

Looking Forward From Ten Years Back

A decade of carolina planning

It seems impossible that ten years have passed since several second-year students in the Department of City and Regional Planning (DCRP) at the University of North Carolina first discussed the concept of a student planning publication. One year later, in May 1975, the first issue of carolina planning was published.

Because I was among those associated with that first issue, it is particularly gratifying to see that carolina planning not only survived the decade, but flourished. The discussion below attempts to describe carolina planning's evolution and its significance for Carolina planners.

A Year of Development

As with most new publications, carolina planning was designed to fill a perceived void -- a publication that would emphasize planning policy over planning theory, reach planners as

well as "non-planners", and encourage student contributions.

Three objectives were set forth:

1. Provide a forum for the discussion of planning problems, issues, and techniques related to the practice of planning in North Carolina
2. Enhance the awareness of public officials regarding planning issues in North Carolina and throughout the country
3. Provide a means of information exchange between DCRP and other governmental and academic institutions in the state and nation

As noted in that first issue, "(this) culminates an intensive year of work by a number of people." The year between the journal's conceptualization and its reality was marked by efforts to fund the publication, clarify its purpose and its audience, design a format, and solicit articles for a then non-existent publication!

Several ingredients made carolina planning possible in that year:

- Student efforts. Jim Miller, John Carroll, and Lee Corum were instrumental in the development of the publication. Their efforts greatly simplified my job as editor. Student members of the Editorial Board, Jim Forester, Wanda Lewis and Chuck Roe, also made valuable contributions to the first issue.
- Faculty support. George Hemmens, then chairman of DCRP, actively encouraged the production of carolina planning. Other



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New East Building at the University of North Carolina, home of carolina planning

faculty members, particularly David Godschalk, Gorman Gilbert and Jon Howes, shared their energy and creativity in the development of the journal.

- Money. As with any new venture, the lack of "start-up capital" was our most serious obstacle. After extensive "door-knocking", however, we were fortunate to receive a grant from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation of Winston-Salem. This generous appropriation allowed carolina planning to publish semi-annual issues for two years until subscription revenues could be generated. The John Parker Trust Fund and DCRP also contributed financial support for staff and publication costs.

By the efforts of these individuals and interests, carolina planning was off the ground.

During the Decade

In 1975, our attention was concentrated on the first issue, and little thought was given to the style or content of future work. Yet despite student turnover in the Department every two years, publication of carolina planning has continued thanks to many other DCRP students who have devoted their time and effort over the decade.

And that time and effort are clearly reflected in the pages of carolina planning. The format has been enhanced; advertising space, book reviews, Carolina Forum, Letters to the Editor, resource directories, and "In the Works" are a few of the notable changes. The pool of journal contributors has increased; writers include current and former DCRP students, planning

professionals, and managers and staff in private sector employ. Furthermore, the circulation has increased; carolina planning now has 700 subscribers throughout the nation.

Perhaps the most important role of the publication is to provide a forum for the discussion of planning topics. A review of carolina planning articles over the years parallels the evolution of professional roles and concerns. For example:

- The legitimacy of planning (1976), the specialization in planning (1979)
- Environmental planning (1975), economic development (1978)
- Federal issues (1977), neighborhood issues (1980)
- Urban development (1977), rural development (1982)

The most significant contrast between topics is evident when issues from 1975 and 1982 are compared. It is doubtful that an entire issue of carolina planning would have been devoted to "public/private ventures" in 1975, as it was in 1982 (much less with a picture of the New York Stock Exchange page on the cover!), or that environmental planning and state land use laws would dominate an entire issue today.

And the Future?

I can only hope that carolina planning will continue its evolution and pattern of success in the years ahead. Many people have contributed to the carolina planning effort, and I am pleased to have been a part of its beginning. ☹