

GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

OFFICE OF RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION

*no action
OK*

RESEARCH PROJECT TERMINATION

Date: June 12, 1975

Project Title: **Public Involvement in Regional Development Plan Update**

Project No: **E-17-610**

Principal Investigator: **G. E. Willeke**

Sponsor: **Atlanta Regional Commission**

Effective Termination Date: 12/31/74

Clearance of Accounting Charges: 1/31/75

COPIES TO:

Principal Investigator
School Director
Dean of the College
Director of Research Administration
Associate Controller (2)
Security-Reports-Property Office ✓
Patent and Inventions Coordinator

Library, Technical Reports Section
Rich Electronic Computer Center
Photographic Laboratory
Terminated Project File No. _____
Other _____

PROGRESS REPORT

TO: Atlanta Regional Commission
Attention: Joel Stone

FROM: Gene E. Willeke, Associate Professor, Graduate Program in
City Planning, Georgia Institute of Technology

DATE: October 17, 1974

SUBJECT: Public Involvement in the Regional Development Plan Update

INTRODUCTION

This progress deals with activities undertaken since July, 1974 in which I have had some part. Thus, it does not deal with all the public involvement activities of ARC that bear on the Regional Development Plan Update. In particular, the activities of the Community Development Advisory Council are not discussed in depth.

The report includes four parts: What has been done, Evaluation of Activities, What is Needed Next, and a Proposed Activity Program.

What has been done?

In July and August, a report on the Evaluation Results for the first three alternatives was written and disseminated. A number of briefings and public meetings were held. A WETV show was produced and several radio talk shows were presented by ARC staff.

Evaluation of Activities

The public involvement activities consumed a great deal of staff time during this period. The short time span between the availability of evaluation results and the Board working session of September 19-20 necessitated such a crash effort just to do a basic dissemination of information.

A large number of questions were raised and comments given. A few were in the form of prepared statements. With some exceptions, both questions and comments were immediate reactions to the information presented at the briefings and public information meetings. Few had prior access to the data. The staff likewise had had little time to digest and analyze the results. Not until near the end of August were staff evaluations (contained in the report on recommendations for Alternatives IV and V) of the implications of the first three alternatives available for presentation and discussion.

The briefings, public meetings, WETV show, and news coverage have largely served to create an awareness of what the three alternatives were, and what some of the implications for population and employment distribution in the region might be. There was not a high degree of informed discussion because the public had had too little time to digest the data and consider the implications. Nor was there extensive staff-citizen dialogue on the implications of the first three alternatives or on what other alternatives might consist of.

The questions and comments raised at the meetings have prompted further staff studies and have modified staff interpretations of the data. Moreover, they appear to have influenced the content of the alternatives presented for consideration in the second round.

There was some criticism regarding publicity for the public meetings. These criticisms were voiced at one or more of the public meetings. Publicity consisted of notices to everyone on the mailing list, newspaper and radio announcements, flyers and posters in the community near the meeting place, and announcements to the Advisory Councils. Meeting places were selected in consultation with members of the Commission from each geographic area and some members of the Community Development Advisory Council. With the limited amount of time, staff availability, and funds for this activity, it would have been difficult to do more.

The more significant problem is that to have large attendance at public meetings, there needs to be substantial prior interest. This is achieved by more informal methods such as workshops, meetings with interested groups, etc., over a period of several months. Such an effort is proposed for the next several months. It would have been done earlier, but the staff felt there was so little information on the RDP to discuss with citizen groups that such efforts would be very frustrating to citizens. Indeed, data compilations were available to citizens within a few days of the time they were available to the staff.

Considerable interest in the RDP has been generated since July, 1974. We should capitalize on that interest, even though some of the interest is skeptical and antagonistic, to obtain meaningful discussion in the next several months. The Community Development Advisory Council should be more closely linked to the other citizen involvement activities so that they are not entirely separate activities.

What is Needed Next?

The new alternatives and their implications need to be explained, from the standpoint of each county and some of the major interests.

A jargon-free explanation of what is being done with these alternatives from a planning standpoint is needed.

