

# *Carolina Planning:* Bridging the Practice-Education Gap

David Godschalk, FAICP  
Stephen Baxter Professor

*David Godschalk has served as the faculty advisor for Carolina Planning since the journal was launched in 1975. He now shares his experience with the CP community.*

I see *Carolina Planning* as a bridge between planning practice and planning education. Like all bridges, it is a combination of art, structure, and budget. However, the *Carolina Planning* bridge is unique in that it must be continuously rebuilt. Every year, a new team of editors must select important current articles, design the layout, arrange for printing, and collaborate with the North Carolina APA officers on a publication budget and distribution plan. Remarkably, this challenging enterprise has succeeded year after year for almost three decades.

Over its history, *Carolina Planning* has steadily contributed to planning knowledge. As a faculty advisor to the student editorial staff, I have been privileged to take part in this publication since its first issue in 1975. Student initiative led to its creation, and it has always been a student-edited, student-written, and student-managed publication. As such, it is the oldest and, in my opinion, the best continuously-published student planning journal in the nation, and probably, in the world.

The first editor, Nancy L. Grden, described the publishing vision. Planning students will be the primary contributors, but contributions from faculty and professional planners will also be encouraged. She laid out the objectives of the publication:

- 1) To provide a forum for the discussion of planning problems, issues, and techniques related to the practice of planning in North Carolina;
- 2) To enhance the awareness public officials have about planning in North Carolina and elsewhere; and
- 3) To provide for the improvement of exchange of planning information between the Department of City and Regional Planning and other governmental and academic institutions in the state and nation.

*Carolina Planning* editorial teams have been remarkably true to that initial vision. From the start, its editors have focused on providing a forum for connecting planning practice and planning education. For example, the first issue covered such topics as water and sewer extensions as a technique for guiding development, a comparison of land use legislation in western North Carolina and Vermont, regional planning in the North Carolina coastal area, and an analysis of the effects of the state's industrial mix on labor force earnings. Articles in the recent Spring 2003 issue covered manufactured housing in North Carolina, the effect of commute time on employment, and case studies of sustainable development in Charlotte and Atlanta. In between, authors have looked at a rich and diverse slate of relevant planning topics.

What has made *Carolina Planning* so successful for so long? Advisors to student publications from other planning schools often ask this question. I believe that success stems from three elements. The first is the vision of linking the content to practice, rather than simply to theory and academic views, which broadens the audience. The second is the imagination and creativity of the student editors and contributing authors, which ensures that the articles embody solid analysis and best practice. And the third is the unique funding arrangement, in which the Department of City and Regional Planning provides editorial assistantships from the John A. Parker Trust, while the NC APA Chapter pays for a group subscription for planning departments in the state, which provides for the printing budget.

*Carolina Planning* set out to be a forum for discussion of planning in and for North Carolina. Its first two years were funded by a grant from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, as well as contributions from the Department's Alumni Association. Since then, it has learned to sustain itself, including broadening its scope to the southeast region. With continued collaboration among its stakeholders, *Carolina Planning* will remain a sustainable bridge linking planning practice and education on through the twenty-first century.

