



PLANNING NORTHWEST

POPULATIONS TRENDS ARE SHIFTING TO A NEW AMERICAN RURALISM

Richard H. Carson

American society has become more urban and less rural according to every census taken since 1790. Only in 1820 did the balance momentarily shift. However, the technological advances of the last decade already are shifting the population trends toward a New American Ruralism.

THE CHANGING PARADIGM

The 20th century was not kind to rural America. By the end of the century, the rural areas were losing population and were in economic ruin. The rural resource economy collapsed.

The combination of dwindling resources, as well as increased environmental and land use regulation, led to the closure of mines, fisheries and forests. Corporate and mechanized agriculture reduced the need for workers. Finally, the new global order has let foreign competitors undercut the price of domestic resource products. The only alternative left was to pursue a tourism economic development strategy with low-paying jobs.

According to the United

States Department of Agriculture (USDA), 25 percent of Americans live in rural areas.¹ Since 1990, nearly 75 percent of the nation's 2,304 rural counties have gained population.² The USDA also notes that:

*"The decade of the 1990s has been a period of rebound in rural and small town population growth as more people move into nonmetro counties than are moving out. The nonmetro population grew by 5.3 million, or 10.3 percent, during the 1990s compared with just a 1.3-million increase in the 1980-90 decade."*³

Part of this population shift has to do with people taking a conventional retirement or buying a second recreation home in rural areas. However, the more important trend is technological freedom and the reality of telecommuting.

THE NEW RURAL ECONOMICS

One of the more important changes driving this new urban flight is technology. My new neighbors are a good example. They both work at home. He is a securities broker, and she is an insurance claims adjuster. All they need is high-speed Inter-

net and telephone access.

The latter has recently had a major breakthrough because the new satellite technology can give you television and high-speed Internet. This means you are no longer restricted by the need for DSL or cable land lines.

These folks can live absolutely anywhere in the world. And now they live in the hills of southwest Washington. In an article on this subject, land use planner Ray Quay noted that:

"One possible future this could lead to is the re-ruralization of America. With the decisions about location of work and home now separate, people unsatisfied with the urban experience but still desirous of current urban employment opportunities could retain employment and relocate to rural areas. Between 1980 and 1990, there was a 1.5 percent shift (3.7 million) in U.S. population from rural areas to urban areas. Even if only 20 percent of potential telecommuters chose to move to rural America, this could represent a potential 4 million people. Essentially this would completely reverse the

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1 U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service (www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/Rurality/WhatisRural)
 2 Kenneth Johnson and Calvin Beale, The Continuing Population Rebound in Nonmetro America, Rural Perspectives, vol. 13, no. 3.
 3 U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service (www.ers.usda.gov/briefing/Population/)
 4 Ray Quay, Telecommuting: Possible Futures for Urban and Rural Communities, McQuay Technologies, 1995.

PROTECTING AGRICULTURAL LANDS

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loss from rural communities over the last 10 years!"⁴

This population shift brings with it some fundamental changes in rural economics. The economic shift will be from the traditional agrarian and resource-based industries, to more knowledge-based industries. There will also be social changes. The urban flight will bring with it people who still have urban wants and biases.

THE CHANGING RURAL CHARACTER

According to western statesman and author Daniel Kemmis, rural Americans are characterized as "the last of what is best in America" and by their "plain-spoken, uncomplicated neighborliness."⁵

However, the growth in the rural areas is resulting in a more cosmopolitan resident moving in. This gentrification of the rural area is not an easy one for either the original inhabitants

or the newcomers. Rural centers used to have the minimum requirements for civilization – that being a post office, a church, a general store and a tavern. The people who had stores there catered to loggers and farmers, and their families.

However, the new urban immigrants want espresso bars, day care, a video store and a tanning salon. A restaurant that was called Fatty Patty's will now be called Augustinos.

