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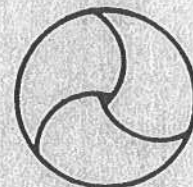
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# COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

TOWARD AN AIP CONSENSUS ON THE  
PROFESSION'S ROLES AND PURPOSES

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*by Melvin M. Webber*

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## TOWARD AN AIP CONSENSUS ON THE PROFESSION'S ROLES AND PURPOSES

by Melvin M. Webber

This essay was initially commissioned by Harold F. Wise, Chairman of the 1963 AIP Government Relations and Planning Policy Conference, and in an earlier version it served as one of a group of conference working documents. It is published here both for its general interest to readers of the *Journal*, and, at the request of the conferees, to serve as a basis for continued discussion within the Institute.

### I A TIME FOR RE-EXAMINATION

The period of postwar prosperity has launched what appears to be a golden age in city planning. Keynoters at professional meetings have been proclaiming the coming-of-age to ever-larger audiences of men who are themselves struck by their sudden popularity and by their marks on the city's skyline. Never before have we been accorded such status as we now enjoy; never have so many governmental and civic leaders been so openly dependent upon our counsel; never has the American city planning movement been in a position to influence the welfare of so many Americans so profoundly. And yet, never has the path of righteousness been less clearly marked out.

Dating from 1909, when the first National Conference on City Planning was called to consider the problems of population congestion, the city planning movement has been fueled by deep-rooted concerns for the conditions of urban life. The plight of the immigrant groups, crowding into the big-city tenements, provoked a wave of social reform in search of effective means for attacking poverty and for accelerating social mobility. A sense of crisis and personal mission marked those early beginnings of the city planning, housing, social welfare, public health, and the related helping professions; but by now, despite the persistence of immigrant poverty and despair, these have been considerably calmed. The natural course of professionalization has taken its toll, by turning many would-be missionaries into security-conscious bureaucrats. But, potentially more important than that, the processes of professionalization are also establishing the channels through which the findings of the social sciences are being fed into practice settings. One result of the expanding flow of knowledge is the transformation of many do-gooders into good-doers, as Meyerson once phrased

*Author's Note: The lively responses provoked by the conference draft of this essay assure me that it touches upon some sensitive issues that are of deep concern to a great many planners. I have no illusions about the adequacy of the present formulation, especially today when so much careful rethinking is in process and when developments in theory and method are accumulating so rapidly. But I do hope that it can serve as a useful foil for a new round of deliberation on the profession's emerging roles and purposes.*

*I have profited from the many comments that were volunteered on the conference draft, and especially from the detailed criticisms by Paul Davidoff, Herbert J. Gans, Frederick O'R. Hayes, Morton Hoppenfeld, Roger Montgomery, Janet Reiner, Van Beuren Stanbery, and my colleagues at Resources for the Future: Joseph L. Fisher, Jerome W. Milliman, Harvey S. Perloff, and Lowdon Wingo, Jr.*

Melvin M. Webber is Associate Professor of City Planning at the University of California, Berkeley, and was formerly editor of the AIP Journal. He was on leave of absence to Resources for the Future, Inc., in Washington, D.C. at the time this essay was prepared.

it. Another result is the introduction of a crop of new doubts about our traditional approaches to human betterment.

For generations it had been generally understood that the physical environment was a major determinant of social behavior and a direct contributor to individuals' welfare. Having accepted professional responsibility for the physical environment, the city planner was thus accorded a key role as agent of human welfare: the clearly prescribed therapy for the various social pathologies was improvement of the physical setting. If only well-designed and well-sited houses, playgrounds, and community facilities could be substituted for the crowded and dilapidated housing and neighborhoods of the city's slums, then the incidence of crime, delinquency, narcotics addiction, alcoholism, broken homes, and mental illness would tumble. Acculturation of ethnic, racial, and other minority groups to the American, middle-class, urban ways-of-life but awaited their introduction to the American, middle-class, physical environment.

