



Letters

Peak Load Pricing

Dear Editor;

There is another significant cost factor that needs to be considered in establishing electricity rate schemes besides that of variation in the time of demand necessitating expensive production facilities to meet peak loads (Miles Bidwell and Jean Bonnes, "A Peak Load Pricing Policy for N.C. Utilities," *carolina planning*, Vol. 3, No. 1, Winter, 1977). That factor is the areal distribution of demand that dictates transmission costs.

Picture a concentration of industry or a central commercial area, both requiring heavy use of electricity, contrasted to a wide areal spread of light residential and neighborhood business uses. The transmission facilities to serve the heavy concentrated use cost considerably less than

those required for the lighter spread-out use. It is my impression that this situation was a primary factor in establishing bulk use rates lower than light use rates—the total cost for bulk use was lower because of the lower capital and operating cost of transmission facilities.

I know that this very same relationship formed the basis of bulk water rates being lower than light water usage rates in Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1955-56. In connection with the University of North Carolina's Institute of Government's annexation study of that city, I had the opportunity of reviewing a recently conducted study detailing all the various costs in order to evaluate and adjust water rates to reflect cost equitably. As it turned out, my review showed that even with lower bulk rates, the heavier users were still supporting the lighter users, the main

reason being the extensive distribution costs to cover the wider spread of use of the lighter users (not just sprawl).

I venture to hypothesize that a similar circumstance may apply to electricity. If borne out, price schedules should reflect not only the time of demand factor, but the spatial distribution of demand factor as well. Perhaps heavy users are more spread out now, negating current applicability of the spatial factor. On the other hand, perhaps the siting and capacities of substations precludes the shifting of power in adequate amounts from one area to another, so that new transmission facilities are needed to serve new residential areas. More detail is needed on such land use, design, and cost factors before proceeding with rate structure revision. Because of such factors, different cities may need different types of schedules.

David Livingston McCallum
Pico Rivera, California

carolina planning welcomes your comments on issues dealt with in the magazine. We reserve the right to edit all letters without altering the basic contents of the materials printed. Address your letters to: Editor, **carolina planning**, Department of City and Regional Planning, University of North Carolina, 103 New East 033 A, Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514.



carolina forum

Editor's Note: carolina forum, a new feature, presents reports of recent or ongoing planning activities and opinions on current planning issues. We welcome submissions to carolina forum from all interested persons—especially practicing planners in the Southeast.

North Carolina Planners: License, Register, or Certify?

With the close of this 1977 session, the North Carolina General Assembly has not taken action which affects the question of whether planning or planners need to be regulated by the

state. However, the lawmakers have taken some action to examine the need for and the operating characteristics of some of the boards and commissions set up in the past to

regulate a plethora of occupations, ranging from physicians to auctioneers. This study, conducted by the Justice Department, is at its midpoint. When completed, it is expected to produce recommendations for adjustments in the composition and operating practices of the present boards and recommended guidelines for the establishment of any new regulatory bodies.

Arguments for and against professional licensing and regulation are numerous. There have been suggestions that the main result of establishing at least some of the boards has been to protect the interests of practitioners rather than protect the public from incompetents and charlatans. It has also been noted that the initiative for most legislation controlling professions came not from public clamor but from the efforts of the practitioners themselves. Furthermore, there have been hints that the usual policy requiring that only certified members of the profession be the only ones allowed to serve

on these regulatory boards provides a rich opportunity for conflicts of interest. As a solution to that suspected malady, there have been proposals put forward that would require representatives from outside the field to be seated on the regulatory bodies. Theoretically these "public" members would elevate the status of the bodies on which they sit and provide a broader range of views in deliberations and actions. On the other hand, it has been argued that it is not an especially difficult task to co-opt the "public" members—in fact, one comment was to the effect that six to eight months' service was all that was necessary to "brainwash" them.

With this brief background, it is appropriate to turn to the question of whether planning and planners should be subject to state regulation or a form of credentialling in order to insure the protection of the public health, safety, and general welfare. While the debate in North Carolina on this subject has been rather low key in the past, and the recent actions of the Justice Department and General Assembly would seem to encourage a short continuation of this period of calm, it is almost certain to escalate in the future. New Jersey and Georgia have licensing laws affecting planners, while Michigan has a registration law. The issue has recently surfaced in Florida and South Carolina; other states are also exhibiting signs of incipient upheavals. Tarheel planners should be prepared for this subject to erupt in the next couple of years.

