

An aerial, black and white photograph of a city street grid. A river flows through the center of the grid. The buildings are of various heights and styles, with some featuring prominent windows and architectural details. The overall scene is a dense urban environment.

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# PLANNING FORUM

VOLUME 10, 2004

It is the mission of *Planning Forum* to serve as a medium for the multi-disciplinary exchange of ideas related to the study of human communities and the interplay of social, political, and economic policy and action with built and natural environments. This nontraditional, cross-disciplinary forum seeks participation and representation from students, faculty members, and field practitioners.

**SENIOR EDITORS**  
TOMMI FERGUSON & SETH OTTO  
[planning-forum@lists.cc.utexas.edu](mailto:planning-forum@lists.cc.utexas.edu)

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## LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

The articles featured in this issue of Planning Forum run a gamut of planning topics ranging from the analysis of empirical transportation data to the more qualitative evaluation of public policy and practice. The breadth of topics covered in the following 101 pages serves to remind us that planning is a widely varied field with many points of focus.

In the first article, *Graffiti in Urban Space*, Sarah Graham, tackles the hotly debated and often polarizing topic of graffiti. Graham, a recent graduate of our own planning program, examines the graffiti abatement policies of three cities across the United States. The case studies provide the basis by which the author poses her suggestions for incorporating graffiti artists into the process of policy formation. To be sure, the author doesn't pull any punches regarding her stance on needed changes.

On a markedly different front, Stacey Bricka and Mark Tinkler present an innovative method of transportation modeling. In their article, *The Impact of Children's Travel on Household Trip Rates*, the authors examine travel patterns of families in two cities to support their assertions about travel demand modeling and its impact on future planning for cities and regions. The authors also touch on ways in which this travel modeling may relate to broader planning issues.

Richard Brady, a planner with Cotton/Bridges/Associates in San Diego, provides the final article, *Fiscal Incentives for Land Use*. Using empirical data and primary source interviews with policy makers, the author analyzes the fiscal incentive policies of two mid-sized cities in California as they impact residential development and suburban growth. The article provides an in-depth examination of these policies and how they shape development and fiscal stability.

A mainstay of Planning Forum, the *Point/Counterpoint* article covers a topic that is particularly sensitive and timely for Central Texas, the visioning process. Section editor Andy Karvonen frames the comments of six key players in the arena of this regional planning process. The perspectives of the contributors illustrate differing opinions, yes, but also, the importance of including disparate viewpoints when formulating goals for the future growth of a region.

In recognition of this landmark tenth volume, we thought it an appropriate issue in which to introduce a new section to the publication: *Alumni Notes*. This section offers news and updates about graduates of our planning program. The profiles included represent only a sampling. New profiles will be included in subsequent volumes; all submissions from one year to the next will be housed on the Planning Forum website. We hope you enjoy reading up on the activities and accomplishments of our alumni. We certainly did.

Volume ten, like all its predecessors, represents the culmination of much time and effort on the parts of the contributors, editors, and supportive faculty members, all of whom make the final product possible. Many thanks to each and all. In publishing volume ten, we are not only proud of accomplishing a challenging goal but also of contributing to the discussion and debate of relevant planning topics.

Sincerely,  
Tommi Ferguson and Seth Otto  
planning-forum@lists.cc.utexas.edu

# Graffiti in Urban Space

Incorporating Artists into the Policy Realm

SARAH GRAHAM

This article is intended for city government officials who have tried to manage the graffiti problem but have met with limited success. The ideas included here are practical suggestions for cities to prevent graffiti/vandalism on private and public property through urban design strategies, and the involvement of graffiti artists as key players in graffiti-related policy-making. Graffiti as an art form will not go away; therefore it makes sense for cities to address it in a way in which they remain in control. This article will address the dual needs of city government to respect the property of citizens while accepting the validity and likely longevity of graffiti as an art form. Through case study examples, it recommends three changes that will serve to accomplish this goal: including graffiti artists in city politics through representation in the policy process, developing and improving urban beautification standards, and creating space for graffiti to legally exist.



## Introduction

For decades, American cities have been fighting a losing battle against graffiti. Property owners and city officials feel trapped by having to waste time and resources on removing graffiti that often reappears overnight. While perceptions of graffiti range from annoying vandalism to original art form, city governments must act in accordance with the general health, safety and welfare of its people by opposing graffiti through prohibition. The deeply entrenched disagreements on either side of the issue have thus far accomplished little in solving the problem or ending the dispute.

It is time to reevaluate our stance on graffiti and find alternative approaches to resolve the conflict. In doing so, the most important step will be giving all parties involved a voice. There are few urban issues that do not have fair representation of key players, yet graffiti artists are rarely, if ever, solicited in helping to come to a viable solution. But because graffiti has undeniably assumed a prominent role as a visual medium and has been embraced by popular culture, graffiti artists deserve to be included in decisions that directly concern them. Equally challenging is the literature surrounding graffiti: nearly all writings on the topic of graffiti are polarized, either strongly for or against its presence. It is my goal to suggest a compromise between the two sides of the argument, using history and culture as guides to understand graffiti's place in the contemporary American landscape.

## The Urban Graffiti Problem

### The Current Problem

Cities across America have been fighting a costly war against graffiti for decades. American cities, and their taxpayers, spend an estimated \$7 billion in removal costs per year (City of Charlotte 2002), and another \$8 billion in law enforcement and court costs (Santa Clara 2003). Cities and property owners alike continue to implement ways to fight graffiti. Internet-based networks such as the Nograff Network, which serves as a resource to community groups and law enforcement agencies, encourage participants to share techniques that have helped limit graffiti in their areas. While new techniques continue to evolve, one of the newest has come from Los Angeles, where "satellites and super-sensitive sensors are now tuned to the sibilant hiss of spray cans in a space-age effort to eradicate... graffiti" ("Graffiti Space" 2003).

Why has our society gone to such great lengths to fight illegal writings on walls? Our efforts are based on a common fear that unfettered graffiti will lead to more serious forms of crime. For example, on October 25, 2002 a new chief was brought into a troubled police department facing some of the toughest urban problems in the country: the Los Angeles Police Department. His goals were not to improve the name of the department, or to reduce serious crime. Instead:

William Bratton, being sworn in today as the Los Angeles Police Department's chief, said his top priority is graffiti. "Fighting graffiti is the key to reducing crime overall", Bratton said. The idea is that eradication of petty crimes and unkempt properties creates safer cities ("Police chief" 2002).

Examples of this sort represent a common view of government officials, who point to graffiti writers and their artwork as the cause of urban decay.

There are two common but opposing stances on graffiti. The first is more widespread: the belief that graffiti is a nuisance and an act of vandalism against private property owners. Many Americans argue that the defacement of property creates fear among citizens and that

it must be removed as soon as it is created. City governments have passed ordinances to criminalize it, neighborhood watch teams have organized to fight it, and business groups try to mitigate its impact. According to this perspective, graffiti is a sickness that can spread throughout a city without early removal. Sociologist James Wilson (Zener 1998) applies the "broken windows" theory to graffiti and how it impacts the urban environment. This theory states that once graffiti occurs and is ignored in an area, it relays the message that the community does not care. This leads to an increase in illegal dumping, the presence of abandoned cars, and the creation of unsafe neighborhoods.

In contrast to seeing graffiti as mere vandalism, others view graffiti as more than scribbles on a wall. A growing number of people believe that some forms of graffiti are art, and that the form of expression portrayed in this illegal form of writing has merit.

Hercin lies the current urban dilemma cities must face: how can cities protect public property and the properties of citizens while graffiti artists continue to express themselves?

### What is this Thing Called Graffiti?

There are many stereotypes about graffiti artists. People unfamiliar with graffiti culture might assume that the creators are tied to gangs and other forms of crime, but in fact, according to the County of Santa Clara, California, "less than 10% of graffiti in the United States is gang related" (Santa Clara 2003).

There are many reasons why graffiti occurs, ranging from simple acts of defiance to public self-expression. But most often, people create graffiti for a specific, and oftentimes very personal, reason. It could be out of a desire to express pride for one's neighborhood, or to speak out about the injustice of political situations (see Figure 1). Or graffiti could be purely an outlet for human creativity (see Figure 2).

Graffiti frequently appears in unused urban public spaces. Differentiating between 'good graffiti' and 'bad graffiti,' however, comes down to personal aesthetics. Drab walls, painted in solid whites, tans or grays, become large open 'canvases' to graffiti artists (see Figure 3).

Figure 1. Graffiti artist, Change, created this political piece in Ithaca, New York, for his brother (Farrell, Susan; artcrimes.org; 2003)



© 2003 - "No War" by Change, Ithaca, NY

Figure 2. Graffiti artists demonstrate the creative process of spray can art in Austin, Texas.



© Sarah Graham

Figure 3. The back of a building on the corner of Rio Grande and 24th Street in Austin Texas shows the scars of previous graffiti marks. Bland walls, such as this one, often become a 'canvas' for graffiti artists and can be found throughout urban areas.



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Whereas distinctions between good and bad graffiti complicate its definition, wording and usage obscures matters further. According to *The American Heritage Dictionary*, graffiti is defined as "a drawing or inscription made on a wall or other surface, usually so as to be seen by the public," (*American Heritage* 2003). However, graffiti has also come to mean an embellished style of writing. For the purposes of this paper, I will include 'Hip-hop graffiti,' (Ferrell 1993), the type of spray can art that developed on the subways of New York and Philadelphia during the 1970's, and its spin-offs within the definition of graffiti. Although 'tags', or "a writer's [personalized and stylized] signature with marker or spray paint" (Cooper 1984: 27), have served as an important identifier for graffiti culture, I will not refer to them as 'graffiti'.

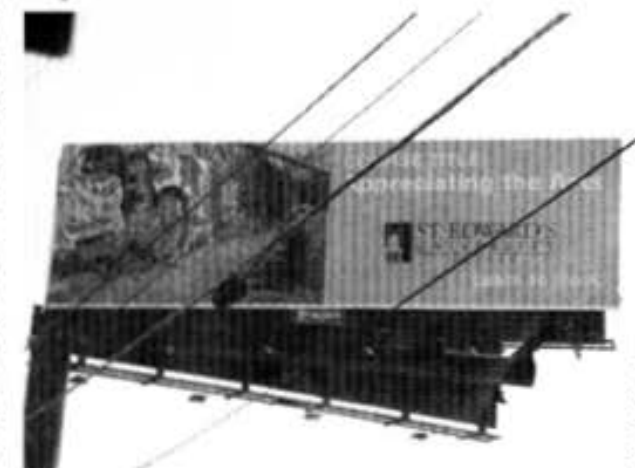
Therefore, the working definition of graffiti for this article is artistically stylized writing or marks on walls, using mediums such as spray paint and stencils, usually placed illegally in public places. This designation includes 'pieces', or a "masterpiece, a work of art made by a graffiti artist, usually created in aerosol paint" (Cooper 1984: 27), and stencil art. Stencil graffiti is created with homemade stencils for a reproducible effect, and is usually applied with paintbrushes or spray cans.

Although vandalism is not a term graffiti-art sympathizers embrace, I will discuss 'vandalism' throughout the article. According to *The American Heritage Dictionary*, vandalism encompasses the "willful or malicious destruction of public or private property". When using the word vandalism, I refer specifically to the negative connotations graffiti often bears. My working definition, however, does not equate graffiti with vandalism, as it assumes graffiti has some redeeming artistic merit.

Though critics argue that graffiti is no more than a defacement of urban areas, it has also been one of the few truly accessible art movements of recent decades. Its roots are found in 'crews' of multi-ethnic, economically diverse individuals from a wide range of neighborhoods who worked together to create art (Cooper 1984: 50). Graffiti's supportive and diverse audience of youth as well as its potential for community building are among its greatest strengths. Because of its clear ties to popular subcultures, like hip-hop and skateboarding, graffiti's audience and participants have grown over time.

Within three decades, graffiti has become a worldwide trend, with no signs of slowing down. Like so many other movements with subculture roots, such as the blues and rock and roll, and personal adornment decisions like tattoos and mini-skirts, graffiti has crossed over into popular American culture. Television viewers see graffiti in prime-time shows and music videos; shoppers see graffiti-inspired clothing in popular mall stores such as Hot Topic. The general public in Austin, Texas has seen an image of a college student studying a graffiti wall,

Figure 4. An advertisement for St. Edwards University depicts a student studying a graffiti wall to promote a course entitled, "Appreciating the Arts". The Billboard ran from 2002 through 2003 at the corner of Oltorf and South Congress.



© Sarah Graham

entitled "Appreciating the Arts", on a billboard sponsored by St. Edwards University (see Figure 4). These examples point toward at least a partial acceptance of graffiti into mainstream American culture, nonetheless, it remains illegal.

#### Redefining the Problem

If we recognize the acceptance of graffiti within mainstream American culture, we must also concede that graffiti can no longer be ignored, or simply erased. It is time to reevaluate the problem of graffiti because past approaches have simply failed. The immense cost of repainting surfaces *after* the graffiti has occurred, for example, reduces the funds available to cities for other pressing urban issues.

If graffiti could be redefined as an art form worthy of merit and appreciation, city policy makers could include graffiti artists in preventing the problem and finding a solution that would meet both their needs.

#### Evaluation of US Cities' Graffiti Policy

It is important for government officials and policy makers to assess graffiti policy in American cities. Most often, city employees and property owners take the responsibility of destroying any visible graffiti-related marks in public places. The following is a review of graffiti policies and their implementation in Philadelphia, PA, Chicago, IL, and Austin, TX; these cities represent how graffiti has spread in waves across the country in the last three decades. In addition, these cities have well-established artistic communities, and their city governments have prioritized public art projects within their city ordinances. The comparison will illustrate how these governments have handled graffiti in their own individualized ways.

#### A Comparison of Policies: Philadelphia, Chicago, and Austin

According to community organizer, writer, and graffiti artist William Upski Wimsatt, the United States has experienced three separate waves of graffiti. By 1970, the tags of New York and Philadelphia teenagers were common sight. By the early 1980's, the trend had spread to other large urban areas: San Francisco, Miami, Seattle, Los Angeles, Chicago, Boston and Baltimore were among the cities affected by the second wave. The third wave took place by 1990; this phase represents the infiltration of graffiti into smaller cities, including Birmingham, Alabama; Madison, Wisconsin; St. Louis, Missouri, and Austin, Texas (Upski-Wimsatt 2000: 134-141). I have chosen a city from each wave of graffiti to compare how different cities handle their problems.

#### The First Wave: Philadelphia

Philadelphia has fought graffiti for more than thirty years, and the city's multifaceted anti-graffiti programs are proof of its concentrated struggle with the issue. Although Philadelphia's law enforcement strategies are similar to those of other cities, Philadelphia has also implemented other creative policies for combating graffiti.

The Philadelphia City Code requires property owners to become involved in the fight against illegal graffiti and to take responsibility for their property's aesthetic impact on local communities. The Code penalizes property owners who don't remove graffiti within a period of twelve days. This requirement is only legally binding when the graffiti is visible to the public, and penalties cannot exceed \$300 after the city issues a series of violation notices. If, however, a property owner ignores warnings, the city is authorized to "proceed to remove the graffiti, itself or by contract, and the property owner shall be responsible for the costs of removal, including all administrative costs" (Philadelphia City Code 2002).

Philadelphia's code also includes strict penalties for those who create graffiti. The Prohibited Conduct chapter singles out graffiti as the one form of vandalism worthy of a \$300 fine for each offense. Comparable offenses, such as destroying or damaging statues and monuments, throwing bricks or other missiles into any public area, entering city property without authority, or obstructing a fire hydrant, all face fines between \$100 and \$300 (*ibid*). These contrasts illuminate the city's unyielding anti-graffiti stance; it is worth noting that fines are greater for graffiti than fines for prohibited actions that could potentially threaten the lives of citizens.

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation also has been involved with anti-graffiti strategies. The DOT has painted surfaces for which they are responsible, such as "concrete retaining walls, overpasses and noise barriers" ("How Philadelphia" 1995) with polyurethane coatings. This type of paint is durable and impermeable, making graffiti removal timely and cost-efficient. This is a common treatment for walls in public areas throughout the nation.

Other Philadelphia city programs working against graffiti include the city's Anti-Graffiti Network, which was formed in 1984. The network provides assistance for property owners through Graffiti Abatement Teams and a Paint Voucher Program. Assistance programs of this sort are common in urban cities, as the costs for graffiti removal are very high, and the city code punishes property owners who fail to remove graffiti, even if they do so for reasons of expense (Philadelphia City Code 2002).

As part of the Anti-Graffiti Network, in 1984 the City of Philadelphia began a mural-painting program to combat tagging (Drescher 2002: 8). Later renamed the Mural Arts Program (MAP), it is supported by city funds and matched donations from corporations and foundations. The program seeks to replace graffiti with murals whose subject matter and execution reflect the surrounding community. The first mural the program sponsored "was painted with 100 young people; they tackled a wall that was covered with graffiti from end-to-end. In the 15 years since, there's been no graffiti" (Jennings 2002). In fact, many graffiti artists have been given the opportunity to create murals, oftentimes becoming "the key to success for many young people" (Golden, 2002: 30). To date, the program has created more than 2,000 indoor and outdoor murals. MAP's success and popularity, with around 3,500 current mural requests, has benefited Philadelphia in ways beyond simple graffiti mitigation. The murals have also strengthened communities that were previously in conflict (Golden 2002: 53-57) and have increased 'place-making' features around the city (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. One of Philadelphia's famous murals depicts local role-model and athlete Dr.J., created in 1990 by artist Kent Twitchell. Such murals create 'place-making' features on publicly visible walls, which would otherwise be bland or possibly tagged.





Possibly the most innovative program in Philadelphia is Urban Artscape. Its purpose is to serve the city's youth by "[combining] daily art classes with mandatory community service programs" ("Philadelphia Anti-Graffiti" 2002). Serving as an alternative to writing graffiti, this program has given economically disadvantaged young adults the chance to partake in "visual, performing and creative arts" (ibid) through a city-moderated program.

Through the evaluation of each City program, it is obvious that Philadelphia's city government has used a variety of programs to fight graffiti while continuing to include public art. According to John Tucci of Philadelphia's Graffiti Abatement Team, vandalism has continued at a steady rate, but he believes painting over graffiti acts as a necessary deterrent. He noted the success rate of the Mural Arts Program in discouraging graffiti, and stated that, although murals are sometimes vandalized, it is to a lesser degree than it would be without murals (Tucci 2003). Philadelphia seems to have found a balance between increasing public art and battling vandalism.

#### **The Second Wave: Chicago**

Chicago is known worldwide for its artistic resources. Some of the city's most important landmarks, for example, are the Art Institute of Chicago, and the many works of architect Frank Lloyd Wright. Chicago also prides itself on its graffiti abatement program. Mayor Richard Daley has made it one of his goals to rid the city of graffiti and has taken bold steps to make this goal a reality. According to the City of Chicago's Streets and Sanitation website, "Chicago became the nation's leading city in fighting graffiti when, in 1993, it became the first large municipality in the United States to assume the financial responsibility for removing graffiti from privately owned property" ("Give Graffiti" 2002). Prior to Mayor Daley's term, the city was only allowed to remove graffiti from public property; now the city doesn't even need an owner's permission to enter the property and proceed with cleanup. A city employee must post a notice on the property containing the graffiti, and if the owner does not act within five days, the City is allowed to remove graffiti without authorization. Chicago's removal program utilizes 'Graffiti Blasters', high water pressured soda-blasting machines which remove graffiti and white-outs, or previous attempts to paint over graffiti ("Mayor Daley's" 2000). The City earmarks around \$4 million annually for the Graffiti Blasters program ("Give Graffiti" 2002).

Another anti-graffiti city program, Give Graffiti the Brush, is more community-based. The initiative contributes city-purchased paint to neighborhood groups to clean up their communities. The program allows communities to white-out graffiti on wood structures or other painted surfaces that would be damaged by the soda blasting machines. In October 2000, the program gave more than 1,370 gallons of paint to community groups; an estimated 200,000 additional gallons have been distributed since its inception in 1993. (ibid, "Mayor Daley's" 2000).

Moreover, Chicago's city ordinance has a time-limit policy applicable to property owners similar to Philadelphia's, but without the additional fee. Once a city employee becomes aware of a graffiti-related offense, a representative from the city's Streets and Sanitation Department issues a notice to warn the property owner that graffiti will be removed by the City, or by the City's contractor, after three working days unless the property owner attempts to contact the City's commissioner with a request for removal or to give a written statement authorizing graffiti on the building ("City of Chicago"). Although the City's policy has been supportive of property owners, this might be changing. A new ordinance, limited to commercial vehicles, allows the City to ticket immediately. Faced with fines, commercial vehicle owners are more likely to remove graffiti without delay ("Mayor Daley's" 2000).

The City of Chicago has also included within its Municipal Code a prohibition for anyone "holding a retail business license in the City of Chicago to sell spray paint or large markers" ("Mayor Daley's" 2000). There are two exceptions to this rule: it is only permissible when the marker is water soluble or "if the sale of spray paint or marker is made to manufacturers, contractors, trades, railroads, public service corporations and institutions" ("Mayor Daley's" 2000). Therefore citizens in Chicago are banned from buying these products unless they are affiliated with a corporation or public service institution.

Chicago's code defines graffiti as markings on buildings, or other structures, visible to the public. However, the city includes an important clause that differentiates graffiti from other signage: "Graffiti shall not include any sign permitted by the Zoning Code or any decoration that is part of the architectural design of the building or structure" ("City of Chicago"). By mentioning permitted signage, the city has made a distinction between what is acceptable to city-moderated policies versus what is not included as legal signage.

At the same time Mayor Daley was reinforcing removal methods, an employee with the Chicago Transit Authority used a different method to discourage graffiti. In 1993, the CTA had its first "Make the Change" art contest, which had sought to redirect the energies of graffiti artists into a legal art show. To be able to participate, contestants had to sign a waiver prepared by the CTA stating they would no longer write on the city's property. Around seventy artists participated and fourteen teenagers were picked to create seven legal murals within CTA's subway terminals (Stern 2003). The CTA also created "permission walls", where graffiti artists had consent to write on designated public walls. Permission walls were located on sides of terminals, street level station sites and retaining walls. These programs that recognized and incorporated graffiti artists sadly came to a halt when the one coordinator for the program no longer worked for the CTA (ibid).

Chicago has made their stance on vandalism clear: graffiti will not be tolerated on any account. The City does have a Public Art Program, however they tend to work with national artists on such 'safe' projects as "Cows on Parade" (Chicago Public 2003). Their one bold progressive art policy was by the Chicago Transit Authority, where incorporating graffiti artists proved to be economically efficient. The success rate of this program was astounding: the CTA reports it saved an estimated \$7 million in graffiti cleanup costs the year after the program began (Stern 2003). However, there are no current City programs incorporating graffiti artists in Chicago at this time.

#### **The Third Wave: Austin**

The City of Austin knows its population and economy are different from the rest of Texas. The "Keep Austin Weird" campaign, an economic strategy campaign that promotes local businesses and the uniqueness that makes Austin stand out in the Southwest, is a direct effect of the City's individualism. Austinites are known for their creativity: the city claims the title "live music capital of the world" and public displays of characteristic individualism, such as yard art and uniquely designed automobiles, are prominent throughout the city. The University of Texas injects a large percentage of young people into Austin, which is generally known as the liberal hub of Texas. Because of the city's immense popularity stemming from the university, the natural environment preserved within the city, its high tech-based economy and its artistic citizenry, Austin's population has doubled in the past two decades. The combination of a large youth culture, creative-leaning people, and the unaffordably high cost of living—which can irritate dissenters likely to create graffiti—has made Austin a popular place for the third wave of graffiti to explode.

Although the City of Austin capitalizes on its creativity, it does not have a reputation for embracing graffiti. Austin's Neighborhood Planning department defines graffiti as "gang advertisement" in its Neighborhood Resource Guide. In an unusual exception to this rule, in 1985 Austin funded the restoration of an illegally executed but widely appreciated graffiti mural. The 'Merry Christmas' mural (see Figure 6), created in 1980, was quite possibly the first graffiti mural created in Austin. Although it was painted without permission, the community in which it is located has embraced its presence and the City paid to have it restored in the mid-80s (Martin 1998). To this day, it serves as a landmark for the Muzak business that rents the building on which it is painted, and the building has not been vandalized since the business moved in. (Schwenke 2003).