As the findings of systematic research into the relations between social-and-physical aspects of environments and social behavior have been accumulating, however, what were once stable pillars of understanding are melting down to folklore, heartfelt wishes, and, more typically, partial truths embedded within complex networks of causes. The simple one-to-one cause-and-effect links that once tied houses and neighborhoods to behavior and welfare are coming to be seen as but strands in highly complex webs that, in turn, are woven by the intricate and subtle relations that mark social, psychic, economic, and political systems. The simple clarity of the city planning profession's role is thus being dimmed by the clouds of complexity, diversity, and the resulting uncertainty that seem to be the inevitable consequences of scientific inquiry and of the deeper understanding that inquiry brings.

But simultaneously, while social scientists are questioning city planning's central doctrine of physical environmental determinism, other critics are decrying the powerful consequences that are alleged to follow in the wake of recent physical developments. On the one hand the suburban housing tracts are accused of spawning a generation of deprived children, who are being reared by neurotic, coffee-addicted mothers in a matriarchal society from which traffic-stressed fathers and most other dissimilar people are all but excluded. On the other hand, central city redevelopment is charged with dispossessing lower-income groups of their preferred habitats, inflicting psychic disturbance, and destroying their social communities. In turn, the design of the new high-rise housing is indicted for breeding a new, sterile, culturally disinherited species.

It is very appropriate, then, in the midst of these seemingly conflicting contentions, that we should again seek to re-examine our roles as agents in the service of the city's people. We may quite properly ask ourselves again, what are our purposes? In what ways can we, who hold such large responsibility for the physical city, so conduct our affairs as to positively affect the lives of its residents?

## II TO EXTEND ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY

The city planner's responsibilities relate primarily to the physical and locational aspects of development within a local government's jurisdiction. Although this focus of attention derives in part from the idea of environmental determinism and in part from the belief that paramount values are intrinsic to the physical city, his activities have been directed to these features of the city for important instrumental reasons as well.

Local governments are charged with building certain large and costly public works which, once constructed, are likely to exert powerful and continuing influences upon locational choices made in the private sector of the urban economy. In turn, some of these choices may contribute to changes in the social-psychic-economic-political environments within which people live, and they may therefore bear at least indirect influences upon their welfare. Decisions on these investments therefore demand the most deliberate efforts to improve rationality—to help assure *one*, that the distribution of the benefits and the costs among the city's publics is consciously intended and democratically warranted, *two*, that levels and priorities of investments are so staged as to induce the desired repercussions in the private markets, and *three*, that public resources are used for those projects and programs promising the highest social payoffs.

Although it is true that we have overestimated the roles that buildings play in shaping social behavior, it is nonetheless also true that some aspects of the physical environment can bring appreciable direct benefits to the city's residents. Imaginative and carefully designed buildings, streets, and open spaces are in themselves direct rewards of an advanced society; and the visual qualities of the physical environment warrant considerably more attention than they have been receiving. The beautiful city remains a goal we have yet to achieve.

Decent, sanitary, and spacious housing is itself one of the salient attributes of the good life, and our effort to accomplish the Congressional objective of "a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family" properly remains a high-priority goal to which our profession is dedicated. Similarly, the range of facilities that municipalities construct—as accommodations for the various health, education, recreation, and other human-service agencies—necessarily affect the qualities of the services rendered; and, as inseparable aspects of the services, these facilities can contribute to full lives for the beneficiaries.

But the locational arrangements of facilities and activities bear upon the qualities of urban living in more subtle ways, too. The urban settlement has always stood at the center of civilization—the place at which the largest varieties of goods, services, and ideas are produced and distributed, and, therefore, where the most, and the most diverse, human interaction occurs. Here is where the individual is able most readily to tap the accumulated riches of the culture. This is because bare physical distance works as a barrier to human interaction. As its unique and most important commodity, the city offers reduced distances between partners to a friendship, and between sellers and buyers, employers and employed, informers and informed, helpers and helped. Metropolitan areas have flourished in our age precisely because that type of spatial arrangement has expanded people's opportunities to find fruitful associations with others.

Having been assigned responsibility for guiding land use patterns, we seek, then, to induce those patterns that will effectively increase accessibility to the diverse opportunities for productive social intercourse that are latent in an advanced civilization.

