



Oklahoma Planner

President's Notes

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

I cannot believe it is Christmas time already. Time seems to fly by as I get older. I now understand what my parents have always meant.

As many of you know, OKAPA has moved to a digital newsletter and this newsletter is the first print since July. If you have not received the last two newsletters, then you need to correct your email address with APA nationally. Their website is located at www.planning.org or you can call their Chicago office. You can review all 2002 newsletters on the Oklahoma Chapter website at www.okplanning.org. Just let me know if I can assist you with any problems.

On December 1st, the new OKAPA officers took office. Their names, phone numbers and email addresses are

provided in this issue. Each and everyone of us are interested in providing a valuable service to you. If you have suggestions or ideas, please let one of us know.

The next workshop is scheduled for January 14th in Oklahoma City at the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG) boardroom. ACOG is located at 21 W Main in the Bricktown area. I have inserted a flyer in this issue for everyone to review. This topic is very important to the planning profession and to communities in Oklahoma since OKAPA is sponsoring a Legislative Luncheon at the Capitol on February 12th.

As planners and planning officials, we must become better advocates for better community planning. The January workshop,

Planning Advocacy, will be led by Stephanie Vance with AdVanced Consulting of Washington, DC. Stephanie has conducted similar workshops and conference sessions for several APA chapters and works extensively with non-profit organizations to become better advocates for their cause.

The Legislative Luncheon is co-sponsored by the Oklahoma Floodplain Managers Association and catered by Jamil's Steakhouse. It will provide each of you an opportunity to practice what was learned in January and to get to know your local legislators.

There are many planning related bills introduced each year and most are not community friendly. The OKAPA Chapter intends to sponsor a couple of bills re-

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Upcoming Events:

- **Complete Management Course for Planning Directors December 2 and 3 in Dallas, TX**
- **Legislative Advocacy Workshop January 14 in OKC**
- **Legislative Luncheon and Planner's Day on the Hill in February**

Funding Parks through Public-Private Partnerships

By Linda R. Cox, FAICP

The search for private contributions to parks inevitably requires partnerships between the public sector and private nonprofit organizations. When cash-strapped local governments seek more resources for their parks, they often look to the private sector. While park systems draw revenues from several private sources, including user fees and business concessions, this discussion focuses on voluntary contributions---gifts from individual donors, corporate sponsors, and foundation grants.

The search for private contributors inevitably becomes a quest for partnerships with private organizations. You can't just pick their pockets--you have to find ways to work together. What follows are some suggestions, aimed particularly at public officials and agency staff, for how to find private funding partners and what to expect from the partnerships.

1. To seek private funding, find a nonprofit partner who can raise money.

Private donors are reluctant to give straight to the government; in fact, their rules often preclude it. They want to be sure their dollars will go straight into the project they choose to support, not a general fund, and they don't want their dollars to displace public spending. Furthermore, private, not-for-profit organizations develop a set of skills, attitudes and relationships that are conducive to attracting private dollars. Typically, they will be better than a government agency at tapping private resources.

Who are these nonprofit organizations? Chances are, you have some in your town, city, or region right

now. They may be big or small, your agency's buddy or its severest critic. Some are citywide park advocacy or booster groups, others are devoted to an individual park or greenway or sport, and some are allied with a civic or community development organization.

Many park groups are evolving. Some that were created at the be-



hest of city government find they must develop greater independence to be fully effective. Others, which may have originated as watchdogs barking at the heels of government, have found

ways to work closely with city agencies. In this burgeoning new field, successful organizations are inspiring new groups to form and are testing new forms of partnership.

2. Private partners do more than raise money.

Even when these organizations are created as a simple conduit for dollars, they take on a life of their own. That is the case because, **first** of all, if they are going to attract substantial private dollars, they must have a compelling mission. The Central Park Conservancy in New York City, for example, did not succeed simply because it was good at rounding up wealthy donors. It succeeded because its founder, Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, brought a persuasive, persistent vision to revitalizing Central Park, which attracted donors. **Second**, funders demand it. They want to be sure that their in-

vestments will not go to waste, so they insist that the nonprofit develop ways to assure that. Susan Rademacher, Director of the Louisville Olmsted Park Conservancy, commented, for example: *"One of the things that we've had to do to assure the private investors and funders that this is an investment well worth making is to really attend, after the projects are finished, to the longer term maintenance issues. We have established a maintenance endowment. We have an annual review by an outside independent panel, [... which] then kicks out work orders ...so that problems don't begin to mount up."* **Third**, the groups often discover that they are good at more things than raising money, and they move to address areas of unmet need. These include such things as initiating innovative programs, managing capital projects (because they have advantages over government in speed and quality control), developing master plans, and building community involvement.