This results in a tremendous clash of cultures. One theme that rural area natives have is that everything is "constitutionally protected." That generally means it is OK to occasionally discharge your rifle, ride your unmuffled dirt bike and start your diesel truck engine at 4:00 in the morning.

However, these are all things that the former urbanites hate and they routinely complain to their local government about them. The immigrant urbanites also will protest any new min-

ing, logging or farming activities because they ruin their view or are too noisy or smelly.

THE POLITICS OF RURALISM

The new American ruralism is sure to bring us back to some basic constitutional issues. The framers of the Bill of Rights and the Constitution were drawn from two very different groups with very different perspectives about what the America experience should be.

One group, led by people like Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay, wanted a more urbanist, federalist and interdependent America. The other group, led by Thomas Jefferson and John Quincy Adams, wanted a more ruralist, decentralist and self-reliant America.

However, the new rural America will be the product of residents who have traditionally

worked the land and newcomers who want to live in what they see as a peaceful, pastoral landscape. They too are people with very different values and motives for living in rural America.

Daniel Kemmis says, "Places have a way of claiming people. When they claim very diverse kinds of people, then those people must eventually learn to live with each other; they must learn to inhabit their place together... and nurture the old-fashioned civic virtues of trust, honesty, justice, tolerance, cooperation, hope and remembrance."⁶ Let's hope he is right.

Richard H. Carson is a theorist, writer and practicing planner with 30 years experience in the Pacific Northwest states of Oregon and Washington.

⁵ Daniel Kemmis, *Community and the Politics of Place*, University of Oklahoma Press, 1945. 6 Op. cit.

SENIOR ACTION COMMITTEE WANTS YOUR INPUT

The Senior Action Committee of the Washington State APA Chapter is working on a history of planning in the state of Washington. The committee is interested in hearing from people with knowledge about the early days of planning in the state, as well as views on current planning problems.

Below is a set of questions intended to whet your response. Primarily, the self-interview is a way to get you started on a discussion of what it was like in those heady early days of comprehensive planning in the Evergreen State.

1. **When, where and how did you get the planning bug?** (Born in a planned city like Reston or Columbia, Virginia? Longview, Washington? Or raised in a lackluster industrial town? Did it matter?)
2. **How were you educated in the field?** (Life-long dream but unable to get into a good planning school? Started out as a rocket scientist but didn't find that challenging and switched fields?)

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Planning Northwest is printed on recycled paper.

AND ONE MORE THING...



Michael Kattermann, AICP
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At the chapter board meeting in June, I reported on the status of 11 goals the board adopted back in December. The following provides a snapshot of just some of the projects we are working on.

I hope it will spur some ideas of what you would like your chapter to do. The board will be meeting in early September to update the strategic plan and set our sights on the next five years. Please send us your comments and ideas.

INCREASE AD REVENUE TO SUPPORT 12-PAGE NEWSLETTER FORMAT

We are looking at some significant changes in *Planning Northwest* (see below) that will affect how we handle advertising. This goal is being re-evaluated in light of the changes and the "retirement" of Anindita Mitra after several years on the editorial board. Thank you, Anindita, for your contributions to the newsletter and the chapter.

INCREASE PLANNING NORTHWEST E-MAIL DISTRIBUTION TO 80 PERCENT OF MEMBERSHIP

We moved to e-mail delivery a couple of years ago primarily to reduce printing and mailing costs. Only about half of our

members are taking advantage of the e-mail delivery so we have not realized the savings. Currently, we budget \$12,000 per year for the design, printing and mailing of the newsletter. At the last board meeting, we decided to use an electronic newsletter format if the cost savings prove worthwhile. Our goal is to implement the new format in early 2005.

SPONSOR OR COSPONSOR AT LEAST ONE PIECE OF LEGISLATION FOR 2005 SESSION

Steve Butler is working with our new Legislative Committee co-chairs, Esther Larsen and Ivan Miller, as well as the Livable Washington and GMA Working Group to develop the chapter's legislative platform for your review and comment by the conference in Portland.