Recent improvements in transportation, combined with recent increases in incomes and other familiar changes, have made it possible for many families and firms to gain spacious quarters in the amiable outlying areas, while they simultaneously endeavor to maintain accessibility to expanding varieties of activities and sources of learning. In this time of rapid suburban development, we are striving, through further improvements in transportation and communication, to help these groups reconcile their new-found locational freedom with their growing capacities to pursue diverse interests with persons who are spatially removed.

Some classes of business and industrial establishments continue to depend upon the external economies offered by concentrated business districts, while the society as a whole continues to depend upon the flow of information and ideas that concentrated centers have traditionally fostered. With mounting sensitivity to these economic and cultural imperatives, we are trying to encourage the formation of new centers of various types and sizes and to redevelop and stabilize existing centers as the communication foci of a large-scale urban society.

For some segments of the lower-income populations, locational inaccessibility to employment opportunities, when compounded with skill deficiencies and with discriminatory practices, erects an additional handicap which acts to further depress earning capacities. Especially for Negroes seeking work in the suburbanizing manufacturing and wholesaling industries, exclusion from the suburban housing market couples with deficient outbound commuter service to make these growing job opportunities relatively inaccessible, while opportunities near their central-city homes are contracting. Thus, the spatial relationships of residences and employment-places for the various classes of employees and jobs remain a central issue for the profession; here, improved land-use patterns and transportation systems can directly help to raise the levels of human welfare. Housing stocks in the lower and lower-middle price ranges need to be expanded in all parts of the metropolitan areas; the filtering process needs to be accelerated; the entire metropolitan housing market needs to be

opened to those who are now excluded by reason of race, religion, or national origin; and transportation systems need to be developed that can serve all groups within the region.

But while physical accessibility is a necessary condition for realizing latent opportunities, it is not the sufficient condition. Differences in social status and race, shortage of job opportunities, inadequate education, low income, and personal inadequacy are likely to be far more serious obstructions to the social and economic mobility that leads to the rewards of the society. Especially for the 16 to 25 per cent of Americans who have yet to achieve a minimum acceptable standard of living, a multi-frontal attack on inaccessibility is necessary.

We face the prospect of continuing underemployment in some regions of the nation, and accelerated automation of industrial and clerical processes is eliminating many of the least-skilled jobs at the very time when the postwar babies are swelling the labor force. The chronic despair of so many central-city residents is accentuating their plight; for, when expectations for betterment are low, so too are aspirations. And thus, job shortages, sense of personal insufficiency, poor performance in school, deficient cognitive, occupational, and social skills, rejection by the larger society, and a range of other disabling conditions resonate upon each other in self-perpetuating waves.

America must demonstrate that cultural deprivation and the life of the slum need not be the permanent condition for any of her people. By opening new opportunities for learning new skills and for earning a better living, we can help those who are dependent upon outside supports to gain the self-respect and the dignity they have been denied. Especially for Negroes, Puerto Ricans, and Mexican-Americans, who are encountering the most numerous obstacles along the paths of social mobility, we must demonstrate that America's affluence can be as accessible as it was to the European immigrants who preceded them in our urban centers. Especially for them, the city must become the school for learning the means of earning the city's riches.

But it is not only the residents of slum and deteriorating areas whom we seek to serve. Our expanding aged populations, relieved of their roles as productive members of the society, must find new ways of contributing their skills and knowledge for the welfare of others and, more important, for recapturing their own sense of personal pride and dignity. The large-scale housing projects for the aged, removed from the lifestream of the larger community, are not likely to contribute to these ends. And so, we are searching for new housing arrangements and new social programs to help them remain active members of the communities in which they live. Similarly, the middle-class majority groups, although usually self-supporting, nonetheless require a wide variety of governmental services and facilities that will further expand their opportunities for self-improvement and for creative contributions to the welfare of the total community.

For all these groups, there are probably no more direct routes to human betterment than improvements in the educational systems and stimulation of the regional economies. No other public activities are likely to be more effective in equipping individuals for self-dependency and growth.