Figure 6. The illegally executed Merry Christmas graffiti mural on Austin's East 7th Street has existed for over 20 years and serves as a landmark for Muzak, the business located within the building.



© Sarah Graham

Graffiti policy in Austin is similar to that of other cities, although it has some uncommon aspects as well. Austin's ordinance, for example, designates those who are responsible for dealing with graffiti. As is the case in Philadelphia, Austin property owners are responsible for removing graffiti from their property.

Like Chicago, Austin helps citizens obtain free graffiti abatement materials. According to Austin's ordinance, property owners "[commit] an offense if the owner fails to paint over or remove all graffiti from the property that is visible from any public property or right-of-way or from any private property other than the property of which the graffiti exists" ("Austin City" 1995). While this ordinance is similar to Philadelphia's code, Austin property owners have 30 days—as opposed to five days in Philadelphia—to remove unwanted graffiti. Austin assumes full responsibility for graffiti removal on city property only (ibid).

Austin's City Ordinance is also similar to Chicago's in that it makes a clear distinction between illegal graffiti and zoning-approved advertisements and signage. The Austin ordinance's definition of graffiti includes markings, "made in any manner" on public or

private property that is in view of the public. Signage not considered graffiti includes that which is "being used for commercial advertising purposes or that is placed on any property in compliance with any applicable city ordinance, state or federal" ("Austin City" 1995).

The City of Austin also has a Graffiti Abatement Program, which communicates with property owners and coordinates with a local youth program to help remove property owners' graffiti. This important participant is the Austin Urban Youth Corp, whose goals are to give young adults, especially those with barriers to education and job training, the guidance needed to become more responsible members of the community. This city-sponsored youth program sends at-risk youth to various locations to white out graffiti. The Youth Corp also visits area elementary and middle schools to teach children "how graffiti and tagging impact communities, and that graffiti is a serious crime" ("Graffiti Abatement" 2001). Although the workers of the Corp might like the graffiti they paint over created by their peers, as I found during an informal discussion with a young volunteer, they are just doing their job for the city's anti-graffiti campaign.

### Summary

Many American cities fight graffiti through reactive methods such as those implemented in Austin, Texas. Such abatement programs concentrate on covering up markings in hopes of discouraging further writing by decreasing its public visibility and influence. This common method creates one significant problem, however; policy makers are working against graffiti artists and vice versa. The most successful policies reach their goal of mitigation by including all players involved in the issue. The Chicago Transit Authority's inclusion of graffiti artists in decorating stations, for example, was progressive and economically effective. Likewise, Philadelphia's Mural Arts Program has also been successful: the pride created from MAP's first community-based mural has kept vandalism away for more than 15 years (Jennings 2000). By examining successful anti-graffiti programs, it is clear that cities should strive to create policies that work for everyone.

### Vandalism vs. Art - Is There a Compromise?

When evaluating the numerous points of view surrounding America's struggle with graffiti, one position remains inarguable: anti-graffiti policies and legislation implemented up to the present simply have not worked. Consequently, it is time for city governments and policy makers to re-evaluate ways to deal with the graffiti problem. Cities need to recognize graffiti's status as an important visual medium within mainstream popular American culture; moreover, cities should acknowledge that methods for dealing with graffiti have in many instances created the inverse result of making graffiti more powerful and graffiti artists more determined to defy the authorities.

Policymakers and government officials must recognize that forming policies without all key players involved is a mistake; in the face of such actions, under-represented voices are left to find loopholes in the laws, or avoid or even ignore policies in which they have no agency. Before tackling these and other essential points, however, I will discuss one of the most essential questions within the graffiti discussion: what could be considered art and what is interpreted as vandalism?

My research has revealed highly polarized stances in most writings on graffiti: authors are either strongly for or against its presence. In this article, I attempt to suggest a compromise between the two sides of the argument. In this chapter, I will discuss whether this is possible.

**Breaking down the Broken Windows Theory**

Many people are afraid of the environment created by graffiti. For example, Cincinnati City Council member Pat DeWine said,

Graffiti makes people feel less safe, it diminishes property values. It takes away from the quality of life, [and] it leads to more crime. If you tolerate this, you create an environment where crime is going to flourish (Korte 2002).

This statement is an illustration of how many Americans simplify a very complex issue. For example, a large number of graffiti tags in a given area may in fact coincide with higher rates of crime or violence. At the same time, however, graffiti and crime may be mutually exclusive of each other in another neighborhood. It might come as a surprise, but not all graffiti results in crime. In fact, I have spoken to several property and business owners who allow graffiti to exist on their properties, and not one has reported an increase of crime or lower property values (Adair 2003, Beesley 2003, Jasinski 2003, Schwenke 2003). Regardless of the actual circumstances, ignoring the graffiti—or worse yet, abandoning the neighborhood—only exacerbates the problem. Although historically many Americans have fled central cities in order to leave such complicated urban problems behind, a community will surely suffer if critical issues such as graffiti are ignored.

Our current graffiti policies generally support such ideologies as the 'broken windows' theory wherein graffiti, and other forms of harmless yet unwanted disorderly conduct, is blamed for being a gateway to more serious urban problems. Such problems, according to Wilson and Kelling's article "Broken Windows", cause many to avoid public spaces out of fear, facilitating problems to increase (1982). However, I would argue that graffiti is not a cause of urban blight, but rather a result. Graffiti cannot be logically blamed for national trends such as unsafe and impoverished neighborhoods, which were a source for concern long prior to graffiti's existence, or even to the notion that graffiti was an issue.

The methods of fighting graffiti have focused on its wide acceptance as a form of vandalism and, as a result, its prohibited status. Introducing city codes and zoning ordinances, criminalizing writers, charging fees, removing graffiti, or even requiring jail sentences are all common methods for tackling the problem. And yet, these methods have not reduced the amount of graffiti found in American cities; on the contrary, many argue that graffiti is continuously spreading. M.J. Whitford, the author of *Getting Rid of Graffiti* noted,

Graffiti artists are encouraged by anything that appears to condone their activities. Evening classes and lessons in youth clubs in graffiti techniques, the use of graffiti styles in advertising, media coverage of 'street art' and invitations to join the art establishment all tend to stimulate the proliferation of graffiti in locations where they are not welcome (Whitford 1992: 1.2).

While Whitford's argument may be somewhat hyperbolic, his main point is noteworthy. Graffiti writers—like all artists—are influenced and inspired by their surroundings. Many graffiti writers began their work because of an earlier tag or piece they saw. A graffiti writer's love for graffiti tends to be cyclical; by creating the risky art, they inadvertently encourage others to try out the artform. As spray paint artist Chris Silva stated, "I loved this idea that people wanted it [graffiti] up there that much that they risked getting arrested for it" (Neumer 2002: 11).

**Reevaluating Graffiti**

Graffiti usually happens for a reason. Like songs written to heal heartbreak, graffiti nearly always has meaning behind it. Justice and equality, poverty and death, a celebration of life, or just gaining notoriety for the writer: these are only a few common topics. At the same time, no creditable studies document the impetus behind graffiti. Some critics suggest that graffiti occurs to liven up a cityscape (see Manco 2002, and Subconscious Art 2001). That is, artists may feel compelled to adorn an urban area filled with gray buildings, or leave a tag in a neighborhood separated by privacy fences. Graffiti also has social benefits, especially for urban youths. An Australian study, for example, found that graffiti partially stems from a lack of legitimate activities for young people, but also from their ability to find merit in graffiti. Graffiti, according to this study, can serve to boost self-esteem; artists derive pleasure from the experience of being creative in a public forum. The study also found that 'legal' or 'permission' walls, where artists can legally paint without the threat of penalty, actually reduce the occurrence of illegal graffiti ("Zero Tolerance" 2002).

Figure 7. The back of Mojo's, Austin, Texas.



A local case study of the benefits of graffiti exists at Mojo's Daily Grind, a coffee shop in Austin. Mojo's owner, Wade Beesley, has allowed the walls of his business to become a legal space for graffiti artists. He sees the graffiti on his building as "beautifying" the ordinary "gray-gray-white-white" colors found throughout boring urban design (see Figure 7). Previous to the legal walls, his alley was covered with tags. Sometime in 1999, Beesley decided to get rid of the tags and permit graffiti artists to put time and effort into their work. He realizes that by encouraging a legal form of graffiti in the area, he is allowing artists to be creative, adding to the amount of public art in the city, and decreasing the amount of surface area continuously painted over still found down the same alley. (see Figure 8).

The property directly behind Mojo's is a sorority house, home to many young women who are students at the University of Texas at Austin. When Beesley began to encourage graffiti in 1999, the sorority mother also gave artists permission to use the back of their wall that faces the alley. After several battles with Austin's graffiti abatement program, she

reinstated her offer so that she would no longer have to deal with city employees. When the city's graffiti abatement program covered the sorority wall with gray and tan paint, it was repeatedly tagged. As these tags were hurriedly executed and contained little evidence of artistic creativity, they inevitably looked horrible. But this is a common scenario: in urban areas where graffiti is outlawed, it usually reappears in a degraded format devoid of care or artistic intent. On the Mojo's wall, however, writers had the opportunity to spend time on their work. The result is something altogether different, something so worthwhile that the sorority mother insisted that graffiti artists have the right to embellish her wall (Beesley 2003) (see Figures 9 and 10).

Figure 8. A repeatedly painted-over wall down the alleyway from Mojo's.



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**Separating the Problems**

By examining the graffiti issue in another light, the general public can decide whether graffiti can function as a new form of public art, or if it is simply a deplorable example of urban vandalism. Damage to one's property will undoubtedly always be illegal, but graffiti does not always have to be placed in that category. If it is possible for city governments to find merit in some forms of graffiti, the outcome of this 'war' can change direction. Graffiti artists will always find ways to write; city officials cannot change this reality. However, they do hold the ability to have a stake in the writing by creating a place for graffiti within the urban sphere.

Currently, anti-graffiti task forces and the artists themselves make separate and contradictory decisions on graffiti. However, this discord is unnecessary; both parties would benefit from attempting to find a middle ground. The fundamental basis of graffiti—that is, markings in public places—is not foreign to Americans: in fact, we are constantly bombarded by signage that is accepted, even encouraged by officials. Even on the University of Texas at Austin's campus, legal commercial graffiti exists (see Figures 11 and 12). Yet few people would agree that these legal signs are universally and aesthetically appealing (Hermer 1996). On the contrary, legal signage can be just as offensive to some as graffiti to the

Figure 9. The sorority wall in February 2003. The wall constantly transforms, allowing many artists a chance to create graffiti.



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general public. In fact, many communities have created sign regulations as efforts to control locations of advertisements, their size and legibility, and even so that the design is compatible to the surrounding areas. Whether they are tied to political messages, a religious message or even controversial commerce, we experience all of these types of messages in the public realm every day.

Figure 10. The sorority wall in April 2003. Within only a period of two months, graffiti artists created new murals. Such permission walls allow a unique environment for aerosol art to progressively change.



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Figure 11. Outside the University of Texas at Austin's football stadium, commercial graffiti existed on the roadway.



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Figure 12. Detail of commercial graffiti.



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The difference between these commercial messages and graffiti is that advertisements are legal and rarely ignite protests from the citizenry. A fundamental distinction between legal signage such as highway billboards and illegal signage, such as graffiti is that one is paid for and the other is not. Indeed, the ability to purchase public space seems to carry with it a form of legitimacy. In terms of city government, a more important distinction is that the advertisements are regulated through zoning laws and graffiti is banned, leaving graffiti artists one option: to create illegal art.

But even in the graffiti realm, there are distinctions between illegal art that garners respect from the general public, and undeserving art, which gets painted over. Graffiti will often provoke contradictory responses, depending on the identity of the artist and the context of the message. City employees charged to clean up graffiti tend to overlook

memorials, for example, because the creator may have been a mother who lost a child, (see Figure 13) or a friend lamenting a bicycle accident (see Figure 14), even though these scenes are illegal. In contrast, political messages, tags, and murals are usually covered over quickly, as they are seen as nuisances that may deliver unpleasant or inappropriate messages.

This discussion of art versus vandalism within America's urban environment leaves us with more compelling questions: what are the real eyesores in American cities? And are we tackling the wrong problems? An English graffiti artist might have said it best in the following quote:

It might cost a bit to paint over graffiti, but it cost a damn sight more to fund the high rise, high volume, cheapskate solutions to modern housing problems that provide an eyesore to generation on generation. But how often does one see renegade planning officers on the run for crimes against humanity and the misappropriation of public funds? (Smith, date unknown)

As a society, it might be necessary to answer some of these questions through community dialogues. The owners of property in the United States will always have greater control over the urban landscape than graffiti artists, but it might be time to bring both sides together to find a middle ground for graffiti-related public art.

### Incorporating Artists into the Policy Realm

#### The Importance of Inclusion

Anti-graffiti taskforces have failed to end the graffiti problem. I argue that a central cause for this failure results from artists being excluded from deliberations considering the control of graffiti. The inclusion of all key players in policy making is mandatory for the policies to be respected and implemented in a successful manner.

Figure 13. Setting an example as 'legitimate' graffiti, a mother memorializes the loss of her son on Lamar Blvd, Austin, Texas.



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Figure 14. Another example of illegal, yet respected graffiti: a friend remembers a fellow cyclist, which can be found on Guadalupe St. in Austin.



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Currently, policy makers face similar decisions when working with graffiti. History has also shown that graffiti artists, when faced with few or no options for creating their art, will continue to write, even in the face of legal censure. The following are ways in which cities can mitigate illegal graffiti through preventative methods.

#### **Urban Beautification as Graffiti Deterrent**

Responsible policy making includes the consideration of all key interests, even if a group is hard to track. Indeed, a city might find it difficult to include a group of people who work illegally in the policy process. Just as day laborers are often banned from soliciting work on city streets, graffiti artists are prohibited from tagging or creating pieces, yet both actions still occur. However, in the simplest form, one could think like a graffiti artist for a moment to realize what is tagged and what is respected. Graffiti artists tend to write on nondescript walls; therefore a property owner can discourage graffiti through better design initiatives. Respect for one's property can go a longer way if one demands it with a sense of style. This does not mean demanding respect through obstacles such as higher fences, but more through aesthetically pleasing design. For example, as one artist phrased it,

My drive is the need to see art on blank spaces, to breathe life into derelict sites. It often makes people think twice about vandalizing them, just as you wouldn't throw a piece of wood onto the fire if it were carved into a beautiful figure or animal (Manco 2002).

Considering urban design as a tactic for fighting graffiti allows a city to control the urban environment through zoning regulations and beautification requirements, already in place in many neighborhood plans and building codes. By encouraging property owners to beautify their property, owners can benefit through visual improvements, possible increases in business and more respect from possible taggers. Discouraging graffiti through urban design is a preventative method that could save property owners thousands of dollars in the reactive graffiti removal process.

A good example of graffiti prevention through urban design is a building on 53<sup>rd</sup> St (or North Loop Blvd), in Austin. Located at the edge of a neighborhood and a commercial district, the two-story building is located next to a dark alley and a busy street. The owner Dave Savemer said that his building had been repeatedly tagged since 1998. For years, the building was painted tan with white columns. Neighboring business owners recommended to Savemer that he paint over any graffiti as quickly as possible. After repeatedly failing to successfully cover recurring graffiti, Savemer was tired of tan walls anyway. So he decided to buy \$9,000 worth of green and red paint to refurbish his building. This was around nine months ago, and the property has not been written on since. I suggested that his building was getting more respect from taggers, as it is no longer just another blank-walled tan building in Austin. Although this was not his intention, he agreed the present design aspects were more creative and would probably help in prevention.

#### **A Pluralist Policy Process: Including the Graffiti Artists**

Partially mitigating the graffiti problem could come as easily as including graffiti artists in policy making. Instead of only hearing the loudest voices coming from neighborhood groups and business groups speaking out against graffiti, cities could level the playing field. The voices protecting property should be heard and respected; however, leaving out the offenders has done nothing for current policies. Because the idea of including offenders in policy-making has not been popular in U.S. politics, this tactic is admittedly somewhat

experimental. Yet a growing amount of innovative planning research shows promising outcomes when including marginalized groups within community projects ("Innovation Center" 2002).

While building stronger communities, for example, a youth-adult partnership can be beneficial in many ways. America's youth and young adults are key members of society, but rarely do they have a say in shaping their environment. As opposed to the common belief within such groups that 'Nobody cares', city officials have the ability to include them in decision-making. According to David Driskell's *Creating Better Cities with Children and Youth* (2002), by allowing youth or any other marginalized group to participate in events in which they have a vested interest, their opinions might be publicly validated for the first time. Consequently, the group in question may for the first time take into consideration the community at large. Local governments can successfully encourage critical thinking skills in young adults through discussions of how their actions affect others and how they can participate in the life of their community. The possibilities to promote youth development can provide a stronger generation of leaders tomorrow. By working together, a shared vision of all key players can emerge.

Admittedly, this suggestion is highly optimistic; it assumes a city government would be able to find volunteers who would admit to writing on walls and who would be willing to participate in brainstorming for alternatives to current policy. However, there are strategies to assist in finding such a population. For example, community leaders, art teachers, and others who are involved with youth groups likely know youth who are interested in graffiti. Another alternative to finding participants is to incorporate the participation into community service hours received from a graffiti-related offense (a form of repayment to compensate for damages to involved property). The youth have been used numerous times for visionary and design projects, from park designs to improving wheelchair accessibility routes (Driskell 2002); this version should be viewed in the same realm.

While including the artists themselves may prove difficult, for reasons such as an unidentifiable population, alternative sympathizers are a better voice than none at all. Potential representatives of writers would be those who deal with the youth on a daily basis but who are legitimate in the eyes of government officials: teachers, social workers, community organizers, older graffiti artists who have moved onto legal work. Whatever the case may be, whether it is through actual artists or their representatives, the voices of graffiti artists should be heard. This form of creative policies makes planning for graffiti easier: let those responsible come up with ways to deter graffiti writing in specified zones. Coming up with a sustainable plan for graffiti control can benefit the city. However, the young adults involved with graffiti, the true experts on the issue, must have an incentive for cooperating with city government.

#### **Creating Space for Graffiti**

*Graffiti as graffiti prevention:* Graffiti artists can also get involved with graffiti mitigation through legalized, city-managed, "graffiti as graffiti prevention" (Ferrell 2002) programs. These types of programs, usually sponsored by business owners, have been successful in many cities such as Austin, Los Angeles, and Denver. Within a legal program, graffiti artists gain recognition through their ability to make aerosol art; they also encounter newfound opportunities to cooperate with previously conflicting parties, such as city governments and businesses.

Moreover, legal options create more artistic opportunities for graffiti artists. Like most artists, graffiti artists typically want their work to be seen and appreciated; they would rather



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Figures 15 and 16. Murals can be found on every wall outside of Austin's Habitat for Humanity building. Some of the creators were aerosol artists, others were civic muralists; their collaboration represents artists from many age groups and interests.



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create a masterpiece than have to settle for a quick throw-up (Cooper 1984). In other words, they would like to be able to take their time, perfect their work, and sign their name to it. It is an unspoken rule in the graffiti kingdom to not tag over previous work if one cannot do any better (Ibid and Kurlansky, 1974). This means that graffiti artists would much rather see and respect a good piece of art rather than a bunch of impromptu tags.

Within a legalized framework, graffiti could also exist in places where it is not in danger of being destroyed, and where great graffiti art could thrive. Because cities have the option to regulate public space—such as blank walls—for the use of graffiti artists, these places could serve as de facto “galleries” for aerosol art. A regulated space will eliminate the arbitrary guesswork that determines what should be painted over and what should be kept as relics. Graffiti then becomes legal on permitted walls and is moderated by the city, creating a legitimate space for it to occur under city regulations.

The following are different ways a city can deter illegal graffiti through incorporating legal spaces within the urban landscape. These methods allow a city to discourage vandalism on private properties and at the same time create an outlet for graffiti to occur in regulated areas.

*Encourage legal murals as an alternative to illegal tags:* Detering writing on private property can be as simple as creating alternatives for artists. Commissioning the work of graffiti artists for the creation of public art is not a new trend; however, its use as a preventative method may be. For example, business owners who are frequently tagged might allow specific artists to create a mural that the community could embrace. (see Figures 15 and 16) In addition, cities could hire artists for public service announcements. By incorporating graffiti artists in neighborhood murals, the city would legitimize the art form and have an interactive community-building art project.

This method gives value to the work of graffiti artists by moderating the legitimate time and place. One good example of this legitimization can be found with the Tats Cru (Tats stands for ‘Top Artistic Talent’) of the Bronx, New York; this group of professional, for-hire muralists, create aerosol art in the form of memorial murals. Their work is a prime example of how community-based murals can become a point of pride. Included in their portfolio of memorials are murals dedicated to lost loved ones, rappers who have passed on, New York firemen who lost their lives in the terrorist attacks on September 11<sup>th</sup>, and even a few beloved pets. As a Tats Cru mural goes up, members of the community often gather for story telling in remembrance of those recently passed. In turn, the mural begins to speak for the surrounding community. Their skills have been used beyond the wall as well, creating t-shirt logos and backdrops for music videos. As such, the Tats Cru has succeeded in turning graffiti into a commercially viable art form. By commissioning such artwork, a business owner could also improve their relations with the surrounding community: businesses that target urban youth can take advantage of such talents and incorporate local artists into commercial advertising (Feuer 2002).

Likewise, city officials have the ability to work with neighborhood groups, local businesses, and public schools to encourage this type of artwork. Potential areas for community-graffiti murals would be ones most likely to get tagged in the first place: backs of buildings, alleys, and non-distinctive blank walls throughout the city. The beautification of blighted areas can become a lawful project performed by artists. Moreover, training for responsible art can be used to moderate graffiti. After-school clubs, such as Zap Graffiti Arts in the United Kingdom, teach kids design skills for logos or pre-planned community service announcements (“Zap Graffiti” 2002).

One local example of a successful legal mural was organized by the Austin Police Department. A couple of writers who had previously been charged with graffiti-related crimes were allowed to create a mural on the side of one of the department's buildings in exchange for community service hours required by law. (see Figures 17 and 18) According to police officer Desiree Small, the building located at South 1<sup>st</sup> and Oltorf had previous problems with vandalism. However, since the mural went up a couple of years ago, the building has not been vandalized.

Figures 17 and 18 (detail). As part of a community service requirement for being charged with vandalism, a couple of Austin graffiti artists painted this mural on the side of a neighborhood police station. The mural, located at South 1st and Oltorf, has relieved the building's previous problems of tags.



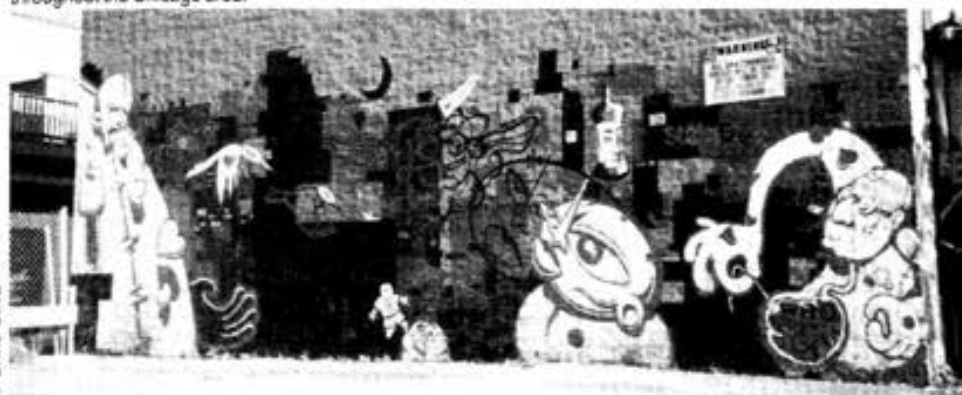
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*The creation of public walls:* Cities can also control how graffiti is incorporated into urban areas. A more formal way of incorporating graffiti artists into the urban landscape is to designate certain public walls for the purpose of 'unregulated' public art. In the Australian town of Hornsby Shire, for example, the current approach to beating graffiti involves the creation of "legal" mural walls. This progressive step, accompanied with regulations to mitigate vandalism on private property, recognizes graffiti as a form of expression that has a place in the urban environment. The Deputy Mayor of the town wanted "to develop a strategy that addressed the needs of young people in a mutually beneficial relationship with the wider community while recognizing that they are extensive users of public space" ("Graffiti the Legal Way" 2002). Major metropolises as diverse as Toronto, Canada and Mexico City, Mexico also have created visually appealing graffiti walls within their urban boundaries.