We have been much more involved in legislation and policy at the state level through the involvement of Lisa Verner, Jill Sterrett, and Mike McCormick in the GMA Working Group. Steve Butler now is chairing this effort for the chapter, coordinating and integrating the work of the Legislative Committee, Livable Washington, and the GMA Working Group.

HOLD AT LEAST TWO CONTINUING EDUCATION WORKSHOPS

Gina Mares Kurtz and Judy Fani, Continuing Education Committee co-chairs, worked with FEMA to host a workshop on planning for earthquake preparedness earlier this year. The committee also has worked with Ted Gage, Planning Officials Development officer, to revive the Planners' Forums in cooperation with CTED and

PAW. The next workshop is scheduled for November and will focus on building communication skills for entry and mid-level planners. Preliminary topics include working with public officials, writing for public understanding, effective use of PowerPoint, and public speaking.

INCREASE MEMBERSHIP BY 5 PERCENT

This represents an increase of nearly 70 members. Anna Nelson, Membership Committee chair, has been working on a brochure and pursuing opportunities to promote the organization (e.g. Housing Conference, student orientations). The board also has agreed in principle to offer chapter-only group memberships to planning commission, city council and tribal council members. We intend to institute this membership by the end of this year.

MAKE DECISION ON EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The task force of Joe Scorcio, Heather McCartney, Ron McConnell, Charlie Dotson and Fritz Wagner is looking at what the duties would be, what it would cost, and how we would pay for it.

Another question is, if not now, what threshold would be appropriate for looking at this again? As the fourth largest chapter in the country, we could be doing much more if we didn't have to rely as much on volunteers for some programs. The preliminary report indicated we could not support an executive director, but expanded duties for a chapter administrator may be appropriate.

PUBLISH AT LEAST ONE EDITORIAL PIECE IN A MAJOR NEWSPAPER

No progress to report.

INITIATE FIRST PROJECT IN PRO-BONO PROGRAM

Looking for a pilot project.

INCREASE PROFILE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF AWARDS PROGRAM

The plan is to make the awards a separate annual event combined with a workshop focusing on the award-winning projects and programs.

FOSTER RECOGNITION OF WORLD TOWN PLANNING DAY (NOVEMBER)

No progress. Could be a topic for an editorial talking about the importance of planning and how we have benefited from it.

TO INCREASE INVOLVEMENT AND COORDINATION WITH PEER ORGANIZATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS

We continue to work with PAW and CTED on Planners' Forums. We also have a designated liaison with *Western Planner*. The GMA Working Group includes 1000 Friends, Washington Association of Realtors, Association of Washington Cities, Washington State Association of Counties, Washington Farm Bureau, and League of Women Voters. We also have been invited to participate in an advisory group to a legislative task force looking at permitting issues. This is a direct result of Livable Washington and the GMA Working Group efforts.

There's much more happening in the months (and years) ahead... stay tuned!

RARE JOINT CONFERENCE EXAMINES PLANNING ISSUES IN TWO STATES

Deborah Munkberg, AICP
Conference Chair

You are invited to join with planners from Washington and Oregon at a joint conference Oct. 4-6 at the Hilton Portland & Executive Tower in downtown Portland, Oregon.

The convergence of planners from both states in one conference is a rare event; it last happened in 1994. A decade later we have the opportunity to come together again as a community of planners to consider our shared past and destiny.

In recognition of our many common issues and interests, the theme of this year's conference is "Cascadia Convergence." Sessions will explore the similarities and differences between the two states in planning for urban and rural communities,

transportation, urban design, and natural environment management.

Through an exciting array of mobile workshops, you will have an opportunity to explore the Portland metropolitan area. The keynote speaker will be Daniel Kemmis, director of the Center for the Rocky Mountain West and author of several books, most recently "This Sovereign Land: A New Vision for Governing the West."