Although the locations of physical facilities for schools and economic activities are certainly of but secondary importance to their successes, they are nonetheless contributive. The physical planner does indeed have a significant role to play in pursuing the larger social purposes, but his greatest potential contribution will be realized only if he can accurately appraise the relative effectiveness of the various servicing and facilities-building programs in which he has a hand.

### III TO INTEGRATE LARGER WHOLES

We are coming to comprehend the city as an extremely complex social system, only some aspects of which are expressed as physical buildings or as locational arrangements. As the parallel, we are coming to understand that each aspect lies in a reciprocal causal relation to all others, such that each is defined by, and has meaning only with respect to, its *relations* to all others.

As one result of this broadened conception of the city system, we can no longer speak of the physical city versus the social city or the economic city or the political city or the intellectual city. We can no longer dissociate a physical building, for example, from the social meanings that it carries for its users and viewers or from



the social and economic functions of the activities that are conducted within it. If distinguishable at all, the distinction is that of constituent components, as with metals comprising an alloy.

With improved understanding of economic and social systems, the idea of "capital" is being extended beyond "things" to encompass the human, intellectual, and organizational resources as well. The skills and capacities of our populations, the accumulated knowledge and wisdom of the culture, and the ways in which we organize ourselves for the joint conduct of our affairs, all contribute to our productive capacities and wealth in ways that are inseparable from those of the physical equipment and natural resources we use.

Planning for the locational and physical aspects of our cities must therefore be conducted in concert with planning for all other programs that governmental and non-governmental agencies conduct. Public capital-improvement programs and budgets must allocate financial and other resources among all constructing and serving activities, in an effort to create the most effective programmatic mix of facilities and services of the various types.

As the minimum condition necessary to this task, each municipal agency should be expected to trace out the probable and significant consequences that its programs would have upon the aspects of the city that other agencies focus upon. In this way, each agency would be better informed about the likely conditions in the future and hence better able to make rational recommendations of its own. But mere exchange of good forecasts is not enough.

All proposed programs must be subjected to systematic valuation, if intelligent choices are to be made among them. The new sophistication developing in benefit-cost analysis is beginning to make it possible to appraise a heterogeneous array of proposals against a common set of criteria. Such a valuative method would permit comparisons of the relative social payoffs that might accrue from pursuing one bundle of policies versus another; for example, in assessing the likely returns from alternative social-welfare programs, alternative economic-development programs, and alternative public-works projects. Similarly, it would permit economic public investments to be made by identifying more effective and less costly program packages that might be substituted for less effective and more costly ones.

With improved capacities to forecast probable consequences and to assess probable payoffs, planners in the various governmental agencies should be more effective investment counsellors to their legislatures. Improved data systems will permit planners continuously to meter the states of affairs of the various population groups, the economy, the municipal fisc, the physical plant, and other aspects of the city. Improved theory, describing and explaining the processes of city life and city growth, will permit us more sensitively to identify those crucial points of public intervention that are appropriate to accomplishing specified objectives. The newly developing decision models—which rely upon the new data, the new theory, and, equally, upon the goal hypotheses of politicians and planners—are already permitting us to simulate what would happen *if* given policies were adopted, and thus to pretest the relative effectiveness of alternative courses of action in accomplishing stated ends.

But none of these is sufficient. Improving capacity for rationality must be joined with improving wisdom—there is no other name. It is *here* that the road forks, the one route leading to technocratic control by elites, the other to guided expansion of individual freedom. That map has often been misread to place the fork at junctions that are sometimes labeled "art" and "science" or sometimes as "intuition" and "reason." But we now know that those signposts are false, that those who would be planners must thereby be artists-scientists—no less than that the so-called artist is thereby rigorous analyst of the real world and that the so-called scientist is thereby imaginative and perceptive innovator. Whatever his professional affiliation, the governmental planner may boast that proud title only if he is at once insightful critic, informed analyst, and ingenious designer of action programs, in turn aimed by images of social betterment that are built of reason and wisdom.