Figures 19 and 20. Chris Silva's artwork has moved from illegal tags and pieces to installations and paid design projects throughout the Chicago area.



© Chris Silva

*Benefits for including graffiti:* One of the spin offs of encouraging legal murals is the development of youth's artistic skills, which could then be turned into a profession. Many youth with graffiti in their backgrounds have become skilled designers and accomplished artists. Their future professional fields will not necessarily be related only to public murals; computer-related design and logo design are both common outlets for promising young artists. Christopher Silva, an artist from Chicago who has been involved in the graffiti scene since 1986, is a prime example of how a young rebellious graffitist can become a mature, well-respected artist with the right encouragement (see Figures 19 and 20). Silva has worked with numerous youth groups installing mosaics on school grounds, in park areas and at churches. He summarizes his connections with city government in this way:

A lot of my jobs are done through city-run programs, such as "Gallery 37" [City of Chicago program which provides urban youth with on the job training in quality arts] which is the program I was doing the mural project for this summer. The mural job I'm doing right now was given to me by The Chicago Dept. of Public Art, and the organization through which I'm most often contracted, Chicago Public Art Group, is not a city-run group but is often contacted by city programs to find artists for them (Silva 2002).





© Chris Silva

Silva's work has influenced the lives of many kids; it is also important, however, to a wide variety of patrons. For example, his work has been published in books, printed on t-shirts, and continues to be seen throughout Chicago.

#### Summary

Mitigating graffiti can begin with a simple step such as urban beautification, which could demand the respect of future taggers. Cities also can encourage 'good'

graffiti by controlling its presence in the urban landscape. Murals can add a place-making quality to areas, and could potentially lessen the amount of illegal graffiti. If cities can make exceptions to their bans on graffiti and include artists in the policy process, new policies are more likely to be respected, as long as outlets for the art form are included.

#### Conclusion

Since graffiti in some form has been around since the beginnings of man, our present view of it as 'a problem in need of fixing' will not make it go away. Therefore cities must learn to use whatever resources they have to incorporate it into the urban landscape when appropriate and to allow artists to exercise their desire to express themselves by writing on walls. These methods of incorporating supervised graffiti into cities will not bring an end to illegal vandalism, but chances are that they will accompany change. By incorporating artists into the decision-making process, cities can come up with positive answers and plausible solutions to a deeply entrenched urban struggle. Including artists in decision-making creates a reason for them to care about outcome; it creates a sense of pride and ownership.

Putting graffiti into perspective is also essential; cities grapple daily urgent issues that are much more deserving of valuable time and resources than graffiti removal. In a recent interview with an up-and-coming college-oriented *INSIDER* Magazine, graffiti artist and muralist Christopher Silva of Chicago, IL summed up this point nicely when answering the following question: *Anything else you think people should know about graffiti?*

I think people should learn about not supporting or participating in acts of violence before they should learn about graffiti.

Moreover, policy makers in American cities could learn a valuable lesson from the art world, which has in recent decades vastly expanded its boundaries to embrace many once-taboo forms of artistic production, ranging from performance art to radical installations, and, most important, socially and politically pertinent graphic works such as graffiti.

Finally, through incorporating artists into the policy making process, cities can strengthen communities and create more workable environments by building new communication lines. The current war on graffiti has been a losing battle from the beginning. It is time we tried something new that integrates all sides of the issue.

#### About the Author



Sarah Louise Graham was born in Humble, Texas on April 20, 1977, the daughter of Paul Ware Graham and Margaret Jane Owen Graham. After completing her work at R. L. Paschal High School, Fort Worth, Texas, in 1995, she attended Hendrix College in Conway, Arkansas for one year. She then moved to Austin, Texas in 1996 to attend the University of Texas. During her college career, she worked in childcare, at a plant nursery, and was the Kitchen Manager at the House of Commons in Austin, Texas. She received the degree of Bachelor of Arts from the University of Texas at Austin in December 1999. She was then the Director of Data Systems at Texas Low-Income Housing Information Service, a volunteer at the Fort Worth Planning Department and an Intern at the Fort Worth

Transportation Authority. She returned to Austin in September 2001 to enter The Graduate School at the University of Texas at Austin. She was a Professional Intern at Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization from 2001 to 2002, and a volunteer at The City of Austin's Art in Public Places Program in 2003. She currently resides in Fort Worth, Texas, where she is employed with the City of Fort Worth's Planning Department, and is a Board Member of the Tarrant County Housing Partnership. Sarah is dedicated to many social and political movements, and her objective in life is to make the world a kinder, fairer, better designed, and more interesting place.

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# The Impact of Children's Travel on Household Trip Rates

STACEY BRICKA AND MARK TINKLER

To support the development of its long-range transportation plan, the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) conducted a household travel survey in the spring of 2003. The survey focused on household members age 16 and older was based on two assumptions regarding children's travel: (1) most children would travel in the company of older household members (whose travel would be captured in the survey) and (2) those children traveling independently would be making non-automobile trips between origins and destinations within the same traffic analysis zone. The objective of this article is to document the impact of this methodological decision on the travel survey data set, using travel data from a similar household travel survey conducted in southern New Jersey (that obtained documented travel patterns from all household members regardless of age).

## Introduction

The Wilmington urbanized area is a small but rapidly growing region in the southeastern portion of North Carolina. The city serves as a commercial hub to the smaller outlying communities, offering specialty stores, services, and employment opportunities. In addition, the region is a popular tourist destination and home to the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. The high levels of both residential and seasonal population growth have led the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to begin the process of developing a new regional travel demand model as part of its regional long-range planning process.

MPOs are federally mandated to prepare long-range transportation plans at least every five years. The long-range planning process begins with an inventory of regional characteristics, including demographics and travel patterns. Travel demand models are developed to model current and future travel patterns based on information obtained through conducting a household travel survey. These data form the foundation for travel demand models that provide snapshots of current travel patterns, including origins and destinations of travel, modes of travel, and times of day that travel takes place. Population, employment, and residential and commercial land use development forecasts are used to project these travel patterns into the future so that potential areas of critical travel demand can be identified and transportation improvement projects developed to address them.

Following this customary process, the Wilmington MPO conducted a household travel survey in the spring of 2003. The travel survey followed standard practice by recruiting households to participate, mailing travel logs to them, and retrieving travel information for a 24-hour period. In total, 1,027 regional households participated in the study, with all household members age 16 and older providing details about 8,103 trips, or an average of 7.89 trips per household per day (or 24-hour period).

The Wilmington survey differed from similar household travel surveys in its focus on household members age 16 or older. Travel surveys focus on either travel by all household members or those above a particular age (5 and older or 16 and older). Given budget limitations and the knowledge that the focus of the model would be on automobile travel, a decision was made to obtain travel only from household members age 16 or older. This decision was taken in light of two widely held assumptions regarding children's travel: (1) most children would travel in the company of older household members (whose travel would be captured in the survey) and (2) those children traveling independently would be making non-automobile trips between origins and destinations within the same traffic analysis zone (which is not explicitly considered in the modeling process).<sup>1</sup>

At the conclusion of the household travel survey, the results were "benchmarked" using U.S. Census estimates for the region (for demographic summaries) and "standard" household trip rates reported in Special Report No. 365 published by the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) (for trip-making summaries). This report provides "standard" average daily household trip rates that reflect the findings of several household travel surveys from across the nation. The comparable households either included travel from all household members or those age 5 and older. When the Wilmington average daily household trip rate was benchmarked against the NCHRP standard for regions of similar size, the 7.89 average daily household trip rate from Wilmington was found to be 12% lower than the "standard" of 9.0 average daily household trips for regions of similar size. It appears that this difference could be attributable to the exclusion of travel by children, an assumption that will be verified in this report.

Given the significant role of the regional travel demand model results in the long-range planning process, it was important to confirm that these three assumptions (two regarding children's travel and one regarding the trip rate) were correct. In order to do so, data of travel by children as captured in another recent household travel survey were used to validate the assumptions. The number of household travel surveys documenting travel patterns for all household members, regardless of age, has been increasing in the past five years. This includes surveys in Little Rock (AR), Phoenix (AZ), Los Angeles (CA), Pittsburgh (PA), Philadelphia (PA), and the Atlantic City region of southern New Jersey. A scan of recent travel surveys conducted using comparable survey methods suggested that the South Jersey survey might be the best available for this confirmation process.

The South Jersey study was sponsored by the South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization and conducted in 2000. It employed the same methods as the Wilmington survey, with the exception of who was asked to document their travel patterns (in South Jersey, travel data was obtained for all household members). The 1,460 participating regional households in the South Jersey study reported a total of 11,260 daily household trips. Of these, 15% were associated with travel by those younger than 16.

There were several factors that influenced the decision to use the South Jersey survey data for this analysis. As indicated earlier, of the travel surveys conducted in the past five years, it reflects travel in a similarly sized region with comparable regional characteristics to Wilmington. Like Wilmington, South Jersey is a smaller urban area that serves as a regional center for employment and other services. It is a coastal community with a large tourist base, attributed mainly to the casinos and boardwalk area of Atlantic City, as well as the South Jersey shore amenities. As indicated earlier, the two regions are not exact matches in terms of all geographic and demographic areas. However, of the recent household travel surveys where trip making was documented for household members of all ages, it was the most appropriate for use in this study.

The use of travel survey data from one study to help understand or explain the travel in another region is becoming more common in transportation planning, given the costs of primary data collection when compared to available funding. Although the Wilmington MPO does not intend to use South Jersey data in its current modeling process, as the region grows so will the need for a travel demand model that references non-automobile travel. Thus, the first section of this report will review recent findings regarding the criteria used to determine the feasibility of using travel data from one region to understand travel in another. These criteria will be used to compare the Wilmington and South Jersey regions.

The second section of this paper sets the stage for an evaluation of the children's travel patterns captured in the South Jersey study by first documenting the basic demographic information about those children. The third section presents the travel patterns of the South Jersey children, including trip purpose, mode usage, travel times, travel with other household members, and other key travel behavior elements. In the final section of the paper, general conclusions are presented, regarding the initial assumptions about travel by children and how the exclusion of that travel impacted the number of household trips captured through the Wilmington survey.

## Data Comparability

The first step in the analysis was to compare the regions based on factors found to be significant when comparing travel patterns between two regions. Given the costs of primary data collection as compared to available funding, some MPOs are considering the use of "synthetic" data, or data collected in one region being used in a similar region for the

purposes of developing a regional travel demand model. The costs and benefits of synthetic data creation are outside the scope of this paper. However, the key factors to consider when comparing regions have a direct bearing on this study.

In 2000, Walker and Reeder developed a regional travel demand model using transferable data based on a compilation of Texas travel survey trip rates. In confirming the appropriateness of their data source, they relied on household vehicle trip rates and the proportion of those vehicle trips by trip purpose. Household size and household income were also key variables. A 2002 study investigating the transferability of the Nationwide Personal Transportation Survey (NPTS) Data to Regional and Local Scales (Reuscher et al) found household income and the number of household vehicles to be critical in the determination of transferability. Greaves (2000) relied upon average household size, vehicles, workers, age, gender, and proportion of 0-vehicle households to determine the transferability of NPTS data to the Baton Rouge region.

While the Wilmington MPO does not plan to build a travel demand model using the South Jersey data, a comparison of these two data sets using the variables found to be significant in transferability studies was performed to confirm the appropriateness of using the South Jersey data to understand the impact of excluding children's travel from the Wilmington household travel survey on household trip rates.

Table 1 summarizes the demographic characteristics of Wilmington and South Jersey, as captured in each household travel survey. As indicated in that table, the Wilmington data compares favorably to the South Jersey data with regard to average household size, vehicles, income, and proportion of 0-vehicle households. The South Jersey data reflects a slightly older population (average age of 45 in South Jersey compared to 37 in Wilmington), a disparity that corresponds with a lower average of household workers in South Jersey. Given that the purpose of this paper is to investigate travel by household members under the age of 16 and the focus on the younger travelers in South Jersey, the impact of the older population may affect the magnitude of children's trip in the overall South Jersey data set, but not the general travel trends of children themselves.

Table 1. Demographic Comparison.

	WILMINGTON N=1,027	SOUTH JERSEY N=1,460
Household Size (avg.)	2.30	2.25
Household Vehicles (avg.)	1.70	1.80
% 0-vehicles	7.4%	8.4%
Household Workers (avg.)	1.47	1.06
Income - < \$25k	27.5%	24.3%
\$25k-<\$50k	31.0%	31.9%
\$50k-<\$75k	17.7%	23.4%
\$75k+	23.8%	20.4%
Age (avg.)	36.97	44.72
% Female	53.3%	51.8%

Sources: Cape Fear Regional Household Travel Survey, weighted, and Transportation for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Household Travel Survey, weighted.

The second comparison of data sets was in terms of the reported trip making. Using the Texas model (Walker and Reeder), the next comparison focused on vehicle trip rates and the proportion of vehicle trips based on trip purpose. The Wilmington data had a higher overall average daily household trip rate than the subset of South Jersey data reflecting

travel by those age 16+ only (7.89 compared to 7.68 - not shown in Table 2) as well as a higher average daily household vehicle trip rate (7.38 compared to 6.73). Even when travel is broken out into the standard groupings of home-based work (HBW), home-based other (HBO), and non-home based work (NHB), the Wilmington data consistently showed a higher average household daily trip rate in all categories as compared to the South Jersey travel by age 16+. This was attributed to the higher proportion of elderly in South Jersey. However, a large portion of the Wilmington growth is attributable to senior citizens, so the South Jersey data may reflect future trip rates that can be expected in the Wilmington region. In terms of the proportion of vehicle trips by trip purpose, the Wilmington data had 7% fewer HBO trips as compared to South Jersey. However, the proportions were fairly consistent on the HBW and NHB trips.

Table 2. Comparison of Household Travel.

SOURCE	HOME-BASED WORK	HOME-BASED OTHER	NON-HOME BASED	TOTAL
Wilmington	1.65	3.33	2.40	7.38
South Jersey (16+)	1.12	3.17	1.77	6.06
South Jersey (All)	1.12	3.69	1.92	6.73
Wilmington	22.4%	45.1%	32.5%	100%
South Jersey (16+)	18.6%	52.3%	29.2%	100%
South Jersey (All)	16.7%	54.8%	28.5%	100%

Sources: All vehicle trips reported in both the Cape Fear Regional Household Travel Survey, weighted, and Transportation for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Household Travel Survey, weighted. Home-based work trips include only those trips that begin at home and end at the work destination (or vice-versa). Home-based other trips include those trips that begin at home and end at a non-work destination (or vice-versa). Non-home based trips include those trips that begin and end at non-home locations.

**Demographic Characteristics of Children**

The South Jersey survey included demographic and travel behavior data from 1,460 households and 3,291 persons. Of these household members, 16% or 526 were under the age of 16. This section presents basic demographic information about those children to provide a framework for analyzing the travel patterns. The demographic information includes age, student and disability status. Reported travel mode for the school trip is also included. This information was obtained from the head of household during the initial "recruitment" interview.

For purposes of analysis, the children were grouped into four categories: ages 0 to 4 (pre-school), ages 5 to 8 (elementary), ages 9 to 12 (pre-teen), and ages 13 to 15 (teen). When categorized, the distribution of children included 24% of preschool age, 27% elementary students, 27% pre-teens and 22% teens.

Of the 526 children included in the South Jersey dataset, two were reported to have disabilities: one with muscular dystrophy and using a wheelchair, the other with dyslexia. Eighty-three percent of the children attended school or daycare. Those that did not were primarily in the "preschool" group (two children were age 5). Almost half of the children were in grades K through 6 (47%), while 27% were in the higher grades. Seventeen percent of the children did not attend any type of school (those mentioned earlier), 6% were in preschool, and 4% in daycare. Five percent of the children were home-schooled.

This information means that of all respondents under age 16, 17% did not attend school, 5% were home-schooled, and the remainder (78%) attended school outside the home at some level (including daycare or preschool). For those 78% that attended some type of

school, their typical mode of travel to school was obtained. Table 3 shows a distribution of typical mode to school, along with the average age of the student using that mode. In the South Jersey region, 38% of children attending school traveled there by school bus. Twenty-eight percent were taken to school in a private automobile, while 16% walked. In terms of mode to school by age, there was a statistical difference in the age of automobile passengers (8.0 years) and those traveling by school bus (9.8 years) compared to those traveling to school by walk, bike, or public transit (all older).

Table 3. Typical Mode to School.

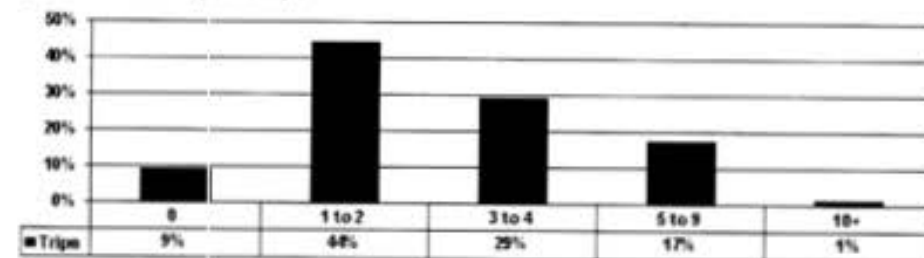
MODE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	MEAN AGE	STD. ERR.
Walk	64	15.5%	10.73	0.39
Bicycle	14	3.4%	11.02	0.80
Auto/van/SUV passenger	114	27.6%	8.00	0.39
Transit Bus	54	13.0%	10.48	0.41
School bus	157	38.1%	9.83	0.26
Refused	10	2.4%	8.37	1.31
Total	413	100.0%		

Source: SJTPO 2000 Travel Survey, weighted. Base: 413 respondents under the age of 16 that attend school outside the home.

**Travel Characteristics of Children**

The South Jersey survey obtained trip characteristics for 1,626 trips reported for respondents under the age of 16. (The survey methodology called for parents to report travel for all children, although children between the ages of 12 and 16 were asked to complete their own travel diaries). The average daily person trip rate for children in the South Jersey region was 3.09, compared to an overall trip rate of 3.41 average daily person trips when travel by all household members is considered. As indicated in Figure 1, 9% of the children reported no travel for a 24-hour period, while almost half (44%) reported making 1 to 2 trips during the 24-hour travel period. Almost one-third (29%) reported making 3 or 4 trips, and 17% reported making between 5 and 9 trips on the travel day.

Figure 1. Number of Reported Trips



Source: SJTPO 2000 Travel Survey, weighted. Base: All trips by respondents under the age of 16.

Table 4 shows the average number of trips by age cohort. Children under the age of 5 had the lowest trip rate (2.44 compared to 3.09 overall). Teenagers (age 13 to 15) had the highest reported trip rate of 3.49 trips per person.

The majority of trips by these young travelers were to return home (26%), to attend school (23%), to eat meals out (15%), and for social/recreational purposes (10%). The full distribution of trips by trip purpose is shown in Table 5.

The distribution of reported trips in terms of home-based school, home-based other, and non-home based trip purposes is shown in Figure 2, for all children as well as by the

Table 4. Trips by Age Group.

AGE GROUP	N	MEAN	STD. ERR.
Ages 0 to 4	128	2.44	0.19
Ages 5 to 8	140	3.24	0.16
Ages 9 to 12	144	3.20	0.14
Ages 13 to 15	115	3.49	0.20
Total	526	3.09	0.09

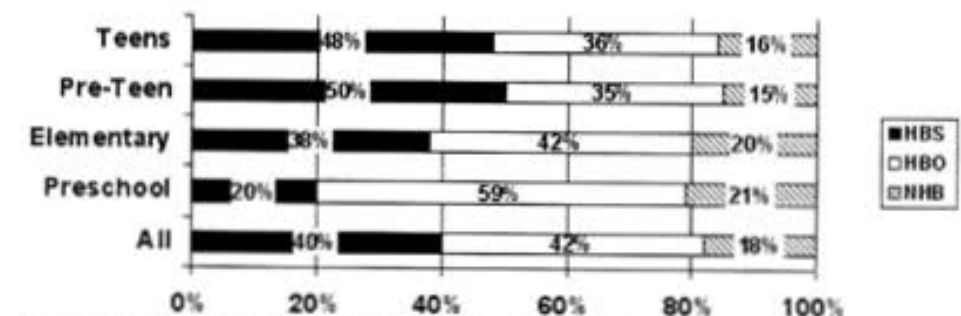
Source: SJTPO 2000 Travel Survey, weighted. Base: All respondents under the age of 16.

Table 5. Trip Purpose.

ACTIVITY	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Other in-home activities	417	25.6%
School at regular place	366	22.5%
Eat meals	240	14.7%
Social/recreation/entertainment	168	10.4%
Drop off/pick up someone	120	7.4%
Shopping	116	7.2%
Other family/personal business	75	4.6%
Visit friends/relatives	61	3.7%
School activity at other place	24	1.5%
Change of mode	15	0.9%
Religious or civic	14	0.8%
Doctor/dentist/other professional	12	0.7%
Total	1626	100.0%

Source: SJTPO 2000 Travel Survey, weighted. Base: All trips by respondents under the age of 16.

Figure 2. Trip Purpose by Age Groups.



Source: SJTPO 2000 Travel Survey, weighted. Base: All trips by respondents under the age of 16.

specific age groups. Home-based school (HBS) trips include those that begin at home and end at school or vice-versa; home-based other (HBO) trips include those that begin at home and end at a non-school location, and non-home based (NHB) trips are those that do not begin or end at home. As shown in that figure, 40% of all trips by these children were home-based school trips, 42% were home-based other, and 18% non-home based. There is variation by age group:

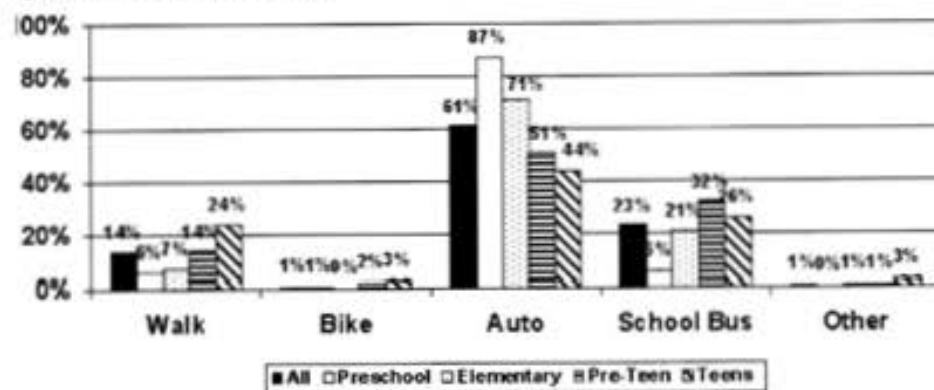
Home-based School (HBS) Trips: The youngest children (the pre-school group of respondents ages 0 to 4) only showed 20% of their trips in this category. This is consistent with the earlier finding that 17% of this age group does not attend school. Pre-Teens (ages 9 to 12) recorded the highest proportion of HBS trips at 50% of their reported trips.

Home-based Other (HBO) Trips: 59% of the pre-school aged trips were for Home-based other purposes. This compares to 42% of elementary aged respondents, 35% of pre-teen respondents, and 36% of teenagers.

Non-home Based (NHB) Trips: The younger children had more non-home based trips (21% and 20% compared to 18% overall). The older children (ages 10 to 15) reported a lower proportion of non-home based trips (15% and 16% respectively).

In terms of travel mode, most trips (61%) were as auto passengers, 23% using the school bus, and 14% walking. This also varied by age group. Auto (passenger) was the dominant mode for all travel, regardless of age. The highest proportion of walk and bike trips were by teenagers (ages 13 to 15), while pre-teens (ages 9 to 12) had the highest proportion of school bus trips. This distribution is shown in Figure 3.