The conference program is topped off by "just for fun" events, including the opening reception, pub crawl to the Republic of Cascadia, and a fun walk/run.

Home base for the conference will be the Hilton Portland & Executive Tower, located in the heart of Portland's financial and entertainment district. This location puts you within blocks of the MAX light rail system, the Portland Art Museum, Pioneer Courthouse Square, and other attractions.

It's going to be an exciting conference with an abundance of interesting new information, inspiring speakers, and lively activities. Plan now to attend.

For additional information, please check the Washington APA Web site (www.washington-apa.org) or call Deborah Munkberg, AICP, at (425) 893-6422.

SECTION OFFERS STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP TO PORTLAND CONFERENCE

Karen Langrock
Puget Sound Section president

The Puget Sound Section (PSS) of APA is sponsoring a planning student from any PSS-area university to attend the October 2004 Joint Oregon/Washington APA Conference from October 4-6 in Portland, OR. In order to be considered for the scholarship, the student must be a member of APA.

The scholarship includes full conference registration and three nights lodging, Sunday night through Tuesday night. Also included is transportation, either via train, an auto ride with another APA member, or approved alternate transportation in equal dollars. Any meals not provided by conference registration also will be reimbursed within reason, up to a total of \$50, after submission of adequate receipts.

Any interested student should submit a letter of application, including information about why he or she would like to attend the conference, and how it would benefit his or her program of planning studies. Deadline for applications is Monday, Sept. 13, 2004.

The objective of the scholarship is to expose students to the benefits of APA and to further develop their interest in PSS APA. This objective complements the goals of the PSS to provide more opportunities for students to interact with practicing planners.


For more information about the student scholarship, contact: Richard Hart, AICP, PSS APA board member and treasurer, 9611 SE 36th, Mercer Island, WA 98040, (206) 236-3593, richard.hart@ci.mercer-island.wa.us.



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VANCOUVER EXPERIENCES DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION SUCCESS

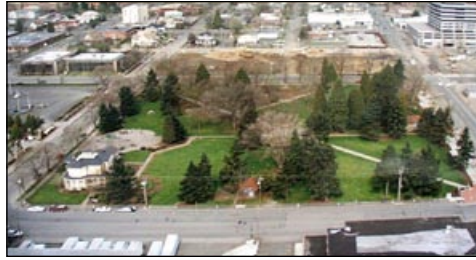
Laura Hudson

The City of Vancouver recently completed updating its Comprehensive Plan under the Growth Management Act. The city made only minor changes to its land use plan, reaffirming a focus on public support to achieve vibrant urban centers – like the successful revitalization of the downtown around Esther Short Park.

In the decade since the city purchased the former Lucky Brewery and cleared the buildings to make way for a mix of housing, retail and office uses, Vancouver has worked with residents, business owners, property owners and developers to revitalize an area of the downtown known as the Esther Short Redevelopment Area.

The city sponsored a planning effort to set the vision for the area and then prepared a planned action ordinance and Environmental Impact Statement to reduce the permitting time and ensure adequate mitigation for projects developed under the plan.

The city also created a public development authority, the Downtown Redevelopment



Esther Short Park, before

Authority (DRA), to oversee expenditure of public funds to achieve the goals of the plan.

As proof of its commitment to the plan, Vancouver invested in the redesign and refurbishment of Esther Short Park, a four-block park at the heart of the downtown that had become a haven for the homeless and focus of criminal activity.

With the increased law enforcement and upgrades to the park, the city also began a series of community events (like the Six to Sunset concerts on Thursday evenings throughout the summer and the Wine and Jazz Festival in September) to bring the community back to the heart of the city.



Esther Short Park, after

With \$18.75 million of public investment and some \$232 million in private investment, these efforts have paid off. The downtown has seen construction of:

- 548 residential units
- 285,000 sq. ft. of commercial space
- a new conference center and hotel with 30,000 sq. ft. of meeting space and 226 hotel rooms.