The development controls need to be explained. This should include what they are, what they are expected to accomplish, why they were selected, etc..

As data are available on any portion of the alternatives, it should be put out, in bite-size chunks.

We need to find out more about who is interested in RDP and who should be interested and involved. While the ARC Board's actions may have been satisfactory to many elements of the regional community from a political standpoint, from a public involvement standpoint we have a ways to go. Self-identification can still be used more, though the Advisory Council should be asked for their advice, and staff identification also needs to be done. In future public meetings, it should be emphasized that all persons should fill out cards, whether or not they are already on the mailing list. We should know who is coming.

Before we get into another round of public meetings, some new policies on graphics are needed. The number of significant digits needs to be reduced. More useful trend lines and means of comparison need to be shown.

What to Do Next?

- A. To explain the implications of the new alternatives and what is being done with them:
 1. Prepare one or two page descriptions of each alternative, simply listing the elements and a map. Also list the studies to be performed on the alternatives.
 2. Prepare one or two page discussions of implications of all alternatives for each county (in comparative fashion). This would include elements of each alternative, with map; what functions those elements are intended to perform; perhaps also what the first three alternatives showed for the same geographic area.

3. Schedule a couple workshops to discuss the alternatives more fully. Could be limited to development controls or some part of the region. If development controls are chosen, or some other manageable unit, a familiarization tour could be scheduled. It would be logical to put this on for the CDAC and the Board. It could also be given for a specially assembled group.
- B. Issue progress reports or working papers as it becomes possible to do so, on results from evaluating the new alternatives.
 - C. Get the meeting cards into the hands of everybody who makes contacts with the public, through speeches, invitations to brief group, etc., so that we can build up our list with people who are interested in ARC work.
 - D. Develop a new policy on graphics that will facilitate communication.
 - E. Have discussions with some groups that made statements at public meetings. Suggested starter: Association to Revive Grant Park.

GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30332

April 16, 1975

GRADUATE
CITY PLANNING PROGRAM
ROOM 108, OLD C.E. BUILDING

MEMORANDUM

TO: Atlanta Regional Commission, Attention: Joel Stone
FROM: Gene E. Willeke, Associate Professor
SUBJECT: Final Report on Public Involvement Assistance in the RDP Update

During the latter part of 1974, there were essentially three public involvement activities in which I provided assistance to the Atlanta Regional Commission:

- a. The Summary of Public Involvement Activities,
- b. The December evaluation session, and
- c. Planning for the Development Controls workshop held at Georgia Tech on March 15, 1975.

My role in preparing the Summary of Public Involvement Activities was to supply certain information which I had about public involvement and to review the draft reports. This report was ultimately completed by ARC and distributed.

In December, I conducted an evaluation of the public involvement program. This was a combination evaluation and training session. The evaluation was done under my direction by ARC staff, with my comments. The education was performed simultaneously with the evaluation. It consisted of a demonstration of "nominal group technique", a technique developed and promulgated by Dr. Andre Delbecq at the University of Wisconsin. The evaluation was especially valuable, I thought, in this context because when the evaluation was finished, a new program for the next several months had also been prepared in outline form.

In late 1974, ARC staff adopted my recommendation that a workshop on development control policies be held sometime in early 1975. I prepared a draft outline of a workshop format which your staff modified somewhat and which then served as the basic approach ultimately followed in the Workshop. I agreed to play a role in putting on that workshop, after our contract had expired, under the auspices of the Graduate City Planning Program at Georgia Tech. After several discussions on format and sponsorship, the Workshop was held under the joint sponsorship of ARC, the Atlanta Bar Association, the American Institute of Planners, and the Graduate City Planning Program at Georgia Tech. The workshop was a successful undertaking, in my view, with attendance of about 150 and numerous useful comments coming from the Workshop. The general evaluation by workshop participants seemed to be favorable and there was some desire for a future workshop to deal with implementation problems.

ARC/page 2

All work connected with the Regional Development Plan update, to be done by Georgia Tech, has now been completed. The experience has been a valuable one from our standpoint. I trust it has been useful to ARC. If we can be of further assistance, we will be glad to discuss it with you.

GEW/ljd