Before further discussion of the issue, a brief review of the terms involved in the controversy is appropriate. Words like licensing, registration, and certification have widely differing meanings and their misuses will only complicate an already emotionally charged subject. Licensing is the control of the practice of an occupation, for instance planning, by excluding all but state license holders from the practice of that occupation. Registration, on the other hand, is the control by the state of the use of certain specific titles. In Michigan, for instance, the title "professional community planner" has been registered. Thus, a person in Michigan can still practice planning, but he or she cannot use the registered term unless the minimum standards of the state have been met.

Certification, as the term has been used in relation to planning, is a process by which a person is granted permission to use a descriptive term,

such as Certified Professional Planner, after having taken and passed some sort of national certification examination. The certification process does not prohibit a person from practicing planning or calling oneself "planner" or even a "professional planner"; however, the term "certified professional planner" could be used only by those who satisfy the national certificate board of their competence and, presumably, their integrity. Advocates of this approach say it is analogous to the process by which an accountant becomes a Certified Public Accountant. The idea of applying a process used to certify accountants to the field of planning and to planners is a relatively new one, and considerably younger than the concepts of registration and licensing. There is still a lot of fuzzy thought connected with the concept, and a long road ahead until some of its ambiguities are resolved, such as: Who would appoint the examining board? What would be the content of the examination? Would existing practitioners be grandfathered in with no requirement to pass the exam? How would the process be financed? Would the several states accept the certification board's conclusion as to the qualifications of the examinees? And can planners ever agree to support this or any legislation concerning credentialling of themselves?

These and other issues relating to certification need attention. The most pressing is the apparent inability of planners to agree on most aspects of the situation. As Harry Truman said in another context, "If you laid them all end to end, they would point in all directions." I wrote recently that:

It would be comforting to report that there is a fairly broad consensus about state control of planning and planners, but that comfort is denied. New Jersey has a licensing law, the enactment of which and the subsequent litigation thereover split the Chapter, while almost submerging it financially. Michigan has a registration law, which is the way the Florida Chapter is likely to go, if it has to go at all. Georgia now has a licensing law—enacted over the objections of the Georgia AIP Chapter. The Board of Directors of National AIP has rescinded its previous official stance in opposition to both registration and licensing; it now has no policy. This non-stance is viewed by some as a step forward, as it removes the Board as part of

the opposition to some planners' efforts to get legislation passed. Now, while the Board may not be with them, it is not against them. Of such is progress fashioned. (Leary 1976)

The AIP Board was able to arrive at its policy of non-policy only in relation to licensing and registration; it has apparently not even progressed that far on certification, and is likely not to do so since the leading exponent for certification was recently defeated in a bid to assume high office in AIP. This AIP policy disarray is not unusual and is not restricted to credentials for planners; it infects many aspects of the organization. North Carolina planners cannot look to the national officers for leadership, or even a straightforward analysis on what are the appropriate training and qualifications for planners. We must deal with the issue as Tarheels, and not hang by our thumbs in pious hope that the issue will either evaporate or by some arcane process the national board will reverse its record of indecision and provide leadership and firm policy direction.

Often in the past, the question of state licensing and/or registration was thought to be primarily a concern of private practitioners, whose livelihood might be affected by state legislation dealing with planning. However, more and more planners outside the private planning sector now perceive such legislation as potentially affecting them. Professors of planning cannot remain aloof when a legislature appears to say that their students are not qualified to practice planning, as recently happened in Georgia. Planners in the public sector may be pardoned a bit of apprehension when they find that they are not qualified for another job, because they do not have the right license. Planning directors may be justifiably annoyed to find that the persons they may hire might not be equipped to do the job they wish done. When the bell of registration and/or licensing begins to toll, it tolls for us all. As planners, it is an issue we must come to terms with in the near future.

*Robert M. Leary, President
Robert M. Leary Associates, Ltd.
Raleigh, North Carolina*

Reference

Leary, Robert M. 1976. *NCAIP Newsletter*, 5(3).

Downtown Revitalization Through Public - Private Cooperation in Greenville, South Carolina

The plight of downtown Greenville, South Carolina, has not differed greatly from that of many other central-city areas throughout the country. Fifteen years ago, it was a bustling center of commercial and business activity. It housed four major department stores as well as dozens of offices and small retail facilities. Evening functions were as prevalent as daytime affairs. It was a Saturday tradition to shop downtown. However, with suburbanization and growth of retail malls, the importance of the downtown as a shopping district declined. In the early 1970's, two of the four downtown department stores fled to a climate controlled shopping center, as did numerous smaller businesses which traditionally rely upon the drawing power of larger establishments. In addition, many buildings in the central city became plagued by vandalism and neglect. There were often complaints of inadequate parking facilities and poor quality merchandising. Although it was to remain the hub of governmental, cultural, and banking concerns, the downtown's heyday as a commercial district was clearly passed by the early 1970's.

