminar scheduled for the 18th of this month. I'm particularly looking forward to this latter event as-it-is-cheap as it will highlight a creative way for financing public services: San Francisco's transit impact fee, which requires developers of downtown office space to provide financial support to MUNI. This approach is controversial and has raised several interesting questions, such as economic justification.

The transit impact fee, like other service charges, is generally justifiable if it is based on the "benefits received" principle by which individuals and firms are charged fees in relation to the benefits received from the transit system. Measuring these benefits is, however, extremely difficult. For example, if a transit system enhances the desirability of an office site through improved accessibility, then the resulting increase in demand should translate to higher rents relative to less accessible sites. Rents, though, are subject to numerous other factors such as quality of space and competitive rates elsewhere; the impact of improved accessibility can only be measured through the use of sophisticated analytical techniques that control for these other variables.

One of the few studies I've seen that has attempted to employ a rigorous analysis in measuring land use related transit impacts is the MTC-sponsored BART Impact Program, completed several years ago, which found that BART had a small, positive influence on office rents in San Francisco. This influence, though, disappeared 100 feet beyond the BART station. I can therefore hypothesize that MUNI, being characterized by spatially dispersed trip destinations relative to BART, likewise has a small, possibly insignificant impact on office rents. If MUNI's benefits to downtown offices are indeed trivial, then San Francisco's transit impact fee loses much of its justification. I'm hoping this point, among others, will be addressed by the panel on the 18th.

Finally, I'd like to put in a plug for the helicopter show and seminar scheduled May 14th at NASA Ames Research Center in Mountain View. Aside from the helicopter rides that will be provided free to APA members, this event should give some insights to the issues faced when planning for helicopters. Incidentally, the helicopter seminar is being held in conjunction with the air show at Moffett Naval Air Station which, if you're at all interested in aircraft or military hardware, should not be missed. I attended last year, and found myself intrigued by the warplanes on display - beautiful machines from a design perspective, but nonetheless unnerving. Equally fascinating were the pilots, who every now and then would drop a conversational gem such as, "No, this plane isn't for ground support, it's for ground attack." Fascinating people, and a fascinating air show.

Richard Anderson
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APA NORTHERN SECTION AWARDS PROGRAM

The annual awards program of the California Chapter of the American Planning Association, Northern Section, is underway. Northern Section will screen submittals for projects undertaken in our jurisdiction during 1981. Awards will be given with the best submittals forwarded to the California Chapter for statewide recognition. In turn, California Chapter will transmit outstanding submittals to the national office under the national APA awards program.

One of the winners last year, Endangered Harvest: The Future of Bay Area Farmland, submitted by People for Open Space, was recently awarded an honorable mention from Cal Chapter.

Five categories have been established to recognize outstanding projects and individuals in planning. There is no limit to the number of entries that may be submitted within each category. A detailed announcement of the Awards Program will appear in a later issue of the newsletter.

A committee has been formed to establish guidelines for the Awards Program. The committee will review criteria for judging entries, selection of judges and decisions as to what types of entries it would like to see submitted. The committee will also recommend names of individuals in planning that deserve recognition.

In recent years, our section has not received any nominations, despite the presence of many distinguished planners in our jurisdiction. Please call us with your nominations for both professional and non-professional planners.

Chris Haw or Doug Bules
City Planning Department
100 Larkin Street
San Francisco, Ca. 94102
(415) 558-4541

The Monterey County Planning Department is currently seeking qualified individuals for the position of Planner II to perform a variety of duties within the major areas of current and/or advance planning. Assignments will depend upon the qualifications of successful candidates. For further details, contact Monterey County Personnel, P.O. Box 1877, Salinas, CA 93902. Phone: 408/424-0753.

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WELLS SPRINGS

Planning Information Resources
reviewed by Keith J. Anderson

Pioneers with a highly valuable experiment are making a significant "errand into the wilderness" of data organization. The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) has developed two useful data processing tools: the Bay Area Spatial Information System (BASIS), and the Automated Regional Environmental Assessment system (AREA).

BASIS is a data base using "geographically digitized" sets of data regarding different aspects of the environment. These sets include such factors as air pollution levels and wind speed - all referenced to specific areas. On command, BASIS produces maps that directly express of combine these data sets.

AREA is a series of computer programs for assessing environmental impacts by manipulating the site-referenced data produced through BASIS. Users of this system can define what constitutes a significant impact and a significant mitigation measure. Essentially, AREA is like Alladin's lamp, and BASIS is the treasure house upon which he draws. The seeker, however, must provide his own values for his wish to have meaning.

No, the genie does not do EIRs, but it can streamline the environmental impact process by "red flagging" the probable impacts resulting from a development of a given size (or range of sizes) in a given area. The AREA/BASIS system can thus focus the scope of an EIR.

BASIS' collection of geographically-referenced data has been growing over the past four years. As the ABAG staff has worked on various projects, the data collected was encoded in a common format and then saved for later use in different applications. BASIS has a grid resolution allowing users to focus attention on areas as small as 2.5 acres.

AREA/BASIS cannot immediately deal with a flood of users. The continued growth of the systems in a circumspect manner, however, promises a future with greater access capability. Think of AREA/BASIS as a dynamic master EIR, growing and changing with user's needs.

For more information about AREA and BASIS, contact ABAG Senior Planner Gordon Jacoby at 415/841-9730.

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