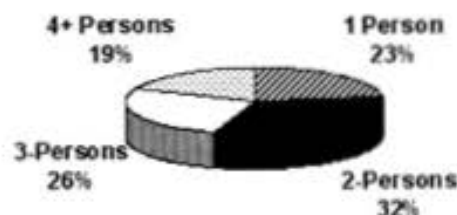
Figure 3. Mode Usage by Age Groups



Source: SJTPO 2000 Travel Survey, weighted. Base: All trips by respondents under the age of 16.

Twenty-three percent of all trips by children were reported to be unaccompanied, meaning that no other household member traveled with them. Figure 4 shows the distribution of travel party size for these trips reported by children. The average travel party size for all trips was 2.5 persons.

Figure 4. Number in Travel Party.



Source: SJTPO 2000 Travel Survey, weighted. Base: All trips by respondents under the age of 16.

Table 6 shows the average travel party size by age group. Travel party size decreased as age increased, with the larger groups reported for the youngest children (averaging 2.83 persons). The travel party size for the "teens" (ages 13 to 15) was statistically lower than that reported for all other age groups. Travel party size for children ages 9 to 12 was also statistically different from the other age groups.

Of all reported trips by children, 23% were unaccompanied. Of those children reporting an unaccompanied trip, most (80%) were for the older children (age 9 and older) and 20% were for children ages 5 to 8. The travel modes associated with these unaccompanied trips were mainly school bus trips (67%) and walk trips (24%).

Table 6. Average Travel Party Size by Age Group.

AGE GROUP	N	MEAN	STD. ERR.
Ages 0 to 4	312	2.83	0.06
Ages 5 to 8	453	2.71	0.06
Ages 9 to 12	460	2.46	0.06
Ages 13 to 15	401	2.16	0.07
Total	1,626	2.52	0.03

Source: SJTPO 2000 Travel Survey, weighted. Base: All trips by respondents under the age of 16.

**Findings**

The purpose of the review of children's travel patterns captured in the South Jersey survey was to sufficiently document trip making by those under the age of 16 such that the implications of excluding this group of travelers from the Wilmington survey could be documented. In particular, three assumptions were made that can be verified through this analysis.

The first assumption was that most travel by children would be made in the company of older household members, whose travel would be included in the Wilmington survey data set. As shown above, this assumption was accurate in that only 23% of all trips (or 374 trips) reported by children participating in the South Jersey survey were unaccompanied. Of these trips, most were on the school bus (67%) and thus related to travel to and from school, while 24% were walk trips. The data show that these unaccompanied travelers were older children, with 80% being children age 9 and older. In terms of the larger, overall data set that includes travel by all South Jersey household members, the 374 trips represents about 3% of the total reported trips.

A second assumption pertained to the unaccompanied travel. Specifically, the unaccompanied travel by children would be between origins and destinations of travel within the same traffic analysis zone. Since travel demand models focus on travel that utilizes higher-level transportation infrastructure and is more regional in nature, trips within the same traffic analysis zone are not modeled. Of the unaccompanied trips made by children, 87% of all unaccompanied trips were between origins and destinations in the same zones. Thus, of the 374 trips attributable to children in the South Jersey data set, 325 were within the same zone. This also means that 49 unaccompanied trips occurred between origins and destinations in different zones. So, of the total 11,260 trips reported by all household members participating in the South Jersey study, less than 1% were unaccompanied trips made by children between zones. Since Wilmington's current travel demand model will only focus on automobile trips, these trips would not have contributed to the modeling effort. However, as Wilmington grows and begins to consider alternative modes of travel, those missing trips will be excluded from the analysis.

The third assumption in the process of conducting this study was made when comparing the average daily household trip rate of 7.89 to the NCHRP "standard" trip rate of 9.0 average daily household trip rates for regions of similar size to Wilmington. Although the Wilmington trip rate is 88% of the "standard", the difference was attributed to the exclusion of children's travel. The proportions of travel by children reflected in the South Jersey data set can be used to validate this assumption. Specifically, children in the South Jersey survey contributed 1,626 trips or 15% of the total 11,216 trips to the survey data set. This means that those over the age of 16 contributed 85% of the trips within that region. Assuming this proportion would also hold in the Wilmington area, the overall Wilmington average daily household trip rate of 7.89 as captured through the survey might actually be closer to 9.28 average daily household trips (7.89 / 85%), which is above the NCHRP benchmark average daily household trip rate. This suggests that the overall household trip rate resulting from the Wilmington household travel survey is indeed reasonable, given the exclusion of household members under age 16.

### Conclusions

Given budgetary constraints and a plan to develop a regional travel demand model that focused only on travel by automobiles, the Wilmington household travel survey was designed to document travel only for household members age 16 or older. In doing so, two assumptions were made about travel by household members younger than 16: (1) Most travel by children would be in the company of household members age 16 and older, and (2) Unaccompanied travel by children would be intra-zonal. An additional assumption was made when benchmarking the resulting average daily household trip rate of 7.89 trips against an accepted standard of 9.0 trips (that the lack of children's travel accounted for the difference).

Travel data from the South Jersey household travel survey, which is the best available household travel survey data set that contains travel for all household members to serve as a comparison to the Wilmington survey results, was used to test these assumptions. Relying on the identification of key variables through prior research, the South Jersey data was compared to the Wilmington data and found to provide a reasonable foundation for this analysis. The assumptions made at the start of the household travel survey were validated through this comparison process.

Specifically, to consider the impact of the unaccompanied trips in relation to the travel patterns in Wilmington, these rates were used to estimate children's travel in Wilmington. Taking the distribution of children by age among the participating Wilmington households and applying the trip information observed in South Jersey yields some insight into how the unaccompanied travel by children in Wilmington could be accounted for in future model updates, as alternative mode travel becomes a greater focus. Within the South Jersey survey data, 14% of all trips were made by children (1,626) and of these, 23% (374) were unaccompanied. Applying these rates to the Wilmington survey, the current 8,103 trips (reported by Wilmington household members age 16+) would increase to 9,422 trips by adding 1,319 trips made by children. Of these 1,319 trips associated with the children of the Wilmington region, 23% would be unique, unaccompanied and not accounted for in the travel reported by those 16 and older. This means that Wilmington could expand the current data set by 1,015 trips using the details of reported trips by the older household members, but would lack details associated with 304 trips (or 3% of all trips in this "new" data file).

Since these unaccompanied trips were made using non-automobile modes (school bus, walking, etc.), their inclusion in the Wilmington data set would increase the proportion

of non-automobile travel by 18% (from its current level of 19% to 22% overall). Therefore, 18% of alternative mode trips were "missed" by surveying only household members age 16 or older. Thus the impact of not surveying those under the age of 16 in the Wilmington survey does become significant when considering alternative modes of travel.

In the travel demand modeling process, the data adjustments to the Wilmington data using the South Jersey proportions would factor up the alternative mode trips throughout the travel demand model to account for walking, bicycling, school bus, and public transit trips missed by not including children in the Wilmington regional travel survey. Given the aggregate nature of transportation analysis zone structures in most regional travel demand models, no intra-zonal trips are assigned to the network. However, an estimated 49 of the unaccompanied trips by children would be inter-zonal and therefore should be, but are not currently, assigned to the Wilmington regional travel demand model. Although this is a small amount, when expanded to represent the regional population, it accounts for approximately 3,283 trips, of which 1,083 are non-motorized trips (walking or bike).

At such time as multi-modal capabilities are added to the Wilmington regional travel demand model, and transit, bicycle, and pedestrian networks are added to the model, these trips may be a significant portion of relatively short distance inter-zonal trips in the model using alternative modes. As future improvements in the alternative mode infrastructure are made in greater Wilmington area and the mode share of alternative modes increases, the importance of this factor also increases. A future multi-modal model used to test alternative development scenarios designed to encourage alternative mode use would need to account for the travel of those under 16.

Since 40% of all children's trips involve travel to or from school, the impact of school location and related congestion resulting from school bus and parent traffic flows is affecting many neighborhoods today. In most travel demand models, school bus transportation is treated much like public transit on the transportation networks. However, the greater impact of school bus travel is felt in the neighborhoods and by local planners who must design adequate traffic circulation flows at each neighborhood school site to accommodate the peak demands associated with this daily travel.

Although the Wilmington regional travel demand model is not being developed initially to forecast alternative mode travel, it remains an important exercise to quantify and characterize the travel of those under the age of 16 in the greater Wilmington area. For long range planning purposes, it emphasizes the share of travel that is really being made using alternative modes and potential to increase that total share. It is not possible to accurately account for the total alternative mode travel patterns and characteristics without including the travel of those 16 and under. Therefore, when justifying future alternative mode transportation infrastructure, it will be necessary to include this travel component in order to more accurately support its level of usage.

The funding constraints and initial plans for the new Wilmington regional travel demand model are not unique to the Wilmington region. Many MPOs in smaller urban areas are making similar assumptions and devising survey methodologies that will provide the necessary data given the level of funding available. This analysis shows that it is possible to survey only those household members age 16 and older and to use comparable data for estimating most trips by children. However, MPOs will have to make similar decisions regarding the true proportions of alternative mode travel within their region and understand the data limitations when evaluating alternative mode transportation infrastructure and measuring estimated impacts of transportation control measures.



In addition to travel demand model implications, three areas of future research have been identified through this work. First, the selection of the best available and most appropriate data source to use as the foundation for estimating children's travel as developed in this paper relies on key demographic factors. Future applications should also include consideration of densities, development patterns, and employment base when comparing regions.

Second, the travel demand modeling effort is regional in scope, which results in the exclusion of intra-zonal trips from the modeling process. While these trips may not impact the travel on the regional transportation network, they do have a large impact on neighborhood design and accessibility decisions. An understanding of travel at the neighborhood level is critical to identifying and prioritizing neighborhood projects or those geared towards pedestrians or alternative modes.

Finally, this neighborhood or micro-scale focus is at the heart of emerging research concerning the interaction between transportation and health. Travel by children and the spatial patterns of unaccompanied children's travel may provide valuable information in informing these studies. In addition, efforts to estimate the impacts of land use densities and other walkability factors on travel mode choice may be expanded with an increased understanding of unaccompanied children's travel.

**Notes**

<sup>1</sup> Traffic analysis zones are sub-geographic regions, similar to census block groups, which form the basic unit of analysis for travel demand modeling.

**About the Authors**



Stacey Bricka is a PhD student in Community and Regional Planning at the University of Texas at Austin, and Research Director/ Principal at NuStats, where she designs and conducts travel behavior surveys. Her research focus has been in two areas: improving travel survey methods through reducing non-response bias, and travel by women and children using both regional travel survey data as well as the Nationwide Personal Transportation Survey data. She holds a BA in Economics from Eckerd College and a MA in Economics from the University of South Florida.



Mark Tinkler, AICP, is a Senior Transportation Planner with the City of Wilmington, North Carolina, and Director of the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization. He holds a BS in Geography from Kansas State University, a BS in Information Technology from the Rochester Institute of Technology, and a MRP (Master of Regional Planning) from the State University of New York at Albany. Mr. Tinkler is leading a cooperative regional travel demand model development project with the North Carolina Department of Transportation.

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# A Marriage of Convenience?

Fiscal Incentives and Residential Development  
Patterns in California

RICHARD BRADY

The term “fiscalization of land use” is often used to describe a phenomenon whereby local land use decisions are mostly influenced by fiscal concerns, contrary to expressed desires of the affected community. A loose theory of fiscalization of land use has emerged with several associated hypotheses. Central to this article are those hypotheses that claim affordable and market-rate housing development is retarded due to fiscalization of land use. Based on interviews with elected officials, city planning and finance department staff, and analyses of local government documents, this article presents case studies from neighboring cities in northern San Diego County that suggest the oft-asserted relationship between fiscal incentives and residential development patterns in California is merely a marriage of convenience.

## Introduction

Considered sacred to local governments, the power to determine land use policy is a last vestige of local autonomy in California. Judicious execution of this power should enable local policymakers to direct growth according to the vision set forth by their constituents. These officials determine an appropriate blend of land uses they feel will improve quality of life in their communities. In doing so, decision-makers must also consider the facilities and services necessary to support future development. State and federal retrenchment has led to many innovations in local government finance. One such innovation is what is known as "fiscalization of land use"; the phenomenon whereby land use decisions are mostly influenced by fiscal concerns, often contrary to the expressed desires of the affected community.

In California fiscalization of land use research has focused on the relationship between sales tax revenue and local land use decisions. Three hypotheses have emerged which Lewis and Barbour (1999, 72) have articulated clearly:

*Hypothesis 1:* Gaining sales tax revenue is a key goal for local land-use decisions, and thus retail development is given favorable treatment over other types of development.<sup>1</sup>

*Hypothesis 2:* This favoritism toward retail uses has the effect of retarding residential and industrial development.

*Hypothesis 3:* The built landscape would look systematically different were it not for the over-reliance on sales tax revenue.<sup>2</sup>

Although not explicitly stated, a fourth hypothesis is conceptually implied: residential development is also retarded for fiscal reasons independent of the pursuit of sales tax revenue. Because certain types of residential uses do not generate sufficient revenue to pay for requisite public facilities and infrastructure, it is assumed that land use policymakers act on this fiscal disincentive by restricting residential development or failing to adequately plan for housing. The purpose of this article is to challenge those fiscalization of land use hypotheses that claim fiscal motives are behind constrained market-rate residential development in California. This article also suggests that, although there is a fiscal motive to restrict affordable housing development, the motive is often subordinate to a community's desire to maintain social exclusivity and property values.

Exhibit 1. Regional Location



The neighboring cities of Carlsbad and San Marcos, situated in northern San Diego County, serve as case studies for this investigation (see Exhibit 1). Although the cities share a contiguous border, they have pursued distinct land use development strategies. The voters of both cities passed growth management initiatives requiring new development to "pay for itself"; however, only Carlsbad's initiative includes a strict limitation on the number of units allowed in the community. While San Marcos has successfully attracted numerous "big-box" retailers, Carlsbad has rejected such development and eliminated the land use designation permitting for these uses.<sup>3</sup> In addition, although Carlsbad failed to meet its regional affordable housing production goals during the last housing planning period, the City Council recently decided to further restrict the number of housing units that can be built in the

city (Baldwin 2003). In contrast, San Marcos exceeded its regional affordable housing production goals for the same planning period and has embarked on an economic development strategy that includes converting existing commercial land uses to mixed-use centers, thereby increasing the residential intensity of its community (Ibid).

Evidence from the San Marcos and Carlsbad cases suggests the examined hypotheses are suspect and should no longer be uncritically accepted. Three broad lessons drawn from the case studies substantiate this claim:

- Housing might do a better job "paying for itself" than originally thought. Increasing net local revenue is often tied to increasing population and housing.
- While the state-local fiscal structure is responsible for the increased use of development fees and exactions, and other methods of requiring new development to "pay for itself," this does not create a fiscal motive for policymakers to resist new housing development; in fact, it mitigates any such motive.
- Widespread negative perceptions held by residents toward affordable housing (and those who live in these developments) drives exclusionary residential development policy, not an imbalanced fiscal incentive structure.

The article proceeds accordingly: First, it reviews fiscalization of land use research and collates existing findings and discussion into a single fiscalization of land use theory to cogently challenge key associated hypotheses; Second, the article revisits a theory debunked in the 1970s philosophically similar to the challenged fiscalization hypotheses. And third, the article presents evidence from two case studies which raises questions about the validity of the conventionally held belief that misaligned local government fiscal incentives are linked to observed declines in residential development patterns.

## Literature Review: A Tale of Two Theories – Fiscalization of Land Use and Fiscal Motive Theory of Zoning

### *Fiscalization of Land Use Theory*

To effectively challenge hypotheses associated with fiscalization of land use theory, there must be a clear outline of the theory itself. For some, fiscalization of land use implies only that "the system of local public finance exerts an influence on local land use decisions" (Wassmer 2002). Kotin and Peiser (1997) go beyond issues of mere influence, suggesting fiscalization of land use describes a phenomenon where "land use decisions are based on the net tax revenues they will generate."<sup>4</sup> While the theory should state that fiscal considerations do more than exert influence on the land use planning process, the claim that land use decisions are based on these considerations is unnecessary. Fiscalization of land use should denote a phenomenon whereby fiscal concerns mostly influence land use decisions. Nevertheless, this condition, while necessary, is not sufficient for an effective theory as it must also describe situations where fiscally motivated decisions are made contrary to the expressed desires of affected communities. This aspect of fiscalization of land use is tacitly accepted by some academics and planning practitioners (Kirlin 1998; and Fairbanks, et al. 1997). If fiscal incentive structures reinforce a community's sense of "good planning" then land use outcomes should no longer be considered "fiscalized."<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, a useful theory of fiscalization of land use should at minimum describe situations where fiscal concerns mostly influence land use choices, contrary to the expressed desires of the affected community. In addition, the theory should be applicable to any fiscal structure so long as there are a set of grossly disproportionate incentives systematically favoring certain uses over others. Not only is it important to distinguish fiscalization of land use from its asserted effects so that it may be applicable independent of diverse local

government fiscal structures; separation is necessary to evaluate the merits of each asserted effect. In other words, the theory of fiscalization of land use is a static theory with a dynamic set of hypotheses.

Existing fiscalization of land use hypotheses are summarized in Exhibit 2.<sup>9</sup> Of interest here is the aspect of Hypothesis II and IV that claim the fiscal incentive structure strongly impacts residential development patterns in California. Evidence from the cities of Carlsbad and San Marcos reveal the suspect nature of these hypotheses. Prior to delving into the case studies, it is appropriate to examine and consider implications of a theory debunked in

Exhibit 2. Fiscalization of Land Use Theory

Fiscal concerns mostly influence land use decisions, contrary to the expressed desires of the affected community.

In California, three associated hypotheses have emerged dealing with over-reliance on sales tax revenue (Lewis and Barbour, 1999, 72).

**Hypothesis I:** Gaining sales tax revenue is a key goal for local land-use decisions, and thus retail development is given favorable treatment over other types of development.

**Hypothesis II:** This favoritism toward retail uses has the effect of retarding residential and industrial development.

**Hypothesis III:** The built landscape would look systematically different were it not for the over-reliance on sales tax revenue.

The following hypothesis is independent of a focus on sales tax revenue.

**Hypothesis IV:** Because residential uses often constitute a net fiscal loss for local governments, residential development is retarded.

and exclusionary zoning may not exist." An empirical examination of this question involving 175 New Jersey municipalities concluded: "a community's desire for social exclusiveness does not always match its real fiscal interests... There was no significant relationship between fiscal incentives and actual zoning patterns" (Franklin and Windsor 1976, 134-137). The fiscal motive could not adequately account for the pervasiveness of exclusionary zoning ordinances in New Jersey.

Fiscal Motive Theory asserted a causal link between fiscal incentives and land use outcomes. However, it turns out that the perceived fiscal structure only reinforced widespread prejudices and racism within these communities (Haar 1996). In consideration of the evidence presented in this article, keep in mind that the debunked Fiscal Motive Theory is philosophically similar to the challenged fiscalization of land use hypotheses.

the 1970s that is philosophically similar to contemporary assertions.

#### **Fiscal Motive Theory of Zoning**

Widespread use of restrictive zoning contributed to large-scale affordable housing shortages on the east coast in the 1960s (Babcock and Bosselman 1973, 1-38). It was widely assumed that exclusionary zoning practices were at root fiscally motivated and that eliminating the ability of local governments to enact exclusionary zoning ordinances would lead to a more equitable distribution of housing (Windsor 1979, 8-9). An academic theory evolved to describe this phenomenon: the Fiscal Motive Theory of Zoning.

While many embraced Fiscal Motive Theory, it had its critics. Branfman, Cohen, and Trubeck (1972, 501) suggested that racism, not the fiscal motive, guided exclusionary zoning. They found "no substantial relationship between residential patterns and fiscal incentives for imposition of (land use) controls." Windsor and Franklin (1975, 90) concurred: "we suggest that the asserted linkage between fiscal zoning

The Carlsbad and San Marcos case studies proceed as follows: 1) the degree to which each city relies on sales tax revenue is examined and the impact that this reliance has had on residential growth is evaluated; 2) the idea that the state-local government finance structure has created a fiscal motive for city officials to limit or prevent new residential development is directly challenged; and 3) the question about whether historical decisions to exclude affordable housing projects have been at root fiscally motivated is answered.

#### **Methodology**

An exhaustive examination of general plan amendments, zoning changes, and a thorough tracking of public statements made by city council members and planning commissioners regarding historical residential development decisions would appear to be an appropriate method for answering the research questions at hand, however this approach is limited.<sup>7</sup> First, in the cases of Carlsbad and San Marcos, there is a lack of recorded historical data. City Council meetings are not transcribed and in most cases, the minutes provide only a cursory record of the proceedings. Second, these methods cannot account for changes in proposed residential projects made by developers upon recommendation by city staff (namely planning staff) prior to submission to the Council or Planning Commission. Therefore, a more effective method for determining the relationship between fiscal incentives and residential development in Carlsbad and San Marcos is to balance historical data concerning development decisions with interview data from those closest to the land use planning process in each city. Interviewees for this study included:

- Jerry Backoff, Planning Director, City of San Marcos
- Lupe Cano, Finance Director, City of San Marcos
- Rick Gittings, City Manager, City of San Marcos
- Craig Ruiz, Management Analyst, Department of Housing and Redevelopment, City of Carlsbad
- F.H. "Corky" Smith, Mayor, City of San Marcos
- Dennis Turner, Principal Planner, City of Carlsbad

Despite having different roles in the local decision-making process, it appears all interviewees have a similar understanding of the motives behind residential land use policy in their cities. In addition to the interviews, an examination of public planning and budget documents, reports prepared by city staff, as well as journalistic accounts of events for which data was not available from other sources aided in the inquiry. Contained in these sources were quotes from non-interviewed elected officials and staff, which supported data collected in the interview process.

#### **Case Studies: Carlsbad and San Marcos, California**

Despite sharing a contiguous border in the same county, Carlsbad and San Marcos are socially, economically, and fiscally disparate. The cities also have distinctly different track records regarding commercial and market-rate housing development, yet it took judicial or regulatory pressure for both jurisdictions to take action on affordable housing. When applied to these cases, fiscalization of land use-residential hypotheses predict that Carlsbad, in its unique position of fiscal stability, would be in the best situation to embrace additional residential development. Similarly, it is also assumed that San Marcos, with fewer resources, would be more inclined to restrict residential development. However, the exact opposite has occurred. The Carlsbad and San Marcos cases present a unique laboratory for the investigation of the relationship between fiscal incentives and residential development patterns in California.

Both Carlsbad and San Marcos are growing suburbs in northern San Diego County. Carlsbad is a coastal community with a population and land area slightly larger than San Marcos. As of January 2003, Carlsbad's population was 78,247 compared to 54,977 in San Marcos (State of California, Department of Finance 2003). In 2000, San Marcos was racially more diverse than Carlsbad. In that year, 46.1 percent of its residents were non-white, while only 19.5 percent of Carlsbad's population was non-white (United States Census Bureau 2003a). In both cities, Hispanic or Latino residents comprise most of this non-white population. Carlsbad households are much more affluent than are San Diego County and San Marcos households. In 1999, the median household income in Carlsbad was \$64,145 compared to \$47,067 in San Diego County and \$45,908 in San Marcos (United States Census Bureau 2003b). The overall household affluence has translated into fiscal affluence for the City of Carlsbad as 2002 per capita general fund revenue was much higher than that of San Marcos (\$1,031 v. \$648), indicating that Carlsbad's fiscal capacity is also greater (City of Carlsbad 2002d; and City of San Marcos 2002). The discrepancy in fiscal capacity can account for the stark difference in commercial development patterns.

#### **Commercial Development Patterns**

Sales tax revenue is one of the last remaining sources of discretionary revenue for local governments (Lewis and Barbour 1999, 81). In California, commercial land uses are often the most "preferred" land uses because they generate huge surpluses for cities and counties when compared to other uses (Ibid). Over the past 25 years, traditional mechanisms for raising local revenue have eroded, leaving many cities to "over-rely" on sales tax revenue. It is this over-reliance that has led to the fiscalization of land use. In his study on the impact that this reliance has had on sprawling retail development patterns, Wassmer (2002) operationalized "fiscalization of land use" by looking at the proportion of a city's general fund comprised of sales tax revenue. This method of determining "over-reliance" is appropriate for a large-*n* study such as Wassmer's; however, a comparison of per capita revenue from sales and property taxes that highlights a type of revenue "dependency" is most useful here.