There is cause for much optimism in all these respects. Now, for the first time in democratic society, we are acquiring the conceptual and the technical competence to undertake comprehensive policies planning. Now that we are learning how to

predict systematically the kinds, scales, and distributions of benefits and costs that various public programs generate, we can more effectively and more wisely integrate the programs of the various agencies into mutually reinforcing program bundles. Now, when so many thoughtful and creative minds are being turned to the big urban-policy issues, the rate of social invention is increasing. If it were possible to gain consensus on objectives, we would be more likely than ever before to succeed in our efforts to attain them.

Of course, ideal solutions to problems, full identification of probable consequences, and faultless evaluation of alternative actions are all patently impossible. We will always lack perfect knowledge; mature judgment will always be too scarce; and the limitations of human intellectual capacities will never permit adequate comprehension of the urban system's complexities. The best will always elude us; only the better can ever be found.

Even so, the better is seldom self-evident; for the city's many publics rarely hold mutually compatible objectives. Some students of urban politics have been describing the city as a jungle in which overlapping interest groups of all sorts compete avidly for favor and advantage in pursuing their separate ends. Because the rewards and penalties of the political game are so large, few are willing, voluntarily, to sacrifice personal gain for even the most studied and judicious image of a "public welfare." The recent spate of studies on decision-making in city councils reveal a persistent unwillingness of elected officials openly to confront hotly contested issues, preferring to deal with them covertly or to regard them as "technical matters" for professional staffs to decide.

In pursuit of their respective images of the public welfare and of democratic decision-making, the professionals in city hall have been seeking to change the rules of that political game. A major ploy in this effort is simply to supply better information and better analysis and then to open the information channels to public view; for with reduction of ignorance and secrecy goes a reduction in special advantage. Similarly, by publicly exposing probable social consequences of legislative actions, legislators are less likely to respond insensibly and less likely to retreat from political responsibility through the "technical matter" route. And, when confronted with fuller information of market conditions and governmental plans, the private investor is less dependent upon special advantage, for he will often find his private interest really is compatible with the public interest.

Among the more powerful of the interest groups affecting governmental policies are the professional staffs within municipal government, who hold vested interests in their own brands of programs and projects. Each tends to see the road to social betterment through the biasing lenses of its own profession's filters, and each therefore competes with the others for the limited financial resources they must divide. Physical planners are no less guilty of this sort of professional partiality than are their colleagues in public health, education, law enforcement, or engineering. But there are many hopeful signs suggesting that this narrow perception is giving way to a more holistic view of the policy-making task.

Professional staffs are now working together with a commonality of interests that may be unprecedented. The current beginnings of local social planning councils and inter-agency coordinating committees reflect a growing search for the social consequences that really matter, and a growing recognition that the web of interdependencies inexorably unites them all. In some cities collaboration is already being supplanted by co-ordination, and in a few leading cities systematic integration of programs is being attempted. Despite the inevitable rigidities of municipal bureaucracy, some agencies *are* searching for higher-level optima to which their own programs might contribute.

Much more than local integration of plans will be necessary, however. Many state and federal programs operate as indirect, and frequently unintended, influences upon the choices and the opportunities that are opened to people in cities and metropolitan areas. The capital-gains provisions of the federal and state income-tax laws, the mortgage-insurance programs of the VA and the FHA, the Federal Reserve System's controls on rediscount rates, the changes in accessibility affected by transportation and communication facilities and rates, the federal water and power projects,

the allocation of defense contracts, and numerous other actions of non-local governments modify locational market conditions to which individual firms and households respond. Although the effects of these indirect controls may be more difficult to predict, they are surely more influential in shaping urban-settlement and land-use patterns than are some of the more direct land-use controls.

The construction and grant programs of federal and state agencies—in education, health, transportation, housing, economic development, urban renewal, delinquency control, and related fields—still lack the integration that would permit common ends to be sought. The ideas of the workable program and the community renewal program need to be extended substantively, as ways of raising the quality standards for local planning and as further means of assuring that the many interacting local, state, and federal activities are effectively fitted together.