A tour of Vancouver's revitalized downtown will be one of the mobile workshops at the conference. Vancouver's planners invite you to visit their success story.

WASHINGTON CHAPTER APA AWARDS ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIPS

Mark Personius, AICP
Scholarship Committee Chair

The Scholarship Committee is pleased to announce this year's recipients of the \$2,500 Washington Chapter APA Scholarship awards for outstanding planning students from Eastern Washington University and the University of Washington.

This year's scholarship recipient from Eastern Washington University is Latisha Hill. Michael Hintze is the 2004 scholarship recipient from the University of Washington.

Latisha "Tish" Hill is a native of Spokane and a first-year graduate student at EWU. She shows great promise as a planning practitioner and has been very active in planning activities on campus and the local community.

She currently works for Avista Utilities where she is the assistant to the vice presi-

dent of Community and Economic Development. Her current assignment focuses on helping to organize the local community to take part in the development of a thriving and dynamic University District.

Tish also is an active volunteer in the local community. She is a board member of several local community groups, including the Neighborhood Alliance, a non-profit helping neighborhoods create sustainable communities, and the Northeast Community Center, providing for the needs of the neighborhood.

Tish volunteers within the Hillyard neighborhood, helping the emerging Historic Hillyard Business District. She is a member of the Eastern Washington University Association of Student Planners and is the student representative for the Western Region.

Michael Hintz is a first-year graduate student in the masters program at the University of Washington. He has been very active

as student liaison to the Washington Chapter APA and the UW Professionals Council.

His interest in urban planning and design first developed while living in Poland as a U.S. Peace Corps volunteer. Witnessing old, well-planned cities in the midst of tremendous transition as wealth increased gave Michael an appreciation of the complex nature of how socio-economic conditions and public policy can impact the physical form of cities.

Returning to the United States, he worked for the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, the entity responsible for overseeing planning in that state.

His general area of interest is sustainable urban design and planning. Looking toward his second year in the program, Michael anticipates more challenges and breakthroughs in his learning process and closing in on a specific focus for his thesis work.

SENIOR ACTION COMMITTEE WANTS YOUR INPUT, CONTINUED

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3. **Did you have good mentors? At school? On the job? Were there villains?** (Obnoxious developers? Ethically-disadvantaged planning commissioners?)
4. **Tell us about your first job in planning. Was it what you anticipated?** (All stats – no people? All people and politics – no real analysis?)
5. **Tell us about your planning experiences – successes, disappointments, lost battles, etc.** (Serendipity? You tried to save a military base in your area but they closed it anyway. Then Disney bought the land for a theme park and now everyone is happy?)
6. **What advice do you have for others?** (Stick with rocket science?)
7. **Finally... open-ended question... get it off your chest!** (Even the best planning is just rearranging chairs on the Titanic?) Don't be afraid to offer anecdotes. Learning is not all books and maps. It is stories as well.

OK? Simple questions. We had one of the members of the Senior Action Committee try his hand at it to set the stage for your entry.

1. **How did you get the planning bug? Born in a planned city and did it matter?**
I was born in Philadelphia and of course it made a difference. My parents loved Philadelphia and taught me all the nuances of Billy Penn's master plan (fine town plat with lots of green spaces, broad streets plus Ben Franklin Boulevard – a part of the City Beautiful Movement – under construction when I was born). I knew all of this by age 10.
When I was 13 my father, a mechanical engineer, took the family to the New York World's Fair with its World of Tomorrow exhibits – especially the General Motors incredible predictions of fast moving cars, tall buildings and car/pedestrian separa-

tions. My father was absorbed in the Holerith cards being manipulated over in the IBM building – insisting THAT was the future.

Kids don't listen to parents, of course, and there was this father/son stubborn gene we shared. He was a good father and bought me USGS sheets for me to play on, drawing glorious cities fronting the northern half of the Chesapeake Bay area where we summered.