Carlsbad's per capita sales tax revenue was \$284 and its per capita property tax revenue was \$288 in 2002 (City of Carlsbad 2002d). San Marcos' per capita sales tax revenue was \$200 and per capita property tax revenue was \$74 in the same year (City of San Marcos 2002). San Marcos, with very low per capita property tax revenue has been forced to rely more heavily on other revenue sources, namely the sales tax, whereas Carlsbad's per capita property tax revenue is much greater, giving it substantial fiscal flexibility.<sup>9</sup> Following is an analysis of both cities' reliance on sales tax revenue and its potential impact on residential land use decisions.

#### **Carlsbad**

Until 1996, Carlsbad's General Plan included four commercial land use designations: Regional, Travel-Recreational, Community, and Neighborhood (City of Carlsbad 1994). The Regional Commercial designation is intended to accommodate mall-type high volume centers, while the Travel-Recreation designation is intended to serve the needs of tourists. A "big-box" retailer should anchor a typical Community Commercial center, whereas the anchor of a Neighborhood Commercial center is typically a grocery store. While the General Plan included a Community Commercial land use designation, historically development had not been consistent with this designation. Instead of the "big-box" discount retail centers that were supposed to occupy this land, grocery store anchored centers were approved instead. Acknowledging the general policy direction in which the City seemed to be moving, the City

Council began to question the continued usefulness of the Community Commercial land use designation and decided to look into the possibility of removing it altogether.

In 1996 the City conducted a series of community workshops and telephone polls to measure public opinion regarding the adequacy of city shopping centers.<sup>10</sup> The overwhelming response from participating residents was that their needs were best served with a limited supply of neighborhood commercial stores and expressed the desire to restrict community commercial uses. "Residents were perfectly happy driving outside the city to shop" at discount retail centers explained Mr. Turner. "However, (these types of retail uses) are the highest sales tax revenue generators you can get... And if you take a grocery store, about half of what they sell is non-taxable food items" (Turner 2003). The direction community residents gave to land use decision-makers was that it desired to exclude revenue-rich "big-box" retailers against the City's best fiscal interests.

The Council directed the finance department to assess the fiscal impact of converting Community Commercial land to Neighborhood Commercial use. In a letter to Principal Planner Dennis Turner, Finance Director Lisa Hildabrand wrote:

If the City were to convert land designated as regional commercial or community commercial to neighborhood commercial, the anticipated net revenues to the City may be reduced (City of Carlsbad 1996, Appendix A).

The Council followed with the question: "Should the city pursue developing more 'true' community commercial developments?" The Finance Department responded that the City did not have to pursue this type of development, if it did not wish to do so (Ibid, 4).

Carlsbad has not, to any noticeable extent, used the land planning process to secure sales tax revenue. In fact, the City has rejected the "big-box" type of development typically associated with fiscalization of land use. Therefore, pursuit of sales tax revenue has not had any recent impact on residential development patterns in the community.

#### **San Marcos**

While Carlsbad only has one "big-box" retailer, Costco, when all currently planned retail projects are completed, the City of San Marcos will have a Fry's Electronics, Home Depot, Costco, Best Buy, Kohl's, Lowe's, Guitar Center, and two-Wal-Mart's. City Manager Rick Gittings (2003) estimates that the combined revenue generated from these high-volume retailers could total more than \$4 million per year, or 34 percent of the City's projected sales tax revenue in 2004-05 (City of San Marcos 2002).

A prominent reason why the City has pursued "big-box" projects is because these are the only viable type of commercial uses remaining in north San Diego County. San Marcos is what Mr. Gittings calls "the hole in the doughnut" explaining that, "There is lots of shopping, but there are no department clothing type stores (in San Marcos) and I can tell you why. You need a certain mass (of residents) and most clothing retailers go into malls" (Gittings 2003). North San Diego County has two regional malls, which are located in the neighboring jurisdictions of Carlsbad to the west and Escondido to the east. San Marcos Mayor Corky Smith stated that the City would love to have more clothing oriented retail stores because that is what residents consistently ask for so they do not have to drive so far away for these items (Smith 2003). Despite the fact that residents of San Marcos desire clothing retail stores and the City Council has long been willing to accommodate, only recently has a prominent clothing retailer, Kohl's, signed a lease with the City (Gittings 2003).<sup>11</sup>

San Marcos' fiscal and economic development strategy rests largely on maximization of sales tax revenue through accommodating a number of "big-box" retailers (San Marcos Economic Development Corporation 1998, 18). However, the question remains, if the City were in a better financial situation, would the Council be less willing to have so many "big-box" uses? "No" replied the Mayor (Smith 2003). "I will tell you that the Council in this community has been much more an advocate of property rights and not using land use planning as a tool to deny people their property rights," stated Mr. Gittings while adding that the Council has not altered land use decisions to accommodate recent "big-box" projects; these uses are sited in places that make sense for retail uses (Gittings 2003).

While San Marcos has done what it can to attract sales tax generating uses, the strategy has not been pursued to the detriment of residential development. Planning Department Director Jerry Backoff explained, "We have always anticipated that the areas around the major arterials, along the freeways would make sense for commercial use, but we did not go in there and change it from housing...to make it retail" (Backoff 2003). High-volume traffic areas are perfectly suitable for commercial uses; however, the environmental hazards (noise, pollution, safety, etc) associated with land surrounding these arterials make it difficult to justify residential land uses in many of these corridors. A closer look reveals the City's revenue enhancement strategy has resulted in increased residential opportunity in the community. Mr. Gittings highlights a logical flaw in the claim that pursuit of retail development impedes residential development:

We have gotten them ("big-box" retailers) in here and it is a conscious strategy on our part because we know our (fiscal) limitations, but the Council has not gone into a residential area and said, this is going to be commercial...The irony of it is local retailers won't come to town unless you have a certain number of residential rooftops! (Gittings 2003).

Therefore, from San Marcos' perspective, fiscal stability and health is tied to steady growth in housing production.

Evidence of this can be found in the City's recent strategy to allow residential uses on land previously zoned solely for commercial use. Mr. Backoff stated that the Council came to the realization that to increase retail activity, the City would have to permit housing next to, or on top of, the retail space. "You can say you are not getting the full value of the retail by putting the people in there with it, but it gets you a better project than if it was purely commercial" (Backoff 2003). For example, the Paseo del Oro project, completed in 2002 included 120 multi-family units (98 affordable) and over 23,000 square feet of retail space, while turning a dilapidated commercial center into a vibrant mixed-use community (Marks 2003). It appears that the desire to improve sales tax rates actually drove decisions to allow higher-density residential development in San Marcos, not vice-versa as fiscalization of land use Hypothesis II contends.<sup>11</sup>

The claim that an "over-reliance" on sales tax revenue is leading to retarded residential development is dubious. A growing number of rooftops has made San Marcos an attractive destination for "big-box" retailers. Therefore, increasing *net* local revenue has been explicitly tied to increasing housing and population in San Marcos. Carlsbad on the other hand has shunned "big-box" retail development, despite the fiscal benefits of such development. While the neighboring cities have pursued distinctly different commercial land use policies, both cities passed growth management initiatives that may be construed as fiscalization of land use.

### **Growth Management**

In 1999, nearly 94 percent of California cities had policies designed to control or manage growth and the vast majority of these policies impacted residential development (Lewis and Neiman 2002). Growth management policies ranged from inclusionary housing requirements which facilitate affordable housing development to moratoria on new residential construction (Ibid, vii). According to Lewis and Neiman's study, "local officials appear to formulate residential policies, in part, in reaction to or anticipation of residents' opposition to new development" (Ibid, viii).

Carlsbad and San Marcos are no exception. Both cities passed growth management ordinances to implement voter-approved initiatives. However, the ordinances differ on an essential point. While both essentially require new development to "pay for itself," only Carlsbad's ordinance overtly restricts future residential development. Furthermore, in 2002, residents of Carlsbad succeeded in convincing the City Council to approve further restrictions on future residential growth, while recently a second growth management initiative that would have hampered San Marcos' ability to increase residential density failed to qualify for the ballot. According to fiscalization of land use hypotheses challenged by these cases, it would be San Marcos that would tend to gravitate towards more restrictive growth management policies due to its weaker fiscal position, not Carlsbad.

### **Carlsbad**

Prior to 1986, Carlsbad's General Plan estimated the City could accommodate approximately 108,300 housing units. Alarmed by the rapid development in the community in the early 1980s, Carlsbad voters ratified a Growth Management Plan through passage of Proposition E. Not only did the Plan require new residential development to "pay for itself," it sharply reduced the City's residential development capacity by capping the total number of dwelling units at 54,600 (City of Carlsbad 2002c). According to one City publication, "Common sense was the guiding force behind the (Growth Management Plan). The Council felt that existing residents should not have to pay to create and maintain the services and facilities needed by incoming residents" (Ibid). While it makes sense for new development to pay its way in the post-Proposition 13 fiscal environment, the decision to cut 53,700 units from its residential buildout capacity cannot be rationalized when considering fiscal factors alone.

The Growth Management Plan divided the City into Facilities Management Zones, each with a corresponding facilities and services plan. "If the City Council determines that a public facility or service is not in conformance with an adopted performance standard, then no future building permits which would impact the facility shall be issued" (City of Carlsbad 2002e, 7). Facilities may be funded by impact fees or are included as a normal development requirement; however, a project's proponent has the option to join or form a Community Facilities District (CFD) to fulfill its Proposition E responsibilities (Ibid, 3).<sup>12</sup> According to Principal Planner Dennis Turner, the City decided to "put all the infrastructure costs onto the builder. So the builders said, 'we will pay for it.' We'll put an assessment district on it...to hide the cost of the infrastructure" (Turner 2003). In addition to the use of CFD's to fund new infrastructure, Carlsbad had the highest residential development impact fees in the region in 1998 according to one survey (SANDAG 1998, 103). In response to the threat to local revenue resulting from California's recent budgetary crisis, Carlsbad's 2002-03 budget cited the city's Growth Management Plan:

Regardless of what happens at the State level, Carlsbad is positioned well for its future...This plan was adopted to

insure that all necessary public facilities were constructed along with development. It also insures that a financing plan is in place to pay for the facilities prior to the development of the property (City of Carlsbad 2002e).

Growth management has enabled housing to "pay for itself" in Carlsbad, mitigating the fiscal motive from future residential land use decisions. While California's state-local government finance structure necessitates that developers pay for public facilities and infrastructure, what was the motivation behind further restriction of housing growth?

If fiscal concerns were at the heart of the decision made by voters to cut in half the total number of units allowed at buildout of the City's General Plan, then the evidence would support the challenged fiscalization of land use hypotheses. However, Mr. Turner explains that fiscal motives were not at the core of this aspect of the Growth Management Plan:

In the 1980s there was a big swell in the number of units permitted, just before growth management... Any time you have big peaks of building activity you have concern from people about congestion... And that expresses itself as political discontent against political officials and [*sic*] proposed developments (Turner 2003).

It was at the peak of a spurt in residential development that Carlsbad voters passed Proposition E. While residents saw increasing population affecting quality of life through the growing inadequacy of public facilities and services, requiring new development to pay for itself would have been sufficient to mitigate any facilities and services impact caused by new development. This suggests that in addition to the fiscal motive, there were other motives working to limit residential growth in Carlsbad. The non-fiscal motives became more evident in recent action by the City to restrict residential development further, despite its excellent fiscal situation.

Carlsbad experienced a flurry of residential development following of the early 1990s recession, reviving latent anti-growth sentiments within the community. In response to an open-ended survey question, 87 percent of Carlsbad respondents felt that growth, overdevelopment, or overcrowding was the biggest concern facing Carlsbad in 2002 (City of Carlsbad 2003, 83).<sup>11</sup> Only three percent of respondents indicated that an increasing cost of living (which at least one respondent indicated was due to high property taxes) was the City's biggest concern and one percent cited "Lack of/Poor City Services." These survey results echoed results from a similar survey in 2001; however, the degree to which residents were concerned about growth reached its peak in 2002 (City of Carlsbad 2002e, 31). "We hear that (Carlsbad is too dense) over and over every time we do a city survey" explained Councilmember Julie Nygard (Mayer 2002b). At the urging of residents, the City Council again looked at issues of growth control in Carlsbad.

After detailed planning of the City's Local Facilities Management Zones following passage of Proposition E, it was determined that the City could only accommodate 48,000 dwelling units if it was to continue preserving habitat and open space. Units approved by Proposition E above 48,000 were placed in an Excess Dwelling Unit Bank (Turner 2003). Units have been drawn from the Excess Dwelling Unit Bank over the years to implement a State mandated density bonus program and to allow a degree of flexibility for projects deemed desirable by the City (City of Carlsbad 2002a).

Additional units have been added to the Bank over the years as proposed residential projects have consistently been approved with densities lower than allowed by the Growth Management Plan. Each unit that a developer could have built, but did not is placed in the

Excess Dwelling Unit Bank. So why has the City not approved projects at the allowable density?

According to Councilmember Matt Hall, the City Council "has been very conservative when it comes to either allowing maximum density for developers, or in handing out density bonuses to developers" (Mayer 2002b). Principal Planner Dennis Turner qualified this statement saying:

It's not like we go in and say "Reduce the density." (It is the) developers who want to put humongous houses on little bity tiny lots and they don't meet our development standards. So we say, you can either have your humongous houses, or you can have your lot yield (allowable density), but you can't have both... Their lot yield goes down because they aren't willing to reduce the size of their houses (Turner 2003).

Mr. Turner believes this tendency to allow developers to under-utilize residential land has actually inhibited higher density development as the Council has approved projects proposing single-family detached homes on land zoned for higher density use such as apartments or condominiums. Aside from the obvious implications this policy direction has had on lower-cost housing options in Carlsbad, these decisions have generated more units for the Excess Dwelling Unit Bank.

Because Carlsbad is not on pace to grow to the capacity of 54,600 units, the City began to "over-design" public facilities realizing that, eventually it could reach its dwelling unit ceiling. Planning Director Michael Holzmilller explained why the Council has taken this approach:

Because (the City Council) needs to be conservative and can't assume that any of the excess dwelling units are going to be used, they came up with a way to have 48,000 units fund the facilities for 54,600 [*sic*] units (City of Carlsbad 2002a).

Therefore, for every unit built over 48,000 paying development or facilities fees, the City will receive surplus revenue.

In short, the City's best fiscal interest is to allow the maximum number of units approved under the growth management plan. However, similar to its decision to prohibit community commercial uses, the Council established a citizen's committee to look into three options concerning the Excess Dwelling Unit Bank: 1) eliminate the entire Bank; 2) reduce the number of units in the Bank; and 3) leave the Bank alone. By a narrow margin, the citizen's committee recommended that the City should leave the Bank alone and keep all the excess dwelling units. However, the minority concluded the Council should reduce the number of units in the Bank drastically:

For the past three years, the City Public Opinion Survey has shown strong discontent from those polled regarding traffic, population growth, and development. As the Council is aware, in this year's survey, when citizens were asked to provide suggestions for improving the quality of life in our city, the number one response was "set limits on growth and development" (Citizens' Committee 2002, 6).

Considering the minority recommendation, City staff commented on the fiscal implications of reducing or eliminating the excess dwelling unit bank:

A reduction in residential development capacity equates to fewer tax-payers, and thus, reduced General Revenues (property taxes, sales taxes, utility charges). Although there will be fewer services needed in some areas, such as reduced utility usage and possibly reduced maintenance and protection services, the per capita operating costs (Parks and Libraries, for example) will be greater with fewer property owners paying for a larger share of these facilities than originally anticipated" (City of Carlsbad 2002b).

Essentially, the advice given by City staff, which included members from the Finance and Planning Departments, was that a decision to reduce or eliminate the Excess Dwelling Unit Bank would have fiscal consequences.

Despite the implications, Carlsbad's City Council decided against the citizen's majority recommendation and cut over 3,000 units from the Excess Dwelling Unit Bank (Ibid). Justifying his vote, Mayor Lewis stated, "My biggest concern... is that the citizens in different areas should be protected. Excess dwelling units are a driver for increasing density" (Mayer 2002a). The decision to reduce the Excess Dwelling Unit Bank, thereby ultimately restricting residential development, was made at a time when the City was in solid fiscal health and against the City's real fiscal interests. The decision concerning the Excess Dwelling Unit Bank combined with 14 years experience working with the City leads Mr. Turner to conclude:

The fiscalization of land use is not the issue so much as it is the perceptions of the community of the kinds of housing, the image that the City has about the kinds of residents, the kind of community that Carlsbad offers (Turner 2003).

Carlsbad's residents are like many that have chosen the suburban lifestyle; they are opposed to density. The opposition is not targeted solely at housing, but any increase in the density of development. "More and more, we are experiencing citizens who don't want anything built near their homes" explained Management Analyst for the Housing and Redevelopment Department, Craig Ruiz (Brady 2002, 5-13). While fiscal concerns may have provided the impetus for growth management in Carlsbad, it cannot explain decisions to restrict residential growth. This suggests that asserted fiscal concerns are the mask behind which hides a truer reason for these decisions: a desire to maintain social exclusivity. This assertion is clarified by examining San Marcos' growth management ordinance. While San Marcos is much more constrained fiscally than Carlsbad, its residents have not advocated decreased residential development or density.

#### San Marcos

In 1990, the voters of San Marcos passed Proposition R, a growth management initiative that was clearly fiscally motivated. The ordinance that implemented Proposition R stated:

It is necessary to require that all new development bear the cost of providing public facilities and services reasonably needed to serve the development and to mitigate the impacts created by that development" (City of San Marcos 1990).

Without these fees the "public health, safety and welfare" would suffer because the existing public facilities and services were quickly becoming inadequate to meet the needs of the growing city (Ibid).

While the ordinance was fiscally motivated, it did not overtly restrict residential development and it cannot be argued that the ordinance is somehow providing locally elected officials with a fiscal motive for restricting residential development; in fact it mitigates any such motive that may have existed prior to its passage. The ordinance is structured so that *all new development* (not just residential) must pay its own way when it comes to public facilities, infrastructure, and services. When asked if the state-local government finance structure has impacted residential development, Finance Director Lupe Cano cited the growth management ordinance saying, "I can tell you from a Finance Department perspective, there has been no impact on our housing development" (Cano 2003). Fiscal impacts resulting from new residential development are largely offset by Proposition R.

While voters approved a growth management ordinance in 1990, a small number of San Marcos residents felt it did not go far enough. In 2002, volunteers began circulating a petition to place a more restrictive growth management ordinance, the *San Marcos Growth Management and Neighborhood Protection Act*, on the 2004 ballot. The initiative would have required voter approval for any proposed General Plan amendment or zoning change that would result in increased intensity or density (City of San Marcos n.d.). For example, the mixed-use development strategy recently embraced by the City would trigger the Act and require a public vote on future mixed-use development proposals. However, the measure failed to garner enough signatures to qualify for the ballot. According to City Manager Rick Gittings the Act failed because, "People see the improvement of quality of life and approve (of the actions the City is taking)" (Gittings 2003). When referring to improved quality of life, Mr. Gittings is referring to the increased level of services and facilities provided to residents that has resulted from the City's proactive approach to securing sales tax revenue, which includes making more opportunity for housing.

Negative fiscal impacts to residential development in Carlsbad and San Marcos that have resulted from a regressive state-local fiscal regime have been for the most part offset by growth management initiatives. Growth management has allowed Carlsbad to "over-build" community facilities, so that future residential development would generate surplus revenue for the City. San Marcos' growth management initiative, has enabled it to tie housing growth to overall fiscal stability because its growing population makes the City an attractive destination for lucrative retail uses. In sum, housing might do a better job paying for itself than originally thought.

There is perhaps one notable exception to the claim presented here that housing does a better job paying for itself than originally thought. Affordable housing projects still carry a fiscal penalty for accommodating jurisdictions. However, fiscalization of land use theory cannot explain decisions to restrict affordable housing development in Carlsbad and San Marcos.

#### Affordable Housing

While the market may supply some housing affordable to lower income households, in California this has become rare. Use of the term "affordable housing" here denotes units that are preserved affordable through regulatory mechanisms (public or private) to lower income residents.<sup>18</sup> Affordable rents are typically capped at 30 percent of the household's income, regardless of the community's market rates. Although affordable housing projects in Carlsbad and San Marcos typically pay full development and facilities impact fees to the City, most projects receive some other form of financial assistance or concession from the City and affordable units typically do not generate the net revenue that a market rate unit does (Turner 2003b; and Gittings 2003b). Under the fiscalization of land use theory, the higher the



fiscal impact of a given affordable housing development, the more likely local governments would resist its approval. The Carlsbad and San Marcos cases elucidate many problems with such an assertion.

#### Carlsbad

In the early 1980s, two affordable housing developments existed in Carlsbad providing 106 affordable units and from 1985-1992, no additional affordable units were built (Calavita and Grimes 1998, 162-163). The City's poor track record concerning affordable housing combined with the loss of a lawsuit for failure to spend redevelopment funds set aside for affordable housing,<sup>12</sup> made it clear that the "paper-chase" was coming to an end in Carlsbad.<sup>13</sup> For too long Carlsbad had produced the required documents to comply with the housing element law, without taking effective action to produce affordable units. The City Attorney warned that a non-compliant housing element would render the general plan vulnerable to lawsuit (Ibid, 162). Nevertheless, the Council failed to heed the City Attorney's advice, and in 1990, its housing element failed to receive certification from the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). According to Housing and Redevelopment Department Management Analyst Craig Ruiz, three years of negotiations with HCD lead to the adoption of an inclusionary housing policy (Ruiz 2002).

As of June 2003, Carlsbad's inclusionary housing program could account for over 80 percent of all the affordable units available in the City and these units were constructed within 10 years of the program's implementation. Carlsbad had a total of 1,213 affordable units located within its jurisdiction, 1,030 of which were the result of inclusionary housing (Ruiz 2003). In addition, 900-1,000 affordable units are scheduled for construction through 2010 because of the inclusionary housing requirement, while zero units were planned for development through other means (Ibid). However, despite inclusionary housing and compliance with redevelopment law concerning the proper expenditure of affordable housing funds, the City failed to meet its affordable housing goals for the 1992-1999 housing planning period (Baldwin 2003).

It can be concluded that Carlsbad's historical nonfeasance regarding affordable housing development was remedied in part through the lawsuit brought against the City; however, HCD's refusal to certify its housing element provided the strongest sanction, which ultimately lead to the adoption of an inclusionary housing program. So why was the City so reluctant to provide affordable housing in the first place? Principal Planner Dennis Turner offers this insight gained from years of experience with the community:

We have people who...come here because of that picture of what Carlsbad is. We are an upper-income kind of community and a lot of people who come here say, "I pay big bucks to be here and I want my gated community. I want that security. I want that low density. I don't want those kinds of people living here, people who live in apartments generally, and especially low-income people" (Turner 2003a).

California's state-local government finance structure has not constrained affordable housing development in Carlsbad. Decisions restricting these uses were made as a result of pressure by constituents, not pressure to balance a municipal budget. While Carlsbad and San Marcos differ in many respects, when it comes to historical affordable housing production, the cities are highly similar.

#### San Marcos

In 1986, Legal Aid sued the City of San Marcos for failure to spend redevelopment money on affordable housing as required by redevelopment law. "To be blunt about it, at the time, we were not (complying with the law). So they had a good case," explained City Manager Rick Gittings who is also the director of the San Marcos Redevelopment Agency (Gittings 2003). The City was forced to make serious concessions concerning expenditures on affordable housing as a result of the lawsuit.

Following settlement of the lawsuit, San Marcos has exceeded its affordable housing goals. Producing 551 affordable units (23 above goal) during the 1991-1999 housing planning period, the City Council now prefers affordable housing to market rate apartments (Smith 2003). "Affordable housing apartments are a lot better than regular apartments in our City. I would much rather have affordable housing than regular apartments anymore," said Mayor Smith (Ibid). According to the Mayor, when the City is proactive in affordable housing development, it has more control over the quality of the project. So why then had San Marcos been reluctant to provide affordable housing in the first place? Mr. Gittings offered the following observation:

Initially, the Council, based on what they have heard from their constituents said they did not want affordable housing. From their perspective, they thought it drove down property values (Gittings 2003).