City planners are likely to be key members in the new partnerships among professionals and politicians at the several governmental levels. The planners have long occupied a uniquely important position in local government, having been the custodians of the holistic view and the utopian tradition. The profession's history has been distinguished by a restless concern for those intangible attributes of the city that are too easily neglected in the day-to-day concentration on short-run problems and partial solutions. The city planners who have earned our highest respect are those whose visions of betterment became epidemic in their communities, raising civic aspirations and forcing solutions of specific problems to be sought within the larger and longer-term policy frameworks they helped establish.

As men who have specialized in the general, the truly effective city planners have functioned as catalysts for synthesizing the developmental plans prepared by the more specialized groups in government. By bringing representatives of public and private agencies together, they have helped to create new amalgams that better reflect both the separate and the mutual goals of the various participants. Individual plans for components have thus been reframed to accord with criteria established by the plans for the next-larger systems of components that, in turn, conform to more comprehensive over-views of the future and of the community's objectives.

Thus, for example, community housing policy is now typically treated as an integral aspect of over-all community social-welfare and land-use policies. Highway and transit facilities, only recently regarded by the transportation engineers as devices for satisfying traffic demand, are now treated as both servers and shapers of the larger land-use and accessibility relationships. In urban renewal the focus of attention is being expanded from the decaying slum buildings to include the larger life environments of the disadvantaged occupants. In turn, this is leading to more enlightened programs in community development, to individualized approaches to human development, and to more humane procedures for family relocation.

In these and numerous other ways, the city planner's realistic idealism, his orientation to the whole city, and his focus upon future conditions have placed him in a position of intellectual leadership. With increasing numbers and varieties of skilled specialists now entering the city's employ, the city planner's outlook will become increasingly important, and his educational mission more difficult. But simultaneously, with improved understanding of the relationships among the various aspects of the city, rational integration will become increasingly possible.

Of course, we claim no monopoly on knowledge, foresight, or wisdom in the urban field. Many of the functions that city planners have traditionally performed are now being assumed by others who are better equipped to conduct specific studies, to lead specific programs, and to integrate them with others. In the presence of increasingly sophisticated theory and method, the planner's conventional reliance upon personal experience and private intuition is unlikely to be accepted as readily as it was in the past. Unless he can keep apace of the intellectual developments in urban theory and planning method, it is quite possible that his integrative roles will be largely assumed by some new group of planners, oriented to more comprehensive wholes, while the city planner becomes a specialist in land use, community facilities, and urban design. In this respect the future is indeterminate, but the profession has no jurisdictional claims to protect. We do stand prepared, though, to participate actively in these endeavors and to represent a human purpose and a holistic approach

to the city's problems and opportunities which, we are persuaded, are most likely to increase the welfare of the people, who, as Henry Churchill succinctly put it, *are* the city.

#### IV TO EXPAND FREEDOM IN A PLURALISTIC SOCIETY

As the comprehensiveness of municipal planning expands and as operating programs become more effectively integrated, the sheer efficiency and inflexibility of it all may inadvertently reduce the range of some citizens' choices. Unlike unorganized or ineffective series of separate programs, the mutual reinforcements of an all-out, co-ordinated effort can build a rolling momentum, which, should it be poorly designed, could seriously hurt some people before the course of action could be redirected.

This could be especially troublesome for the minority racial and ethnic groups whose value systems and behavior differ greatly from those of the middle-class professionals who design the programs intended to help them. We, in the several welfare professions, have frequently assumed that our ways are best ways, that our aspirations are or should be their aspirations, that a neighborhood designed to suit us is just the type that would best suit them.

There is now a growing appreciation, though, that cultural diversity is an intrinsic characteristic of our society, and we are coming to accept this kind of pluralism as a societal goal deliberately to be pursued. As one of its paramount functions, then, planning in a democratic society is being seen as a process by which the community seeks to increase the individual's opportunities to choose for himself—including the freedom to consume the society's produce and the freedom to choose to be different.