When WWII came, I was stationed at Bainbridge Naval Training Center, a fine boot camp with freshly built barracks, mess halls and huge gyms. When the war ended, I envisioned turning the base into a college campus. I wrote a paper and prepared maps with this idea for a correspondence course I was taking.

2. **How were you educated in the field?**
Despite my strong interest in city planning, when I was discharged from the Navy there was no clear route into the field. At Penn State, there was a shelf of planning books but it was in the Department of Agriculture, under Rural Sociology. I started out as an architectural student, but finished in sociology.
By then I knew planning was taught at the graduate level, and I found myself fascinated by the numbers, the socioeconomic data, etc. I came to see cities (like Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh, where I later worked) less in architectural terms and more in ever changing neighborhoods (some you could save – others you could renew!).

I was accepted at Cornell, Harvard and the University of Washington. Cornell and Harvard wanted more money than I had (my GI benefits having expired) while UW gave me virtually a free ride plus \$36/m for helping hang the architectural renderings. It was an excellent education. Ed Horwood and Mike Wolfe were just great.

Later I was lucky to work for Francis Pitkin in Harrisburg, PA, for the State of Pennsylvania. I picked up a keen interest in land conservation (now

known as ecology), Indian problems, urban renewal and economic development.

4. **First Planning Job?**
My first planning job was in the King County Planning Department, where I gradually rose to associate planner.
There is no better way to learn the field than to struggle with the day-to-day battles inside a planning office. One quickly learns that planning is a craft (some say an art) and not a science, but that socioeconomic statistics are a critical part of the mix of information needed in promulgating rules, zoning decisions, variances and the rest of the permitting process.
In the early 1950s, we tried to save the farmlands of the Green River Valley. Our tool was zoning. It was at best a holding action; eventual development of the valley was a forgone conclusion. There were successes in the eastern slopes, where planners helped dramatically in reviewing plat developments, securing green spaces, reasonable lot developments and, in a few cases, successfully locating shopping centers. There were attempts to disperse industrial sites as part of the cold war planning.
But mostly the '50s were a time of rapid suburban growth and planners who wanted to see distinct greenbelts and open space separating rural towns were bound to be disappointed. The planners lost the battle to stave off urban sprawl.

5. **Planning Experiences. Lessons learned, etc.**
Moving back to Pennsylvania in the mid-1950s, I got involved in "701" local planning programs and later urban renewal in Pittsburgh. Much of the work was "missionary work," paving the way for action programs (urban renewal, industrial development, etc.).
The big lesson learned in those early days was that when there was

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SENIOR ACTION COMMITTEE WANTS YOUR INPUT, CONTINUED

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real power (eminent domain, strict development codes) and real money (federal, state aid, big developers) local planning entities could pull off some remarkable projects (Reston, Columbia, Pittsburgh Triangle, Boston Harbor, etc).

Getting powerful people involved helped immensely. The Mellon family decided to move the U.S. Steel headquarters out of New York and into Philadelphia, got behind the Clean Air programs and even planned (in secret) a regional park system, then quietly bought up all the property for a half dozen large regional parks and just handed it over to the local county governments at cost, plus development funds.

6. Advice.

Above all – listen to the people. Hold many, many small input meetings. Have the courage of your convictions. It

is okay to think systemically as planners do even if you have no mandate. The Seattle monorail was planned without thought to park-and-ride, integration into the other parts of the overall transportation problems of the city.

Also, encourage grass-roots efforts (the Burke-Gilman Trail system would not have happened without strong local support).

7. Final remarks.

There are glaring gaps in the planning process at the regional and state levels. Some planning problems require state-level inputs of money, expertise, vision and appropriate laws to deal with the saving of critical land areas, growth management, major economic development projects and so on. The local planners always valiantly try to meet the needs but too often their efforts are thwarted at the regional and state levels.



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