While the perception that affordable housing would "drive down property values" likely played a part in residents' opposition to affordable housing, this does not imply that the City's decisions were fiscally motivated. In other words, for reasons independent of the state-local fiscal structure, affordable housing was opposed, and therefore this example does not fit our understanding of fiscalization of land use.

Despite the City's initial reluctance, or outright failure, to produce or support affordable housing, the lawsuit forced San Marcos to rethink its position. Now, the City has exceeded affordable housing goals in the last housing cycle and according to the City Manager is well on its way to exceeding its allocation for the 1999-2004 housing cycle. According to City Manager Rick Gittings, the implications for the challenged fiscalization of land use hypotheses are clear:

The argument that this fiscalization of land use is driving out affordable housing is simply not true. Are there cities that don't want affordable housing? Sure. But it is not for fiscalization of land use reasons. It's because of image reasons (Gittings 2003).

While there might be a fiscal disincentive to provide affordable housing, the Carlsbad and San Marcos case studies demonstrate that any such fiscal disincentive has been subordinate to the deeply held desire among local residents to maintain social exclusivity and private property values.

#### Summary of Findings

For many cities in California housing might do a better job "paying for itself" than originally thought. Growth management policies requiring new development to pay for itself through development fees and exactions, and use of Community Facilities District's (CFD's), create a fiscal environment whereby increasing local population contributes to a city's fiscal stability. Even though the fee revenue generated by the residential uses might not cover the entire cost to provide services, urban areas with a growing number of rooftops are attractive

destinations for large retailers and increasing *net* local revenue is often tied to increasing population. Therefore, the claim that an "over-reliance" on sales tax revenue is leading to retarded residential development should be viewed more critically.

In addition, costs related to development fees and exactions, and mandatory participation in CFD's are (to a certain degree) reflected in the sale or rental price of residential units. Numerous macro- and micro-economic factors contribute to the overall affordability of local housing markets. One such factor is the passing of these fees on to occupants of residential units through increased sales or rental prices market-wide. While the state-local fiscal structure has created an environment whereby CFD's and development fees are necessary to fund basic services and infrastructure, this does not create a motive for local policymakers to resist new residential development for the purpose of balancing municipal budgets; in fact, it mitigates any such motive.

Finally, the large majority of affordable units that have been built over the years in the studied communities are a direct result of a threat of sanction. Although there was (and is) a fiscal incentive to restrict affordable housing production, these cases demonstrate that this motive is subordinate to the deeply held desire among local residents to maintain social exclusivity and property values. This article argues that there is no discernable connection between fiscal incentives and residential development patterns in Carlsbad and San Marcos. While additional studies are appropriate, conclusions drawn from these initial case studies suggest two prominent hypotheses associated with fiscalization of land use theory are suspect. Perhaps the asserted link between fiscal incentives and residential development patterns in California is merely a marriage of convenience.

#### About the Author



Mr. Brady lives in San Diego, California with his wife and two children. As an associate planner with Cotton/Bridges/Associates, a Division of P&D Consultants, he has a strong background in housing, community, and environmental planning. Mr. Brady's experience includes the preparation of housing elements, general and community plans, analysis of impediments to fair housing choice, consolidated plans, and environmental impact reports. In 2003, he received his B.A. in Urban Studies and Planning, earning Highest Distinction from the University of California at San Diego.

#### Notes

1 Refer to Schwartz (1997), Fulton (1997, 258-281), Kotin and Peiser (1997), Schrag (1998, 178), and Lewis and Barbour (1999, 78) for a review of research and discussion of this hypothesis.

2 Refer to Fulton (1997, 262) and Wassmer (2002, 1307) for a review of research and discussion of this hypothesis.

3 "Big-box" refers to retail development projects that generate a high level of sales tax revenue per square foot. San Marcos has successfully sited the following "big-box" retailers: Fry's Electronics, Wal-Mart, Costco, Home Depot, Best Buy, Kohl's, Lowe's, and Guitar Center. Contrast this with Carlsbad, where Costco is the only "big-box" retailer in that city.

4 After all, land use has always been "fiscalized" to some extent (Barbour 2002, 60).

5 In these cases, the fiscal windfall that would accrue due to a policymakers decision

would be subordinate to the decision makers desire to please her constituency.

6 Fiscalization of land use is *one* result of the regressive state-local fiscal regime. While a result of the state and local fiscal structure, the nearly ubiquitous use of innovative financing mechanisms that force developers to carry an increased burden of the cost to provide public facilities, infrastructure, and services do not necessarily constitute fiscalization of land use (Schrag 1998, 178; and Barbour 2002, 59). Fiscalization of land use theory has appropriately moved beyond attributing every effect of a regressive state-local government finance regime, focusing instead on those effects that affect local government land use decisions.

7 The author would agree with Lewis' (2001, 26) claim that the problems of studying local development decisions are often "intractable."

8 As noted by Dr. Bussell, a lecturer at the University of California at San Diego and commenter on an early draft of this article, there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that this may change with time. Windshield surveys of new residential development projects reveal many new homes starting over \$500,000, triggering higher property tax assessments, and therefore giving greater fiscal flexibility to decision-makers in San Marcos. It will be interesting to see if land use policy shifts in accordance with the shift in demographics that will likely occur in San Marcos as more and more houses are built for upper-income households. In fact, the City's approval of a second Wal-Mart has recently caused residents to circulate a petition to overturn the decision.

9 Survey methods and results were not available in written form and were therefore conveyed by Mr. Turner in the interview.

10 An interesting discovery that emerged from this investigation is the fact that San Marcos, itself, is in the land development business. An earlier version of this article characterized San Marcos as an *entrepreneurial city* that has bought, developed, and currently manages large tracts of land within its jurisdiction as a means of countering California's regressive state-local government finance structure. Because this activity does not fit our definition of fiscalization of land use (nor should it), further discussion of this issue was determined to be off-point and not appropriate for this article. Whether *entrepreneurial cities* like San Marcos are common in California's local government landscape is not known to the author, but further exploration of this issue could prove revealing.

11 Riverside is another example where in order to increase sales tax revenue and revitalize dead or dying retail commercial centers the City has approved mixed land uses in previously commercial-only areas. The City's General Plan 2025 will include three new mixed land use designations permitting a variety of residential densities on top of, or along side commercial uses on the same lot.

12 CFD's (Mello-Roos Districts) enable cities to finance new public facility projects through issuance of bonds embedded in the property taxes paid on a parcel. Although these types of bonds are subject to a two-thirds vote of affected voters, passing them has been generally successful as it guarantees that the money generated will be spent in the immediate community. In addition, on large vacant parcels, a two-thirds vote of the landowners is required, enabling a relatively small number of landowners to create a CFD and when the property develops, new residents who purchase a new home are required to join into the agreement (Shires and Haber 1997, 22-23).

13 Annually since 2001, the Carlsbad has contracted with the Social and Behavioral Research Institute of California State University at San Marcos to conduct a public opinion survey. The referenced, 2002 survey was conducted via telephone interviews of 1,019 residents of Carlsbad over the age of 18 between July and September, 2002. Respondents

were randomly selected from two regions in Carlsbad (North and South) and there were at least 500 respondents from each region. Interviewers transcribed all responses to open-ended questions and a list of the transcribed responses is contained in the survey report. Findings were determined to be significant to the 95 percent confidence level and the margin of error for the survey is +/- 3 percent (City of Carlsbad 2003, 1-3).

14 A "lower income household" is a household that earns less than 80 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI).

15 As referenced by Calavita and Grimes (1998, 162).

16 The term *paper chase* is used by Fulton (1991, 75) to describe how the California Department of Housing and Community Development often focuses on whether the housing element "complies" with state law, but often does not deal with whether or not enough housing is actually being constructed.

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# The Visioning Process

Point/Counterpoint

Edited by Andy Karvonen

Since the late 1980s, a number of regions in the United States and abroad have engaged in visioning and planning processes to help guide metropolitan development. Cities such as Portland, Nashville, Denver, Baltimore, Atlanta, Salt Lake City, and Austin have used these processes to address issues associated with land development, population growth, traffic congestion, infrastructure, pollution, taxation, housing affordability, environmental conservation and so on. At the same time, regional visioning and planning is aimed at broadening the regional decision-making process to include as many regional stakeholders as possible in future growth choices. In this feature article, we asked six individuals active in regional visioning and planning processes to respond to several questions on the subject. The following are their responses.

**Kevin Fayles**

Kevin Fayles is the Development Director of Envision Utah, a private-public partnership seeking a regional quality growth strategy through local control and implementation. He is also a member of the West Valley City Board of Adjustment.

**Jeff Jack**

Jeff Jack is a practicing architect with extensive experience in neighborhood and community planning. He is a past president of the Austin Neighborhoods Council and has also served on the Austin Downtown Development Advisory Committee, the Affordable Housing Taskforce, and Capital Metro's Strategic Advisory Committee. He is currently on the Board of Directors of the Central Texas Clean Air Force and is Chair of the Austin Area Human Services Association Budget and Political Action Committee.

**Robin Rather**

Robin Rather is an environmentalist and community activist focused on protecting Austin's quality of life. She is the former Chair of the Save Our Springs Alliance and is currently the Chair of Liveable City and the Vice President of the Hill Country Conservancy. She is also a member of the Executive Committee of Envision Central Texas.

**Jim Skaggs**

Jim Skaggs is a member of the Executive Committee of Envision Central Texas. He is active in transportation planning issues in the Austin area and is the Chairman of Austin Area Citizens for Mobility Excellence. He is the retired Chairman, Chief Executive and President of Tracor, Inc. which was Austin's first Fortune 500 company and the 'granddaddy' of the Austin high-tech industry.

**Fritz Steiner**

Dr. Fritz Steiner is Dean of the School of Architecture at the University of Texas at Austin. He is a noted author of many books on landscape architecture including "The Living Landscape" and "Human Ecology: Following Nature's Lead." He has worked on numerous environmental plans and designs throughout the United States and is a member of the Executive Committee of Envision Central Texas.

**Tim Taylor**

Tim Taylor is on the Executive Committee of the Real Estate Council of Austin (RECA) and is the Chair of RECA's Ordinance and Legislation Review Committee. He is also a partner at Jackson Walker LLP where he specializes in land acquisition and development issues. He has been intimately involved with the redevelopment of several neighborhoods in Austin.

**QUESTION 1**

**Is a regional visioning process necessary? Why or why not?**

**Steiner**

A regional visioning process is helpful because it presents alternative futures that citizens can embrace or reject. Regional visioning helps paint pictures of the future that will occur without good planning and positive options that can occur without leadership and imagination.

**Fayles**

A regional visioning process is necessary because there exists in most regions tremendous fragmentation of cities, towns, special service districts, agencies, and so forth. Many jurisdictions have been left to act independently, compounding the challenges of growing populations. This fragmentation contributes to a "bunker mentality," causing citizens to entrench themselves within the smallest defensible unit (i.e., their city, neighborhood, department, and so on) and to try to manage growth from a "micro" level.

Often, there is no single organization that brings together the major public and private stakeholders to coordinate activities related to growth within the region. For example, a metropolitan planning organization typically focuses on transportation needs and trends – often without considering the impact of roads on land-use; a city council focuses on obtaining a "big box" within its boundaries to generate much needed income without considering the long-term implications with neighboring communities; and a police officer seeks to find affordable housing within the community she serves and protects. There is a tremendous inter-connectedness of local land-use decisions that is often not understood or realized, unless one is able to step back and see the "big picture."

A regional visioning process helps citizens to find ways to overcome their micro-vision and their isolation as individuals and interest groups, and leads to addressing their challenges as a community. Stakeholder involvement, when thinking for the long-term, tends to reduce self-interest.

**Taylor**

Comprehensive regional visioning is a necessary process for comprehensive regional planning and coordination, but that regional planning must lead to actual implementation strategies and well-defined milestones by which to measure adherence to the vision and plan. The visioning process can be a vital component of such planning to establish a common understanding of stakeholder issues and concerns. The operative word in this question is "regional." This assumes an approach that transcends jurisdictional boundaries and local issues, but nonetheless is responsive to the variety of issues, concerns, and goals that citizens of a region may have.

**Skaggs**

Regional visioning is not absolutely necessary but, if implemented in a responsible manner, it could have some positive results. Market forces have generally enjoyed much greater success in producing communities that are more effective in addressing the guiding principles of Envision Central Texas (ECT) than central planning approaches. Most countries and U.S. entities using central planning have failed and many have changed or are in the process of changing to more market-oriented solutions.

However, there is a distinction between visioning and planning which often is blurred even by those in the visioning process. Visioning is not intended to be planning. The current visioning process has brought together a selection of diverse citizens from the

region and exposed them to a better understanding of a broad range of growth implications. This should lead to a better understanding of the many perspectives of the stakeholders throughout the region. Hopefully, better understanding will result in more effective communications and progress in making this a better region for all citizens.

#### Jack

The fact that our community continues to grapple with the problems of transportation, affordability, environmental protection, and preservation of our neighborhoods suggests that our current approach to dealing with the consequences of growth falls short of being able to resolve these issues. Whether we look at the responsibility of government or the role of the private sector in our society, we find that the tools for successful growth management are lacking.

It is clear that the structure of our local governmental entities cannot successfully address these issues within the limitations of their authority and geographical reach. However, it is also obvious that a market economy whose focus is on individual profit and not on the viability of the whole community inherently does not have market mechanisms to address these issues on a regional basis either.

Therefore, a community-based visioning process can be very helpful in identifying what both our jurisdictional authorities and our market economy have to change to address a shared set of community values that can be identified by a visioning process.

#### Rather

If you believe, as many of us do, that most cities and regions in the United States are increasingly unsustainable, then developing a healthier vision of the future is an extremely valuable and necessary tool. The ECT process provided a critical first look at the possible futures we face in Central Texas. The two years of work built new relationships across antiquated geopolitical boundaries and created a deeper shared knowledge for discussions of the future. These are essential steps in creating a sustainable region.

The ECT vision that has just been released is a very powerful statement of the region's desire to change and to develop in a much healthier direction. This desire is an important and necessary precursor to implementing a meaningful shift in growth and other socio-economic trends.

#### QUESTION 2

Are there key elements that lead to a successful regional vision?

#### Taylor

The key elements of a regional vision are identifying the common goals and priorities of a region's residents (e.g., clean air, clean water, efficient transportation network, housing, jobs, and schools). However, a vision by its nature is not an "implementable" plan. Therefore, a plan should incorporate the ideals and goals expressed in the regional vision. Plan components must integrate transportation network construction, civic/institutional uses, utility infrastructure, programmed open space, as well as identification of optimal sites (but not mandated sites) for particular uses (e.g., agriculture, office, retail, industrial). The plan must also address and hopefully enable regional cooperation and inter-governmental communication and coordination.

#### Jack

There are several key factors in the success of a visioning process:

- It has to be community-based with full public participation.

The process has to be constructed to ensure that all facets of the community have an opportunity to be involved. If a stakeholder process is used, these stakeholders have to truly represent the range of identifiable community interests. A self-selected group that is slanted in its perspective or has a hidden agenda will only result in further community tension. The funding has to come with "no strings attached" so as to preclude any appearance of prejudice.

- It has to provide accurate and thorough data on the existing conditions for the region. This background data may be the most important service to the community that a visioning process can provide in the short-term. This data should include all geographic based data that can be assembled. This would include everything from environmental conditions to man-made infrastructure. It should also include data on quality of life issues such as income levels, ethnic diversity, education levels, and so on.

- It has to provide a thorough assessment of where the current population wants to go with regard to the major issues.

The values of the people need to be recognized as a primary determinant of any "vision." What is it that people like? Why are they here and not someplace else? What do they want their future to be for themselves and their children? These core values should be used to evaluate how we get from where we are to where we want to be.

- It has to develop alternatives with the tradeoffs accurately documented.

We have choices to make with almost every decision about a regional plan and with each choice there are tradeoffs. It is critical that when the choices are presented to the community they really have full knowledge of the tradeoffs. If you are asked if you want to be given a new car and you can pick between a Mercedes and a Ford, you may choose the Mercedes, but if you are told that the monthly payment for the Mercedes is four times what it is for the Ford, you may change your mind if you have to make that monthly payment. Without full disclosure of what the implications of the choices are, it is just a beauty contest and such a plan will falter when the community is presented with the real consequences of these choices.

- It has to have public scrutiny to see how well the alternatives meet the community's desires, goals, and objectives.

Since most visioning processes are actually developed by a core group of volunteers, maybe some donated governmental staff time and some professional consulting, there is a tendency for the guiding group to take the public and stakeholder input and then formulate a resultant "vision" without taking the step to go back and see if this product truly reflects the will of the people. But this step is essential if the vision will have significant buy-in from the community.

#### Skaggs

Early understanding of the true implications and trade-offs of growth decisions will lead to a more successful regional vision and resulting plans. The beginning vision is not yet fully developed in this regard. The total implications of such things as the actual choices of citizens, much higher population densities, and transportation solutions are not well understood.

A successful vision should provide for the dynamic, adaptive, and evolutionary nature of neighborhoods and cities. It should not lead to prescriptive, centralized plans that attempt

to determine the detailed outcome of community form and function. It should allow a diversity of neighborhood design as desired by the market. Densities and land use should be primarily market driven and not plan driven.

Success can be measured in a number of ways. A short term measure is how well the vision is accepted by all the stakeholders. Longer term measures include:

- Are the vision and the sustaining organization successful in facilitating the bringing together of various parties to resolve growth issues in a more effective way?
- Is the vision the catalyst for changing growth patterns and decisions in a way that enhances the region's ability to better achieve the vision's guiding principles?
- Are planning and zoning codes changed to allow more development patterns such as traditional neighborhood design, historic neighborhood renovation and conversion, and other mixed-use development which are supported by the market?
- Have property rights been respected?
- Is the quality of life improving for the citizens?
- Absent a material threat to other individuals or the community, are people allowed to live and work where and how they like?

#### Steiner

The key elements to a successful regional vision include: strong leadership, an active core group of participants, effective consultants, broad participation, ample media coverage, and concrete measures to implement the vision.

#### Fayles

Feedback from the community interviews conducted by Envision Utah's Steering Committee led to the following conclusions on key elements of a successful regional vision:

- Develop an on-going process – not a project.
- Create a process that could be repeated and updated over the years to address growth challenges.
- Identify representatives from both the public and private sectors of the community who would be willing to work toward the common good.
- Design a group that is manageable in size and represents as many segments of the community as possible.
- Develop several alternative growth scenarios as choices for future growth.
- Complete a baseline report projecting how the area would grow without change in current growth trends.
- Design an effective technical model to create and analyze a baseline and alternative scenarios.
- Provide area residents with an opportunity to be involved in the process as much as possible, be able to assess the results, and make decisions about how the region should grow.

#### Rather

The question of timing or whether the region is ready to approach problems on a regional scale is an important element in determining the success of a visioning effort. Were Austin and Central Texas ready to deal with regionalism? What conditions or preparations should be in place before certain visioning processes are undertaken? How does the region's historical, social, and political culture determine which visioning approach will work best? Few of these questions were asked or answered in the case of ECT. Nevertheless, ECT will likely be seen down the road as a significant milestone in changing the way planning and

implementation is approached. As an initial education, communication, and relationship building process, ECT was not perfect but was a big step towards a regional framework.

Even more important than timing is a real commitment to inclusion of the people of the region. This is far easier said than done. This commitment means extensive participation across cultural and age groups. ECT was not able to foster much participation from within the Hispanic community or among the younger generation and did not spend much time considering cross cultural perspectives.

Hopefully, near term efforts will focus on the large and growing Hispanic population as well as schoolchildren young adults who are so important to the future success of the region and will make them a permanent part of the process.

The Sustainability Indicators Project is an important program that goes a long way to providing a framework for measuring progress towards the key goals outlined by the ECT vision. But the most important way to measure success may be whether the vision acts as a catalyst for change across the region. What types of innovation does the vision foster over time? How much independent action is taken by local communities in the region as a result of the vision? And what is the depth of the commitment that people feel for moving forward with the shared vision? These are the crucial human questions that will measure the ultimate success of the Vision.

#### QUESTION 3

**Who should be involved in the process of regional planning? Is it possible to represent all stakeholders?**

#### Rather

Ideally, all stakeholders should be involved, of course. In practice however, this is almost never achieved. Generally, the most privileged voices and those that are most politically dominant are over-represented while the politically, economically, and socially disadvantaged are under-represented. That was certainly the case with ECT.

At every point in the process, regional visioning organizations need to push past their own comfort zones and take extraordinary steps to ensure participation across all segments of citizenry, especially those less powerfully and politically connected. This is particularly important in regions such as Central Texas that anticipate a high degree of demographic change.

#### Skaggs

Most planning in the region is conducted by local entities such as counties, cities, towns, and neighborhoods or regional planning organizations. It is not perfect and there are problems but, to a substantial degree, planning between these jurisdictions has been reasonably successful for some time.

There are also various regional planning efforts by organizations such as the Texas Department of Transportation, the Regional Mobility Authority, and the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization. The Austin – San Antonio Intermunicipal Commuter Rail District, the Capital Area Planning Council, the Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority, and various other organizations address issues such as water supply and quality, education, health care, and so on. Each of these organizations has stakeholder representation and has established processes for stakeholder input, involvement or approval. In effect, all citizens should be involved in regional planning either directly or indirectly through representation which they support or elect.

However, it is very difficult to represent all stakeholders on every issue. ECT's stated



intent is to have a balanced board with proportional representation from the five counties, with a balanced representation of the Civic/Neighborhood, Business, Environmental, Elected Officials, and Public Officials areas and a good balance of gender and ethnicity. It is debatable that ECT's board membership goal has fully achieved this objective and the desired balance has been somewhat less effective because about half of the ECT board attended 30% or fewer of the meetings. This does not invalidate ECT's work but it is a factor to consider in representing positions as a consensus of the entire community. Likewise, citizen participation in the visioning process, while very important, is not truly representative of the entire region. ECT must remain mindful of this shortcoming in the work ahead.

#### Jack

The simple answer to this question is that everyone impacted by the regional plan should be involved in the planning effort. However, this is not practical with the limitations of an individual's time to be involved with all decisions that affect him or her. We also need to recognize the various degrees to which individuals are impacted by certain decisions. Certainly, someone who drives down a street is impacted by the traffic congestion on that street, but to the person who has a business on that street, the congestion and any proposed solutions to the traffic problem is of much greater concern.

It is probably not possible to have everyone involved but it is possible to identify key groups that are impacted and invite them into the process as part of a "stakeholder" process. The key elements to the success of such a stakeholder process are:

- Be sure that the determination of who is a stakeholder is a public process which allows for full public disclosure of who is invited to the table. A select set of stakeholders chosen from the top down is unlikely to be inclusive and will only generate resentment by those left out of the process.
- All stakeholders have to have mutual respect and acknowledge the legitimacy of other groups designated as stakeholders. The process will be ill-served by some groups having preference over others.
- The selected stakeholders need to truly represent the group's interest and have the ability to speak for the group they are supposed to represent. This opportunity to be a stakeholder is coupled with the responsibility to act as a representative of the larger constituency, facilitating communication in both directions and conveying information and decisions.

But, as valuable as a stakeholder process can be, it needs to be coupled with the opportunity for the general public to have access to the process and the opportunity to have meaningful input to the decisions made.

#### Taylor

Regional planning should involve those with expertise and those with decision-making authority. Ultimately, no plan is viable unless it is supported and endorsed by elected officials throughout the planning region. Furthermore, experienced leaders in the fields of planning, engineering, and regional economics must be involved in regional planning. Ideally, these individuals would not represent any individual stakeholder group and would not have any preconceived bias in order to ensure an optimal and equitable planning recommendation. It is up to the elected officials to ensure that their constituents' concerns are adequately represented.

While it is possible and even beneficial to have as many stakeholder groups as possible involved in a visioning process, an actual planning process can get hopelessly bogged down if there are "too many cooks in the kitchen." Opening the regional planning process to

each and every remotely interested stakeholder group will likely result in many single-issue debates, causing the participants to lose sight of the envisioned goals, and negate the purposes of comprehensive planning.