During the course of our history, the nation has learned that we cannot rely upon either chance or unseen hands to assure widened choice and abundance for all. Expanding freedom requires deliberate governmental actions, designed both to extend and to restrict individuals' liberties, as the contextual circumstances demand. To the end of expanding freedom and increasing the nation's wealth, a variety of controls that restrict individuals' liberties have by now been firmly established in custom and in law. Among the more notable are the anti-trust laws that seek to avoid the concentration of power in too few hands and to increase productivity; the regulations of the various public-utility commissions that establish prices and set rules of conduct; the pure food and drug laws that seek to protect consumers from the errors or the wiles of the industry; and the various municipal regulations designed to improve health and increase safety. Any restriction of liberties is of course fraught with hazard, for it is too easy either to invoke the doctrine of majority rule in usurping individual rights or to invoke the doctrine of individual rights in limiting majority freedom. A number of guiding principles are clear, however.

1 Certain regulations may be justified as means of forestalling *social costs*, that is, preventing one person from imposing hardships upon others without compensating them for their losses. If the spill-over effects of an individual's actions are likely to harm others, those actions may be prohibited, thus converting potential social costs into private costs to be borne by the actor. Or, if it is not possible to avoid the actions, he may be required to pay the persons who suffer the costs, again requiring that the actor bear the burden. (This is, of course, the prime justification for nuisance-control zoning, pollution-control legislation, and, indeed, the fundamental proposition underlying the police power.)

2 Some regulations and public programs find their justification in explicit political decisions to *redistribute income* among the populations. In matters of this kind the polity is sovereign; and income-redistribution decisions may be based upon purely moral grounds, so long as due process is respected. (Examples of income-redistributive measures are by now plentiful. They include public housing, public education, aid to dependent children, recreational programs, and the property and income taxes that finance them.)

Each of these two circumstances involves transfers of costs, benefits, or prerogatives from some individuals to others, with governmental agencies serving as coercive brokers to the transactions. Total wealth of the community is not necessarily affected

by these transfers. Other types of governmental activities, however, do seek to increase the total wealth.

3 Under special circumstances *all individuals profit by yielding certain of their rights* to a central authority, because the total returns to the community are thereby increased, and each person's share can be greater. This is in the nature of an economic game in which all players are winners. (Examples here include popular allegiance to a governmental system of legislatures, executives, and courts, whose stability is prerequisite to individual security and freedom; the universal acceptance of the traffic signal's authority, which assures time savings and greater safety to all; and the assignment to governments of exclusive production rights for the "collective goods," such as national defense and city streets that, by their very nature, are available to everybody if they are supplied at all.)

4 In a similar way, tax-supported *information services* serve to foster increased productivity by increasing opportunities for making more rational private decisions, by stabilizing investment expectations, and by raising aspiration levels concerning the community's development. (Examples are the federal censuses and the new state and metropolitan data-reporting systems that serve to inform all interested members of the community about the current states of affairs; and governmental declarations of intent, as expressed in city plans and budgets, that aid private persons and groups in their efforts to anticipate future conditions, and that may encourage them to conform to collective aims.)

Having been closely associated with zoning regulations and land-clearance procedures, we are well aware of the vices that can be committed under the general-welfare sanctions. These controls have too often dispossessed some individuals of their property rights in the name of majority benefits, and they have too often been used as instruments of political power to further the private ends of some groups at the expense of others. Zoning and redevelopment programs carry unavoidable income-redistribution features that make them particularly susceptible to favored application and make them extremely difficult to apply equitably. As one reflection, large-lot zoning and exacting building codes in suburban municipalities have recently been used as tools for social discrimination and as unnecessary constraints upon individual freedom. Some aspects of urban redevelopment programs have been similarly criticized for the hurts they have imposed upon groups they have displaced.

We would prefer that these and other controls be applied with greater restraint and with greater sensitivity to the question of who benefits and who sacrifices. To accomplish the larger society's purposes, we look to the gradual reduction of controls on individual choice when benefits cannot be explicitly demonstrated and warranted. To this end, we seek ordinance revisions favoring greater permissiveness and greater flexibility for individual actions.

Although we recognize the necessity to centralize certain kinds of decisions in governments, a major purpose in setting these decisions should be to expand the possibilities for decentralized decisions—to increase the number of options that are thereby opened to individual persons. Through explicitly goal-directed investments in public-service programs and in public works, governments can help expand the volume and the diversity of the society's produce and, in turn, can help increase individuals' capacities selectively to consume it.