While these circumstances do not speak particularly well of the downtown's recent past, through the efforts of the City of Greenville and a group of private businessmen known as the Greenville Community Corporation, the future seems much more promising. Shortly after the 1976 reelection of Mayor Max M. Heller to a second term, downtown revitalization became a priority. With full support of the City Council, the services of Zuchelli, Hunter, and Associates, an economic consulting firm from Annapolis, Maryland, were engaged in order to update old plans, analyze existing market conditions, and recommend implementable solutions for downtown revitalization. From the outset, the objective of this analysis was to develop a program that would not only physically improve and beautify Greenville's central business district, but also provide a pervasive economic stimulus for the area. To this end, one of the first actions undertaken by the city was the establishment of a \$2.15 million low interest rate loan pool in conjunction with local financial institutions

and the Greenville Chamber of Commerce. Utilizing Community Development funds as an interest subsidy, low interest rate loans were made available to downtown merchants for rehabilitation of downtown buildings. In addition, participating banks also provided loans at lower than market rates for property acquisition and expansion of retail or wholesale inventories. During the loan pool's initial year of operation, a total of almost \$475,000 in loans was approved.

While the loan pool is directed toward making immediate improvements, a \$26 million dollar plan of action has also been developed and adopted by the City Council for changes which are to occur during the next several years. The physical plan, which was formulated by CHNMB-Lawrence Halprin and Associates, an urban design group from San Francisco, has two components. First, Main Street will be beautified. At the present time, Main Street is a four lane highway with parallel parking on both sides of the street. This wide expanse creates an environment which is totally dominated by the automobile and discouraging of pedestrian movement. In order to reassert the importance of the pedestrian, five blocks of Main Street will be narrowed to two lanes. In addition, diagonal parking will be installed and amenities such as comfortable and distinctive street furniture, attractive as well as functional lighting, and plantings for both shade and screening of automobiles will be added. Through vehicular traffic presently using Main Street will be funnelled to parallel arteries.

The second component of the program is the development of the Greenville Commons Area at the north end of Main Street. It is this aspect of the strategy that will provide the much needed economic catalyst for the downtown. The Commons will consist of a preleased office building of 100,000 square feet; a 300 room hotel; 45,000 square feet of retail space; a 55,000 square foot convention center; and parking accommodations for approximately 700 cars. These facilities will be physically coordinated and will surround an inner city park of about one acre. The park will be planted open space which

is terraced and will rely heavily upon the use of water for visual stimulation. In addition to undertaking the Main Street improvements, the city will develop the convention center, open spaces, and parking facilities. A private developer will be responsible for the hotel, office, and retail construction.

The total cost of this project is \$26 million dollars. Funding comes from three sources. First, the city has committed \$7 million dollars from Community Development, general revenue, and city surplus funds, as well as revenue and general obligation bonds. Secondly, a developer will be responsible for contributing up to \$13.5 million. Finally, and perhaps the key component of the program is the support of the local business community. As mentioned earlier, through the efforts of several local businessmen, the Greenville Community Corporation has been formed to secure funds for the revitalization effort. The group consists of representatives from most major employers in the Greenville area. Its forty-five person Board of Directors has committed the corporation to raising \$4.25 million through the sale of common and preferred stocks, as well as through the solicitation of grants and gifts. Approximately \$3.5 million of this money will be used as equity funding in the construction of office, retail, and hotel spaces. Another \$750,000 will be contributed to the city for its use in beautifying Main Street. It cannot be emphasized too strongly that without these funds, the project would not be possible. The private money has not only encouraged the city to commit its resources, but will undoubtedly help reverse the negative image that for so long has afflicted the central city.

The revitalization effort in Greenville is a bold step—one that has taken two years to plan, and one that will take at least that length of time to execute. The end product will be a downtown which provides both an improved physical as well as economic environment. Its success will depend not only upon the support of the public sector, but more importantly on the psychological and economic support of the private sector. Without the harmonious marriage of these two sectors, the fate of downtown Greenville would indeed be less promising.

*David R. Paulson
Community Development Planner
City of Greenville, South Carolina*