#### Steiner

Regional planning should involve elected officials, the leadership of agencies involved in planning, business and environmental groups, neighborhood organizations, minority groups, the press, educators, youth groups, and anyone else who is interested. I think it is possible to involve all stakeholders, either directly or through representation or by surveys and the media.

#### Fayles

For a regional planning process to have staying power, it must include representation from as many factions as possible, including opposing parties, to respond to the growth question. Gaining community input is a critical step in building community support to begin the process. In the case of Envision Utah, interviews were held with more than 150 community leaders, including educators, business leaders, religious leaders, media representatives, conservationists, developers, local and state government leaders, utility companies, minority leaders, and so on. Each person was asked:

- Do you believe a process to coordinate future growth would be helpful?
- Will you support this process?
- Who should be involved in this process to ensure its worth and success?

The interviews yielded important feedback on how to proceed and what obstacles might occur.

Utah, like many states, reveres local control and a move towards the establishment of another layer of government in the form of a regional power would be easily defeated. In some political circles, "planning" is considered a four-letter word. Therefore, Envision Utah's Steering Committee understood that local control had to be protected. In addition, a steering committee should take the form of a public/private partnership, motivated by good information and a sincere desire to work for the common good of all residents—both present and future. In other words, "leave your self-interest at the door, but bring your expertise with you."



**QUESTION 4**

**What methods are most effective to determine the needs of the population in a given region?**

**Taylor**

The greatest challenge of planning, beyond the issues of time and space, is working in the public interest. The public interest is the tense intersection between the needs of the region, the needs of the communities comprising the region, and the sum of needs of all individuals in the region. Transportation needs vary among communities and among households within each community. The same can be said for housing, employment, and recreation needs, among other elements or factors. There are likely not many common needs, but rather a matrix of needs depending on a variety of factors (such as location within the region, income level, children, and so forth).

Thus, I think that identifying all of the varying wants and needs of each community and each household cannot be strictly determined; however, a regional visioning process that incorporates as many methods of input as possible will be more likely to give the direct participants or leaders in the visioning process and the planners in a regional planning process information that is useful and meaningful. These methods include surveys in local newspapers, "town hall meetings," direct mail polls and surveys, and, ideally, some independent polling that uses a truly scientific polling process. Too many visioning and planning processes rely on the input coming from persons willing to commit the time or volunteer information. Some scientific polling that interviews a cross section of the communities and the region is more likely to produce a clear view of the needs of the population. For example, a single parent with three children and two jobs is not likely to spend a lot of time going to town hall meetings or filling out surveys, but that person might be responsive to a telephone poll or direct, in-person canvassing.

The key point is that there is not a "one-size fits all" approach to determining a regional population's needs. We need to recognize that all households require food, shelter, mobility, employment, and the means by which each household achieves those needs must not be centrally planned. However, the extent to which an understanding of the variety of needs can be achieved is more likely to result in a vision and a plan that enables its citizens to fulfill their needs.

**Skaggs**

As an example, Envision Central Texas is addressing very complex issues and concepts which are not well understood by most citizens and many are very controversial among various groups. Tradeoffs between different policy options for addressing the issues are poorly understood. Therefore, it is difficult for an individual to make an informed determination of needs based on the short time available and the very surface and summary level information provided. It is vital that eventual planning be based upon facts and not perceptions. I have a strong belief that if people are provided all the relevant facts and considerations without political or vested interest "spin," they will make decisions which will best serve the overall community.

First and foremost, the actions and decisions of people reflect their needs better than any other indicator. Beyond this, there are many representatives of the population such as elected officials and their appointees who represent their needs. Valid, random surveys can provide important information concerning population needs.

ECT's goal is to establish a vision which best serves the current and future citizens of the region. Therefore, all public input to the ECT process is important in the board's development and adoption of the regional vision which will serve as the foundation for

future ECT activities. The input to date is important but it is by no measure a "mandate." The self-selection nature of all the participants in the ECT workshops and the final public survey, as well as strong lobbying efforts by some organizations with vested interests, must be considered in the evaluation along with prior random survey and focus group information, and decision trends by the citizens.

**Fayles**

Some of the most effective methods to determine the needs of a population are questionnaires, random sampling surveys, and polling. Envision Utah has had great success in hosting community workshops where residents are educated on possible planning tools (i.e., clustering development, public transportation options, and baseline trends) and given the opportunity to express their opinions. Our approach has been to divide those individuals attending workshops into diverse groups and ask them for input on where growth should be accommodated and how. Paper chips, representing different types of development, are then placed on maps. Each group's map is subsequently compared with the others from the workshop to determine common themes. Follow-up workshops are held for additional comment and modification. These maps lead to zoning and code changes by the local officials. The workshops put citizens in the proactive role of property development, rather than the usual role in which developers make a plan and citizens can only react to it. Developers, property owners, city officials, and others benefit from working together and making tradeoffs in conjunction with problem solving.

For Envision Utah, another key element was conducting a series of in-depth interviews to find out what residents valued about Utah. For example, our research showed that Utahans would be more receptive to nature preservation as it related to places families could go to get away rather than preservation for its own sake. Many activities and education campaigns were subsequently tied back into the data discovered in this values study. It proved to be critical to the regional planning process.

**Rather**

Benchmarking and indicators are important methods that can be used to identify and track needs and changes in needs over time. However, to understand and identify diverse community priorities, regional organizations need inclusive representation within their leadership coupled with a serious commitment to listening across cultural, social, and economic barriers. These are crucial components to a deeper understanding of the needs and hopes of the people of the region.

Unfortunately, the temptation exists for the most dominant voices to override or gloss over community needs with their own interests rather than negotiating in a more equitable fashion. One of the most interesting examples of this problem during the ECT process was the ongoing discussion about the role of market forces. While some representatives of the development community argued that market forces automatically address the important needs of the region, other members of the environmental, neighborhood, and social services communities believed reliance on market forces ignores the pressing needs of the historically disadvantaged and negates the concept of sustainability.

This legitimate question of "whose world view is the plan based on?" is an important part of the dialog in any visioning exercise. A vision that includes multiple definitions is likely to be more meaningful and credible. Balancing existing market trends with the ability to shape innovative yet pragmatic alternatives is an irreplaceable regional skill set.

**Jack**

There are a variety of methods that can be used to determine the needs of a community. Typical methods include simple opinion polling, statistical sampling, and benchmarking key indicators. However, each of these has its own limitations with regard to determining what the community really desires and we have to be mindful of the difference between true needs and wants. As an example, opinion polling is often used to gauge the sentiments of a community. However, public opinion can be shaped by many factors and may not actually correspond to the real needs of the people. If the popular press and local elected and community leaders believe that a certain action is needed in the community, they may use their position to mould public opinion. In Austin, after several years of almost daily media attention on traffic issues, was it a surprise that when polling was done that "traffic congestion" was rated the biggest problem in the area?

Statistical sampling is a little better in gauging real needs but it too has its own drawbacks. The significance of the sample may be scientifically verifiable, but this form of response is entirely dependent on how the questions are constructed and what information is provided to the respondent. A sampling question like "Do you want highways improved to relieve traffic congestion?" is a very different question than "Do you want to add 10% to your property tax bill to widen our streets?" Again, this process can be manipulated toward a pre-determined outcome by how the process is constructed.

Benchmarking how the community is doing seems to offer a better opportunity to extrapolate the real needs. As an example, if per capita income is rising more slowly than the cost of living, then this may indicate the need to address either cost of living factors or economic viability. If the education levels of the current population are less than the education needs of new businesses, then we may need to ask if these are the right businesses to bring to the area or what we need to do to increase the education levels of our current population? This type of benchmarking can help ascertain specific needs in the region.

However, to be of real service to the community, whatever benchmarks we use must be relative to one another and connected to some higher community value. One possible unifying indicator is "Do people stay in the community over time?" It is only reasonable to assume that people stay where they want to be and move on when their needs are not being met. Some change is due to personal preference, such as wanting to be closer to grandchildren, while other decisions are made because of personal needs such as having to move for a job. While we are a very mobile culture and moving around is easier than ever, it is the "why" and how much we move that is important in ultimately determining the community's needs.

**QUESTION 5**

**How important is population forecasting when designing a regional plan?**

**Taylor**

Population forecasting serves best to provide a timeframe in which to implement a regional plan. Various plans may result based on the assumptions of varying population projections. The greatest value is providing planners and service providers a plan with alternatives and milestones to accommodate the needs of future residents, whatever the number may be.

**Skaggs**

Population forecasting is important but, due to the uncertainty of population forecasting, ECT indicated an approximate doubling of the population over a 20- to 40-year period. This allows the vision to consider the broad implications of doubling the population but the more

detailed planning and implementation will develop on a schedule paced by the actual population growth and its location. The most likely thing to happen is that the actual population increases will be substantially different in size and location from that projected in the vision. This is why the vision must be broad and flexible and is not a plan.

**Fayles**

It is very important to know what the future population is likely to be, so plans can be made to anticipate their needs. In Envision Utah, the projected 20-year population figure was used as the absolute number of people who needed to be accommodated with the chips process. (In our community visioning workshops, each chip represented a certain number of people. By requiring workshop attendees to place all of the required chips on the regional map, they could visualize just how many people needed to be accommodated within the geographic constraints.)

**Jack**

Traditionally, regional planning starts with projecting population growth and then plans on how to accommodate it. The usual methodology is to do a statistical progression analysis based on a selected number of past years' data, extend it out for a period of years, and then try to figure out how best to manage the result. This approach is very speculative and therefore very risky to solely base regional planning on. As any stock prospectus will tell you "past performance is no indicator of future profit." And so it is with such population projections. While we should have this data available for consideration, it should not be seen as a given.

However, planning needs to be based on some form of expectations. Fortunately, there are other ways to make forecasts that can be more useful in regional visioning. One essential analysis that should be done is to look at the carrying capacity of the region's resources. The ability of a region to accommodate additional growth should be assessed with regard to the available water, wastewater treatment capacity, electrical generation capacity, transportation systems, agricultural lands, and food production. These are critical in assessing a region's sustainability. In addition, we should assess what the current population's expectations are for quality of life issues such as the cost of living, cultural amenities, educational opportunities, and so forth. These sustainability and subjective factors may be more important in determining the appropriate population growth for a particular region than just a statistical projection of the past.

**Rather**

For ECT, forecasting 1.25 million future residents over the next 20 to 40 years was a pivotal and controversial issue. By simplifying the process and considering only one high estimate, it may have over-projected infrastructure needs with all the resulting costs and impacts while not providing the most realistic set of scenarios. Cities grow and change differently over time and it may be more effective to create scenarios around several different variations of population trends—high, medium, and low. Also, a twenty-year forecast may be too short a time horizon. Regions may need to look at even longer planning cycles to fully understand the impact on issues such as water availability and open space.

**Steiner**

Population forecasts are very helpful, but, as Lewis Mumford observed, "trend is not destiny." Good forecasts are usually derived from past and current trends which have limited predictive power.

**QUESTION 6**

What are the short-term and long-term goals of the regional planning process? Who should be responsible for carrying these goals forward?

**Rather**

The long-term goal should be to create a sustainable region and the most important short-term goal may be to first define and establish a sustainable economy. All citizens, stakeholder groups, and elected officials should be responsible for developing the expertise necessary to achieve these goals.

**Taylor**

Short-term goals must be focused on action and implementation within the principles of the regional vision. Short-term goals are concerned with details: road construction, financing payment, utility infrastructure, and inter-governmental cooperation.

Long-term goals must allow for flexibility because community and individual needs evolve over time. Therefore, planning and implementation must reflect those changes. Adhering to a plan developed in the 1970s prior to the development of the Internet and mobile phone technology, for example, would prove futile as it does not represent the realities of today or the possibilities of the future. In real estate, site design and development constantly change. Also, new engineering techniques and solutions and new technologies may allow a type and/or density of development which is environmentally-sensitive but which could not have been foreseen during the original visioning and planning process. Commercial design, residential design, and ideals of communities and neighborhoods are not timeless laws set in stone, so flexibility and the tools for responding to change are key elements of a good regional plan.

Plans must be responsive, yet maintain goals that are timeless: a healthy and sustainable economy, a good quality of life with the cornerstone being a clean and protected environment,

and a culture that seeks to achieve social equity. The goals should help achieve the common vision, which, for example, will likely be along the lines of an outstanding community in which all citizens have the opportunity to find meaningful employment, affordable housing, and outstanding education within a clean and safe environment. Generally speaking, the goal of regional planning and visioning is to reach consensus and develop goals that will help the region achieve a sustainable balance of economic, social, and environmental interests to ensure the long-term vitality of the region and the communities within the region.

Long-term goals are the responsibility of the region's citizens. That statement is not necessarily contrary to the statements above regarding those involved in the regional planning effort. Planning is the delicate balance between implementing short-term solutions while maintaining long-term flexibility. Elected officials must carry out the short-term goals. It is up to the electorate to insist upon future leaders who adhere to and promote the regional vision.

**Steiner**

The short-term and long-term goals of the regional planning process will vary from place to place. Generally, the goals will need to address issues that are regional in scope which most likely will include transportation, water and sewer systems, environmental quality (especially clean air and water), open space, land use, and economic development. I think the best entity to carry these goals forward is some type of regional organization, either governmental or non-governmental.

**Fayles**

Both the short-term and long-term goals of a regional planning process should develop through a grassroots, inclusive process that allows residents to make their preferences known. In the case of Envision Utah, years of exhaustive involvement of the public, local and state officials, and numerous stakeholders led to the broadly and publicly supported Quality Growth Strategy (QGS). The seven goals of QGS help protect the environment and maintain economic vitality and quality of life as the region accommodates anticipated growth:

- Enhance air quality
- Increase mobility and transportation choices
- Preserve critical lands, including agricultural, sensitive, and strategic open lands
- Conserve and maintain availability of water resources
- Provide housing opportunities for a range of family and income types
- Maximize efficiency in public and infrastructure investments to promote other goals
- Revise the tax structure to promote better development decisions

The primary responsibility for implementation falls on local governments, state and local incentives, and the actions of developers and consumers in the free market, as well as public approval of transit tax through a county referendum. Envision Utah's objective is to analyze and disseminate the costs and benefits associated with these goals and their accompanying 32 strategies. Envision Utah seeks progress over time by working with the entities that hold responsibility for these goals and strategies. Most of the strategies are incremental steps that can take place over time, provided the right regulatory and market environment. Envision Utah's role is to encourage the creation of that environment by providing information and resources to community leaders in order to broaden the choices available to them, to facilitate more informed decision-making, and keeping regional goals and objectives in the minds of local officials.

**Skaggs**

The short term goals are to find a way to fund the continuation of the ECT organization and to establish a set of prioritized tasks which are consistent with the vision and can bring early positive results in improving regional planning. The long term goal is to continue to work with governmental and stakeholder groups throughout the region to educate, encourage, motivate, and facilitate the solution to growth related issues which will enhance the quality of life of all citizens.

**Jack**

The most important short-term resultant of such a process is to engage the region's residents in a discussion of these issues. The long-term goal is to create mechanisms at both the governmental and market level to achieve a sustainable regional population.

**QUESTION 7**

**Is there a way to measure the success of a regional planning process?**

**Fayles**

Generally, success is measured in specific quality of life targets the process has defined, such as air quality, vehicle miles traveled, transit ridership, appropriate densification, development of a regional public transportation system, open space preservation, changes in long-term plans and ordinances at the local level, and so forth. Though more anecdotal, success can be measured by what percentage of active stakeholders support the regional plan, how well it has made its influence felt in local planning decisions, or if it has been an active force in shaping growth decisions in the region. Knowing what can and cannot be measured, as well as when to actually measure an area, is often an art rather than a science.

**Jack**

The most important measure of success of a regional plan is to look at who we are today and then assess as the plan unfolds, how those people who are here today fare as a result of the actions taken by both the market and our local governments in response to the regional vision. If we are truly building this plan to guide our collective decisions so as to help better the quality of life for those who live here now, then we just need to keep an eye on that target as we move forward. If we see that we have built a beautiful new community but the majority of folks who live here today have had to move away, then we have failed the most basic purpose of such a planning exercise.

**Steiner**

I think sustainability indicators that assess progress on specific environmental, equity, and economic conditions can be effective measures.

**Taylor**

Success of a regional planning process lies in execution. The best-laid plans are worthless if left on a shelf gathering dust. Planning is not supposed to be an intellectual exercise for the sake of debate and pretty maps. There are always needs to be addressed at any time, and planning without execution addresses none of those needs. Therefore, success can be measured in terms of how well a plan is realized through construction, job creation, improved health measures, and so forth. Furthermore, the success of a planning process is based on its relevance and responsiveness. A planning process must be deemed a failure if it has not been implemented and is replaced by another effort.

Finally, the ultimate measure of success of a regional planning process is the vitality of the region viewed over a long period of time. Were the goals and ideals of the vision achieved? Did communities prosper? Did the region actually grow in a way that reflected the vision and the plan? The answers to these and other questions that visioning is intended to address will allow one to determine whether or not a regional planning process was successful.

**Rather**

In the case of Austin, the most important measure of success for a plan is whether or not it is actually implemented as opposed to just sitting on the shelf. Most of the plans, regardless of how much citizen input was received, have not been implemented at all, resulting in a considerable amount of "planning cynicism" and frustration. Thus, it is crucial to capture both imagination and confidence in the region with a bold vision to debunk the widespread sentiment that plans don't matter.

*Special thanks for Mark Yznaga and Kathleen Ligon for contributing to this article.*

Solomon, Daniel, 2003. *Global City Blues*. Washington D.C. : Island Press.

Review by Oormi Kapadia

*Global City Blues* is a collection of essays by Daniel Solomon, one of the nation's leading designers of housing and urban neighborhoods. He is Emeritus Professor of architecture at the University of California, Berkeley and co-founder of the Congress for a New Urbanism. These essays are compelling anecdotes of the horrors of modernism and the post-World War II rationale that inform today's American cities. The book addresses present day dialogues regarding sprawl, urban disintegration, and placelessness as well as a wide range of issues affecting everyday life from the place of technology to the essential nature of food and urbanism.

The essays are as much a critical re-examination of modern urban theories as they are a romantic nostalgia of the author's personal experiences. They are structured under seven main themes: Nearness, Times, Site vs. Zeit, Urbanism, In Asia, Cybertime, and Signs of Life. Through these groups of essays readers are introduced to various people, places, and ideas that have been instrumental in shaping the world we inhabit. Solomon argues that in the past fifty years the Zeitgeist dreams of modernism have been successful in ignoring the historical legacy and the identities attached with the American cities. Furthermore, the manifestation of these dreams have succeeded in replacing the complexities of traditional urban streets with monstrous freeways and neighborhood corner stores with placeless boxes and shopping malls.

The book begins on the philosophical basis conveyed by Heidegger's argument of "loss of nearness." Contemporary, everyday life experiences this loss of nearness in the social, physical, and natural environments as well as from one's own self. Throughout the book, this central idea is elaborated by various examples from the author's personal and professional experiences. On the ideological front, Solomon manages to criticize both Corbusier (a proponent of mid 20<sup>th</sup> century's modernistic utopia) and Koolhaas (an advocate of the 21<sup>st</sup> century's humanist deconstructivism) in the same breath. Rather than creating an aura of pessimism, the book initiates an alternative perspective of looking at the cities through the glasses of New Urbanism. The essay about the author's personal experience with urban theorist and critic Colin Rowe barely manages to question the theory of New Urbanism which is presented as the proposed solution. Two essays at the end of the book are aptly dedicated to the efforts of various organizations like the Congress for a New Urbanism and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development towards achieving the vision of place making and HOPE VI's efforts at addressing the issues of equity on an urban scale. The book concludes with the optimistic beginnings of what the author terms "a new era" where efforts would be concentrated at creating a city fabric as opposed to isolated monuments in a park.

The lucid language and anecdotal structure of the book provides entertaining as well as a thought-provoking reading. Since this serves to introduce the reader to existing issues in planning, design, and sustainability, it is recommended reading for enthusiasts, professionals, and especially for those who care about the future of urban life in America.



Frank, Lawrence D., Peter O. Engelke, and Thomas L. Schmid. 2003. *Health and Community Design: The Impact of the Built Environment on Physical Activity*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press.

Review by Lisa M. Weston

The relationship between the health and planning professions goes back many years. The connection between the smokestacks of the early days of the Industrial Revolution and the poor health of nearby neighbors was direct and addressed by nascent planning efforts. Since then, public health officials have worked on issues such as communicable diseases while planners addressed growth issues as the influx of automobiles has led to a changing cityscape. Now planners, public health officials, and researchers have come together once again grappling with problems as intuitively direct as the one described above—how does the built environment, that combination of land use, the transportation system, and design, promote or deter good physical health?

Journals, popular magazines, and newspapers are filled with articles about urban sprawl, traffic congestion, and the increasing percentage of overweight and obese Americans. In *Health and Community Design: The Impact of the Built Environment on Physical Activity*, Lawrence D. Frank, Peter O. Engelke, and Thomas L. Schmid attempt to untangle the separate elements contributing to the dynamic association between people's health (specifically physical activity) and the environment. They focus on three strands of influence: the transportation system, land use, and urban design.

Frank, Engelke, and Schmid have done a good job of bringing together relevant material from a variety of disciplines. A reader who is from one discipline might be tempted to skip the chapters in their area and just read the ones from the other disciplines. That approach is not recommended. Instead, the reader may benefit from first reading the conclusion of each chapter. The conclusions to chapters two through five and seven through nine (there is no conclusion for chapter six) are excellent, well-crafted summaries. Readers with some familiarity with a topic would benefit from reading the chapter conclusions in order to assure they understand the authors' arguments and then decide how much they need to go back and read.

The chapters describing the essential elements from the public health and planning professions provide the reader with background material that serves two purposes. First, it allows someone new to the profession to understand its basic tenets. Second, it provides a bridge between the professions since they often have different ways of describing the same thing. For example, many transportation professionals have been asking, "How can we get people to drive less?" While health professionals are asking, "How can we get people to walk more?" Clearly, these questions are two sides of the same coin.

After presenting the fundamentals of this new dialogue between the disciplines, the concluding chapters are anticlimactic. Data from Atlanta, Georgia and Portland, Oregon are used to flesh out the theoretical constructs of the earlier chapters. Admittedly, the combination of land use, the transportation system, and urban design manifests itself in a spectrum of outcomes. The authors have tried to isolate the impacts of these three main elements, but it is the chemistry among these elements (as well as other factors such as climate and topography) that determines the impact of the built environment on physical activity.



This is not a book about answers. However, it is an excellent resource for many reasons. To demonstrate the interaction among the three main fields discussed here the authors present a diagram of three overlapping circles. This book allows those that assemble where the three circles meet to speak to each other in a common language. Furthermore, this is an excellent introduction to the dialogues on this subject that are happening in other professions. Lastly, the authors articulate many questions that require scrutiny by researchers, planners, public health professionals, and policy makers interested in addressing this serious health issue.

Revell, Keith D. 2003. *Building Gotham: Civic Culture and Public Policy in New York City, 1898–1938*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Review by Andy Karvonen

In 1898, the New York State legislature passed a landmark law to create Greater New York, a metropolis of 3.5 million people including the boroughs of Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx, and Staten Island. The nascent region instantly became the second largest urban area in the world and presented a plethora of new challenges to planning and management due to its great diversity, complexity, and physical size. The centralization of greater New York was undertaken to consolidate shared public services and create an efficient and rationally planned hub of economic activity. *Building Gotham: Civic Culture and Public Policy in New York City, 1898–1938* documents the rise of the city as an interconnected metropolis and highlights the difficulties and challenges in large-scale urban planning. The author emphasizes the influence of experts, including engineers, bankers, lawyers, and planners, in fostering the interdependence of the region through technical, financial, legal, and physical means.