The history of public education in America reveals a model for other governmental programs to emulate, for here the over-riding purpose has been to give, rather than to take—to open, rather than to foreclose choices. Those who have been successfully served by our public schools have been better equipped to support themselves and have been less dependent upon the social welfare services than are their less fortunate neighbors. In turn, they are able to contribute to and then consume the growing varieties of goods, services, and ideas that prophesy the eventual elimination of poverty from the nation.

Since we are a long way from achieving equal opportunity, however, our plans must account for wide variations in degrees of freedom and in capacities to consume. Poverty and the deprivations of racial minority groups persist as the most pressing social issues confronting municipal governments. They call for an all-out reappraisal of programmatic priorities and for imaginative new programs aimed, above all, at

increasing a sense of personal dignity and at fostering positive images of self and group.

Many of our present municipal programs are proving inadequate to this need. Lower-income families, who must budget larger proportions of their earnings for rent, are typically more eager to find cheap housing than they are in getting the modern housing facilities that middle-income families enjoy. Similarly, they must place higher priorities on developing low-cost transit service to employment places than they put on the amenities of open space and recreational facilities that others are seeking. Enforced relocation into higher-priced but superior housing is not likely to improve their standards of living if it requires reductions in the food budget. Declines in transit service, which may be tolerable for those who can afford automobiles, can be severely damaging for those who cannot.

Family- and youth-guidance services, occupational retraining programs, empathetic teachers and compatible school curricula, professionalization of low-skilled service jobs, inexpensive health services, the removal of racial bars, and increased employment opportunities are certain to be more immediately helpful to the city's underprivileged groups than are many of the community facilities that now absorb large proportions of municipal budgets. Although many of these activities do not fall within the city planner's areas of special competence, he is nonetheless a key agent in setting municipal-investment priorities; and he is thus in a position to guide municipal policies toward the issues that really matter.

Our purpose is to find those wealth-increasing approaches that will benefit *all* members of the society. Where such consummate returns are not possible, we seek to design those minimum controls that will avoid abuses by forestalling probabilities of individuals or groups harming others. Where income-redistribution effects are either unavoidable or publicly intended, we would have the gains go to those most in need of help. And when sacrifices must be made, especially when they must be made by those least able to sustain them, we would have them accompanied by commensurate payments.

City planning is moving through a period of rapid change—some have called it a revolution, so dramatic is the transformation likely to be. The major sign is a growing sophistication. The main prospect is a large increase in the profession's effectiveness. The chief stimulant has been the injection of a large body of theory and method that has been accumulating in the social and behavioral sciences over the decades and which, until recently, the profession had been largely immune to. Now, the problems of urbanization are attracting the attention of men from all the arts, humanities, and social sciences; and they are allying themselves with the urban-policy professions in what is fast becoming a saturation of talent into urban policy-making.

The infusion of new blood into the planning profession has brought with it a growing appreciation of the organizational complexities marking the societal systems that the city mirrors. Concomitantly, attention is being redirected from the form of the city to the processes that relate the interdependent aspects of the city one to the other. And, in turn, with improved understanding of how the city-system works, our capacities for effective intervention and willful change are improving rapidly. But effectiveness and will can come to nothing if they are not guided by wisdom. Worse, the damages wrought can be severe, the more because the levers of contemporary government sweep wide arcs.

The contemporary planners inherit a proud tradition of service, an egalitarian ethic, and a pragmatic orientation to betterment that are as old as the early social reform movements that spawned the profession. The caretaker of the idea of progress during the long years when it lay in disrepute in respectable quarters, the planner is now being wooed as the Cinderella of the urban ball. The resulting marriage of the social sciences and the planning profession holds out the promise that a new level of intelligence will be merged with noble purpose, in confronting the problems and the opportunities of the day. And then, the payoffs of this new partnership will come, if they are to come at all, in imaginative social inventions that will increase the city's riches, while distributing them to all the city's people.