The need for comprehensive infrastructure planning in New York City emerged with the proliferation of skyscrapers, rail lines, roads, subways, water and sewer lines, and electricity service, all elements of the new and modern city. Keith Revell, a professor in the School of Policy and Management at Florida International University, explains the emergence of urban interdependence and divides the topic into three sections to describe how both private and public interests coped with large-scale system building. The first section of the book addresses the development of private infrastructure, specifically rail lines for transporting goods from the busiest port in the country to the rest of the United States. The port was the key to growth of the region and the municipal government was in continual negotiation with railroad companies to make infrastructure decisions that would benefit the public as well as function as a part of the larger, comprehensive transportation network. Engineers working as employees of the railroad companies often mediated between realizing profits for their companies and maximizing the public good. These experts were instrumental in viewing the railways from a systems perspective and recognized the long-term benefits of planning private infrastructure so that it would protect the welfare of the general public.

In the second section of the book, Revell describes public infrastructure and how the regional governments in Greater New York systematically created underground services including water, sewer, and subway lines. These service networks required the successful coordination of numerous local governments and managers of these systems often wrestled



with the problem of the "free rider" or those individuals who did not pay their fair share for public services. Experts in finance, particularly J.P. Morgan and his banking colleagues, were instrumental in creating the municipal taxing strategies to finance these new public services. Bankers were also influential in determining how the government would spend the funds they borrowed and how they would manage their debt loads.

The third and best section of the book describes the development of planning and the struggle of the metropolitan government in negotiating private property rights. Edward Bassett, a leading proponent of zoning in the United States, campaigned for zoning laws to guide the development of skyscrapers in Manhattan as well as resolve the ever-increasing conflicts in land use throughout the region. Skyscraper regulation was at the heart of the zoning debate because these buildings affected residents in terms of economics, safety, health, and welfare. Bassett was successful in framing the zoning debate on specific zoning decisions instead of its overall legal constitutionality. Regional planning experts also fought for a centralized planning authority that would consider the metropolis from a regional instead of local perspective. This shift to a regional focus was often perceived as a threat to local politicians, particularly the borough presidents who relished their discretion in planning their jurisdictions. Proponents of comprehensive planning were eventually successful in establishing a regional planning authority in 1938 after two decades of debate and, while not immediately successful, the new agency represented New York City's genuine commitment to regional planning.

This book covers a wide range of topics and, for the most part, Revell succeeds in demonstrating that the idea of collective living on such a large scale required a novel approach – thinking regionally while acting locally. No longer could local bureaucrats monopolize how a particular area of the metropolis would be shaped but instead would have to consider neighbors and the region as it related to infrastructure planning. This new regional focus also highlighted the tension between public and private investment in urban areas. Revell debunks the myth that the sole motivation of private interests is profit and emphasizes the importance of companies such as railroads and banking to the development of infrastructure systems in New York City through their private planning efforts. These private companies recognized the advantage of comprehensive planning and hired experts to devise solutions that would serve both private and public interests. Finally, Revell demonstrates that the rise of the metropolis is intricately linked to the emergence of the "expert." Engineers, financial analysts, planners, lawyers, and sanitarians were all crucial actors in the regional planning efforts of New York City and often served as rational moderators between public and private interests.

Florida, Richard. 2004. *The Rise of the Creative Class: and How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community, & Every Day Life*. New York: Basic Books.

Review by Elizabeth D. McLamb

In *The Rise of the Creative Class: and How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community, & Everyday Life*, Richard Florida, a Professor of Regional Economic Development at Carnegie Mellon University and a visiting scholar at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C., describes his creative class theory of economic growth. First released in hardback in 2002, Florida's ideas received



widespread attention from a variety of academic and professional fields. In early 2004, *The Rise of the Creative Class* was released in paperback, including a new preface that responds to some of the criticisms of the first edition and presents new information. Also included are updated city rankings based on a revised Creativity Index, a new appendix explaining the technical details of these changes, and an example of one community's "creative environment building principles" called the Memphis Manifesto. The remainder of the paperback version is unchanged, providing the same highly readable and engaging description of the development and implications of the creative class theory, as well as the controversial assumptions and methodologies used to quantify creativity.

Florida introduces the creative class theory by analyzing economic transformations over the last century. While natural resources and agriculture drove economic growth initially, today's growth is driven by people and ideas. Florida argues that this transformation is illustrated both through the change in the share of jobs held by the three principle economic classes, the working class, the service class, and the creative class; and by examining the rising importance of "information" and "knowledge" in the new economy.

Florida defines the creative class in two components: the super creative core and the creative professionals. The creative core includes artists, musicians, scientists, engineers, architects, designers, entertainers, and educators – people who create new ideas, technology, and creative content that are widely usable and transferable. The creative professionals make up a broader group from business and finance, law, healthcare, and related fields – people who integrate and apply the new ideas developed by the creative core. Both groups "share a common creative ethos that values creativity, individuality, difference, and merit."

Comparing historical census data and 2001 occupational and employment data, Florida found that the percent-share of creative class jobs has increased from approximately 10% in 1900 to 30% in 2001. Likewise, Florida cites more than 800% increase in research and development investment and 250% increase in patents granted between 1950 and 2000 as evidence of the growing significance of the creative class in the U.S. economy.

The increase of the creative class has caused numerous social, cultural, and lifestyle implications. According to Florida, more and more people work in casual and autonomic office environments, blend work and life into one common experience, spend more and non-traditional hours at the office, and choose to delay marriage and children. In addition, the labor market has become more horizontal, where workers are not as tied to one particular company and tend to move laterally from job to job. There is less desire for the security once found in a lifetime with a large corporation – people are willing to take risks to have the experiences that they want.

In Florida's mind, creativity is more than just a skill – it is a way of life that more and more people are *choosing*. This is where many of his peers disagree. Social commentators like Jill Fraser believe that changes such as longer work hours are being forced on today's workers, creating the modern "white collar sweatshop." Robert Putnam claims that changing lifestyles decrease "social capital," or the civic engagement and community spirit once at the source of prosperity. Florida addresses these arguments more carefully in the 2004 preface, admitting that economic transformations do not always happen smoothly. He advocates for new social institutions and policies that will address these problems and calls on the creative class to "harness the creative energy we have unleashed to mitigate the turmoil and disruption that it generates."

Another point of contention is Florida's claim that the new economy does not abide by traditional economic growth theories. Florida believes that workers today are choosing location over jobs, instead of allowing jobs to dictate their location. He claims that members



of the creative class are abandoning traditional corporate communities, working class centers, and Sunbelt regions for places referred to as "Creative Centers." Critics argue an opposite view, claiming that economic growth comes from growth of companies, jobs, or technology in a region.

In the 2004 preface, Florida addresses this by offering a more holistic approach – economic growth is complex and dependent on several independent factors working together. Florida believes that creative people choose to live in "Creative Centers" based on the amenities and experiences offered, the openness to diversity, and the opportunity to express their creativity in their life and work. These ideas culminate in his "creative capital theory" which says, "regional economic growth is driven by the location choices of creative people... who prefer places that are diverse, tolerant, and open to new ideas." Likewise, the Creativity Index was developed to measure city and regional creativity and is composed of three equally weighted parts: technology, talent, and tolerance.

In the initial version of the book, Florida focused heavily on the creative city rankings. As a result, some critics felt that the Creativity Index was too narrow – simply producing "winners" and "losers" of the creativity game. In the new preface, Florida asks readers to use the Creativity Index in more general way, "Please view the Creativity Index as a broad-gauge indicator of a region's ability to harness energy for long-run economic growth. All my measures are best used as tools to focus strategic effort."

Examined in the broad context, the ideas in *The Rise of the Creative Class* are significant to the future of cities and regions. The combination of Florida's easy to read writing style with an attention to empirical detail in the appendices allows his ideas to reach a diverse audience. By attempting to prove quantitatively that intrinsic "livability" values also contribute to economic growth, Richard Florida makes the case for newer, non-traditional economic development strategies.



# Professional Reports, Theses, and Dissertations

Published in the Community and  
Regional Planning Program, 2003

- Chen, Jing  
Sustainable Ecotourism Development and Minority Participation in Yunnan, China
- Cicarelli, Dawn  
Implementation of the Federal Housing Abroad Program: Case Study of the American Embassy  
in Bogota, Colombia
- Conley Tyree, Melissa  
Approaches for Developing a Park Land Acquisition Strategy for the City of Round Rock,  
Texas
- Dawson, Yvonne  
Bringing Business to the Inner-City: Increasing Commercial Development by Community  
Development Corporations in Texas
- Eckl, Lynn  
Public Art in Streetscape Improvement Projects: Three Case Studies
- Graham, Sarah Louise  
Alternative Ways to Solve the Graffiti Problem: Incorporating Artists into the Policy Realm
- Harden, Joi  
The Impact of the Relationship of the Austin Revitalization Authority (ARA) to its Stakeholders
- Hiche, Daniella  
Ecosystem Management: A Conceptual Framework for Planning
- Krzyzanowski, Daniel  
An Evaluation of Capital Metro's Light Rail Plan For Austin: Comparison To DART's Dallas  
Metropolitan LRT System
- Lenahan, Regan  
24-Hour Center Cities: An Analysis of Downtown Austin
- Lintz, Cynthia  
Transformational and Functional Indicators of Success in Community- Based Projects -  
Kumanovo, Macedonia

- Lowery, Christina  
Let the People Learn, Let the People Lead: A Case Study of the South African Homeless  
People's Federation
- Mazzola, Mark  
Land Supply Analysis in Washington State: Urban Growth and Development in the Six  
Buildable Lands Counties
- Parmar, Anuradha  
Using GIS as A Tool for Growth Management and Open Space Preservation Programs:  
Challenges and Opportunities
- Rozell, Kara  
The Effect of Historic Designation on Residential Property Values in Houston, Texas
- Rush, Kyle  
The Evaluation of Austin's Smart Growth Effort
- Suarez, Blandenier  
Municipal GIS Data Distribution In Texas: Public Use, And Accessibility
- Swinford, Kendall  
Adaptive Watermanagement and Dispersed Development in the Lower Rio Grande Valley
- White, Danielle  
Struggling Young Adults in Houston: Development Strategies for the Hip-Hop Generation in  
the Third Ward Neighborhood

# Alumni Notes

## News about Graduates

Community and Regional Planning Program, University of  
Texas at Austin

In recognition of Planning Forum's landmark Volume 10 edition, the editors have added a new section entitled Alumni Notes. The following pages include profiles of just a few of the graduates of the Community and Regional Planning Program at the University of Texas at Austin. The profiles provide updates and information about alumni – their type of work, publications, areas of research, and other notes of interest. Many include advice to future planners as well.

Other alumni of the program are encouraged to submit their information to the editors. New profiles will be featured in subsequent volumes as space allows. Submissions received first will take priority. All submissions are subject to editors' review. An archive of all submissions will be housed on the Planning Forum website. Our thanks to the planning alumni for forging the path. Best wishes for all who follow.

### **Richard Abramowitz (1983)**

Since graduating from CRP in May of 1983, Richard Abramowitz has done several things, mostly being involved in the recycling and solid waste industry. He is currently a Market Area Recycling Manager for Recycle America Alliance, a subsidiary of Waste Management. He manages six recycling plants in four states, namely Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Mississippi. His current position is in Dallas, Texas, where he has lived for the last 9 years.

### **Max Beauregard (1976)**

Max Beauregard is an independent consultant for GIS projects and demographic research with applications in planning, market research, transportation, environmental affairs, political/election analysis, and school enrollment forecasts. Max's most recent political work examines trends in Hispanic and other minority voters, identified from name analysis based upon languages spoken at home. Max has architecture and city planning degrees from the University of Texas at Austin (1974 and 1976), and has been employed in Houston for the last 20+ years.

### **Dr. Barbara Becker, AICP (1983)**

Barbara Becker is a Professor in and Director of the School of Planning at the University of Arizona in Tucson, Arizona. She has co-authored a book with Eric Kelly, *Community Planning: An Introduction to the Comprehensive Plan*, which is widely used today as a planning text.

### **Becca Bruce (1995)**

Becca has been working in affordable housing development since graduating from the CRP program in 1995. She has a consulting business, Vacri Development and Consulting, where she works largely with nonprofit organizations to help them obtain financing and work through the development process to rehabilitate or construct affordable housing in Austin. She also works as a commercial real estate agent for Southwest Strategies Group ([www.swsg.com](http://www.swsg.com)), which is a full service brokerage, real estate planning and investment services firm. She is currently in the 2003-2004 Class of Leadership, Austin. She is happy to offer advice to any CRPers!

### **Paula Brumbelow (1995)**

Paula works for the Development Planning and Zoning Division, Philadelphia City Planning Commission. She reviews plans for small and large projects, works on zoning code amendments, represents the Planning Commission at the Zoning Board of Adjustment, conducts research on zoning issues and prepares reports, and is currently the Project Manager for a consultant based project. She has previously worked with the City of Solon, Ohio, where she performed various planning duties that pertained to growth management of a small city, writing grant proposals, and managing projects that were given grants. She has also worked as a zoning consultant for Telecommunications Carrier. As for words of advice, she notes that her experience has taught her that it pays to be flexible in the type of planning you want to do. The more general your experience the more marketable you are to most cities and consultants. It gives the employer more ways of using and developing your own skill set out in the work world. Also in writing, remember that the majority of the people you

benefit do not know the acronyms or need big or impressive phrasing. Write for the average reader. She has a primary focus within land development and zoning as a planning field in her current job. She has had experience in most other types of planning (community, capital budgets, preservation, design, and GIS) from working for a city with a population of 25,000. In working with a large city, she feels planners end up focusing in one area of planning without the chance to do other types. She notes that with her work experience, she wished she had paid more attention to Planning Law. Also being removed from school for a few years now, she has also realized that there is much more to the world than work and planning.

She is involved with several organizations that do not involve the field of planning, where she volunteers or serves as a Board Member. She also spends a large portion of her free time traveling.

#### **Jackie (Brown) Chuter (2002)**

Jackie works as a Neighborhood Planner for the City of Austin's Neighborhood Planning and Zoning Department. After working on the Central Austin Combined Neighborhood Plan for 15 months, she looks forward to her transition to the East Riverside/Oltorf Combined Neighborhood Plan this year.

#### **Philip Farrington, AICP (1994)**

After leaving the CRP program in 1990 (MSCRP in 1994), Philip worked as a regional water resources planner in central Texas, and then in Oregon as a parks planner and land use planning consultant. Some highlights of his work include: helping develop the Edwards Aquifer Protection Program, which led to acquisition of what is now Government Canyon State Park north of San Antonio; co-authoring an award-winning update to the Oregon Department of Aviation's Airport Land Use Compatibility Guidebook, and securing approvals for an updated Eugene Airport Master Plan, OR; planning for completion of the riverside multi-use trail system in Eugene; planning and development for Oregon's first critical care access hospital serving a rural area south of Eugene; and preparing master plans for parks and neighborhoods for communities from the Oregon coast to the Cascades. Two years ago, Philip left consulting to spearhead planning and development for a new regional hospital, the largest between Portland and San Francisco. Currently, he is concluding his second term as a board member of the Oregon Chapter of the APA, and running for chapter Vice President/president-elect. He is also developing the program for a joint conference between the Oregon and Washington APA chapters, Fall 2004, in Portland.

#### **Brett Firfer, AICP (1997)**

Brett received his BSAS in August 1995 and his MCRP in December 1997. Following graduation, he spent a year and half learning full-time at Yeshivas Ohr Somayach in Monsey, NY, and teaching high school English part-time. He then began working for Ricci Associates, now called RicciGreene Associates, an architecture and planning firm in Manhattan, where he is currently working as a "Justice Planner." The firm specializes in justice facilities, specifically courthouses, jails and juvenile facilities. His role as a planner includes population and caseload studies, space programming, cost estimating, other courts master planning functions, and architectural support. He has been living in Manhattan since April 2000.

#### **Todd Hemingson, AICP (1992)**

While he pursued environmental planning with Prof. Kent Butler as his advisor, the need for a job in a slow economy led him to the Texas Department of Transportation, where he worked on public transportation issues for a couple of years. After a brief stay (9 months) in Houston working for the Metropolitan Planning Organization, he moved to "Planner Mecca" (AKA the Portland, Oregon area) to take a job as a planner with a public transportation agency, and pursue a Ph.D. in Planning at the Portland State University. While he never received the degree, he did learn a lot and totally enjoyed his five years in the beautiful Pacific Northwest. With a yearning for job advancement, he moved back to Texas and took a Planning Manager position at VIA Metropolitan Transit in San Antonio. Now nearing four years at the agency, he has advanced to Vice-President, Planning and Development, and enjoys the challenges his job brings him every day. He is interested to see what his fellow students are up to!

#### **Linda Howard, AICP (1982)**

Linda Howard graduated from the CRP program in 1982. She is currently the Director of Planning & Programming for the Aviation Division of the Texas Department of Transportation. She is responsible for the development and continuous update of the Texas Airport System Plan, and the Texas Aviation Facilities Development Program, which allocates approximately \$60 million annually in federal and state funding to general aviation airports.

#### **James Koski (2001)**

Upon graduation in 2001, James Koski received an American Planning Association Fellowship, which took him to Washington, DC and placed him in the office of U.S. Congressman Blumenauer. Congressman Blumenauer's legislative theme in Congress is "Livable Communities." James currently serves as his Legislative Director, where he works on issues as diverse as the Congressional Bike Caucus to International Relations. He also serves on Washington DC's Bike Advisory Council, which is made up of volunteer citizens, and provides bicycle policy advice and recommendations to the Mayor.

#### **Daniel Krzyzanowski (2003)**

Daniel recently finished his PR, and graduated in December 2003. In October, he took a position as an Urban Planner with the City of Galveston, Department of Planning and Community Development. His work has a focus on neighborhood and historic district planning.

#### **Joelle Labrosse, AICP (1998)**

After graduating from the CRP Program, Joelle worked for the Water Development Board for five years as a planner, developing population and water demand projections and providing economic analysis of projected water shortages in the State. She currently holds the position of Senior Planner at the City of Round Rock. Her focus is on Long Range Planning, including downtown redevelopment, demographic analysis, historic preservation and neighborhood planning. Joelle currently lives in Leander, Texas.

**Makela Mangrich, AICP (2000)**

Makela Mangrich is an Associate with Vandewalle & Associates in Madison, Wisconsin. Due to Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law, commonly known as the "Smart Growth Law", she has been able to prepare comprehensive land use plans for predominantly smaller communities in the Upper Midwest. She is also working to develop a professional specialization in land conservation planning, and is working for a conservation district in Illinois to update their Master Plan. Prior to joining Vandewalle & Associates in October 2003, she worked for the City of Austin and Hill Country Conservancy in Austin. She would like to encourage students to stick with the profession and have patience with the numerous bureaucracies planners face. They can be painfully slow, but good things can come to those with patience. She also recommends investigating numerous employment options while still in school and talking to people with experiences in a variety of firms and agencies before taking a job. The options can be overwhelming, but research can help find a good fit for your career objectives.

**Charles Scott McCutcheon (1995)**

Charles is currently employed as a Market Intelligence Manager for Austin Micro-Devices (AMD). He lives in Austin, Texas.

**L. Ashley McLain (1997)**

Ashley is a Senior Project Manager at Hicks & Company Environmental, Archeological, and Planning Consultants. After graduation, she spent 8 months working in Paris for the United Nations Environment Program - Industry and Environment Office as a part-time consultant on ecotourism issues. She has worked for Hicks & Company for the past six years. She conducts socioeconomic and environmental justice analyses for transportation projects, assesses proposed rules for aquifer management, and manages regulatory compliance and permitting for city water projects. She was on Planning Forum's first editorial board, and prepared the initial Point/Counterpoint article on Neotraditionalism.

**Scott Polikov (2002)**

After graduating, Scott Polikov formed Gateway Planning Group ([www.gatewayplanning.com](http://www.gatewayplanning.com)), providing town planning and transportation consulting services to both public and private sector clients. Scott works with communities and developers to capture growth in mixed-use pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods, specializing in transect-based plans and codes.

**Laura Powell (1995)**

The idea for Planning Forum grew, in part, out of Laura's conviction that interdisciplinary studies are vital to the continued relevance of many academic disciplines, including planning and architecture. Not coincidentally, Laura's own "interdisciplinary" (read: tortured) career path exemplifies this. After graduation in 1995, she received a Fulbright Fellowship and moved to Quito, Ecuador, where she spent about a year doing research on housing finance and gender issues in Ecuador, but quickly decided that academic research was not the career for her. She eventually obtained a job in educational administration at a private university in Guayaquil, Ecuador, where she stayed until 1998. At that point she realized that she lacked a fundamental understanding of the mechanics of finance, which she deemed essential, and

hence moved on to Columbia University's MBA program. Laura graduated in 1999, and in her search for a real job, stumbled across a career which combines a number of her academic interests and skills—public finance. Laura is currently the Vice President of UBS Financial Services Inc, located in San Antonio, Texas. She works as an investment banker to state and local governments, assisting them in evaluating their financial options and raising capital in the debt markets.

**Andrew Spurgin (2001)**

After completing coursework in 2000, Andrew began work for the Planning Department, City of San Antonio. Presently a Senior Planner in the Neighborhood & Urban Design Division, he has worked on neighborhood plans, conservation districts, and the Unified Development Code revision. In the past three years, five of these projects have received awards from the American Planning Association. He currently manages the Corridor Overlay Districts program and the limited purpose annexation program. As a result of recent annexations, including the Southside Initiative, San Antonio is now the largest City in the U.S. as calculated in area. Andrew's office regularly employs student interns and often has entry level planning positions for hire. Interested students are encouraged to contact him.

**Barbara Stocklin (1991)**

Barbara's areas of study were historic preservation and economic development planning. She worked in historic property compliance for the Texas Department of Transportation from 1987 - 1997, and as the City of Austin historic preservation officer from 1997 - 2002. She is currently the City Historic Preservation Officer in Phoenix, Arizona. At that job, she manages a 12-million dollar historic preservation bond fund, and oversees the city's historic preservation planning program. She also writes a monthly newspaper column on local history and historic preservation issues for a monthly newspaper in Phoenix.

**Andrew Tadross (2002)**

Andrew is currently working in Cambridge, MA for ConsultEcon, Inc ([www.consultecon.com](http://www.consultecon.com)). They specialize in economic and management planning (feasibility studies) for public attractions, such as museums, zoos, aquariums, visitor centers etc.

## INFORMATION FOR CONTRIBUTORS

*Planning Forum* serves as a medium for the multi-disciplinary exchange of ideas related to the study of human communities and to the interaction of social, political, and built and natural environments. The journal welcomes submissions of original research papers, timely book reviews, and discussions of current debates, literature, and theory. The journal's intended audience is primarily academic – graduate students and faculty members in worldwide planning-related disciplines – but also includes practitioners who work in fields directly related to journal content.

**Submission Guidelines:** Suggested length is 5,000-10,000 words, including notes and references. Please indicate the number of words on the cover sheet. Authors should follow the style and spelling requirements of the Chicago Manual of Style, 14th Edition. Authors should use the parenthetical author-date style of references, and should include only those works actually cited in the text. *Planning Forum* cannot accept papers that include footnotes. Papers are reviewed anonymously, authors should therefore refer to themselves in the third person in text and notes. Each illustration, chart, table, or graph to be included in the text should be submitted on a separate sheet, with desired text locations clearly indicated. If the manuscript is accepted, the author will receive detailed instructions regarding the proper format of non-text elements. Submission of black and white photographs to accompany the article is encouraged, but publication of these will be at the editor's discretion. Images must meet the required minimum resolution of 300dpi. Images not produced by the author must be accompanied by permission to use or reprint.

**Number of Copies:** Authors should submit five (5) copies of each manuscript, which will not be returned, and an electronic copy on diskette or as an email attachment to the address below. Please include a cover sheet listing the article title, author's name, author's address, phone number, and email address.

**Review Process:** Submissions are anonymously evaluated by the student editorial staff and faculty reviewers according to the following criteria: clear statement of purpose or thesis, clear significance of the contribution to an existing body of literature, clear and effective writing, and use of explicit, sound, and appropriate methods. All submissions are subject to final content and style editing with the acquiescence of the author before publication.

**Deadlines:** *Planning Forum*, Volume 11, will be published in late spring 2005. Abstracts (250 words max) may be submitted via email until October 1, 2004, indicating that the author intends to submit a full manuscript. Full manuscripts prepared according to the guidelines above are due no later than November 1, 2004. Note: Papers must be received by this deadline, *no exceptions*.

Correspondence should be addressed to:  
Editor, Planning Forum  
planning-forum@lists.cc.utexas.edu

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