These factors add up to a private partner that brings much more than dollars to its relationship with the public sector. They also mean that the best of these organizations places demands on the public agency for better performance.

Public sector leaders play a critical role in shaping this emerging field by the ways they engage in partnerships and the ways they encourage the formation, spread and evolution of groups.

3. Private funders vary in what they support.

Donors fall into three categories: individuals, private foundations,

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Top 10 Technologies for E-Government

by Chris Stein

Some of these technologies have been around since the advent of the Internet. Others have gone mainstream over the last few years. All of them can be implemented as part of an e-government strategy.

1. A website. As part of a government website, a good planning site should include agendas and minutes of planning commission and other planning meetings, digital versions of general or specific plans, an online form with which to contact the planning department via the website, the zoning code, and commonly requested planning forms available for download by interested citizens or businesses.

2. E-mail newsletters. A planning agency can simply post a form on its website where interested citizens "subscribe" to a newsletter by providing contact information to a database.

3. Web mapping. Most data has a geographic component, and geographic information systems and web-based mapping (sometimes called Web Geographic Information Systems, or Web GIS) take full advantage of it. Sophisticated web-based mapping software allows affordable online delivery of complex data such as land-use information, zoning, demographics, aerial photos, real estate site location, routing, and analysis.

4. Visualization. A virtual reality simulation allows you to see and experience a place as if you were

walking through it. Planners can alter the simulation — by changing landscapes, street-scapes, or building configurations and textures — and immediately demonstrate to citizens and decision makers the visual impact of these changes.

5. Planning support systems. Technology that integrates GIS, three-dimensional models, and decision-making tools is one of the fastest growing planning markets. A planning support system employs a sophisticated model to analyze a variety of socioeconomic, transportation, environmental, economic, or land-use data and show the outcomes of various assumptions and policy decisions.

6. Technology for public participation. This type of technology can take many forms, from simple online discussion forums, to more formal visual preference surveys, to conference facilities wired to allow audience participation. The goal is to facilitate decision making, both via the Internet and during face-to-face meetings. Planning tools for public participation have blossomed to include: online tools for opinion polling, collaborative design in charrettes and community meetings, and electronic meeting systems.

7. Online planning portals. Planning portals on the web enable professional planners and other inter-



ested parties to share best practices, stay current with trends around the country, conduct research, interact with other planners, locate Internet resources, and find employment.

8. Content management systems. CMS enables the user to store information in an online database using a web browser. If a city's zoning code were managed in a CMS, updates to the code also would be reflected in real time on the city's website.

9. Permitting and zoning systems. Over the last three years a flood of new software has come on the market that enables cities to manage zoning codes in a digital format and publish online, often with sample images, renderings, multimedia, and links to definitions and additional information.

10. Handheld devices. Handheld devices, such as Palm Pilots (and Palm PCs), provide a revolutionary way to collect data, perform site surveys, and deliver information to mobile workers. The city of Los Angeles is using a system that allows building inspectors to download a list of buildings for inspection in the morning, and then conduct the surveys by entering data into their handheld devices.

E-Government: The Top 10 Technologies, September 2002, Planning Magazine

A few good examples:

Websites—

San Francisco, Neighborhood Planning:
www.sfgov.org/planning/neighborhoodplans

Web mapping—

Oklahoma City:
www.gisplanning.net/okcity

Planning Support Systems—

Orton Community Viz
www.communityviz.com

Permitting and Zoning Systems—

City of Long Beach, CA, Planning and Building Dept.
www.ci.long-beach.ca.us/plan/permit

Public Policies to Support Active Living

by Joel S. Hirschlom of the National Governors Association

In its report *"New Community Design to the Rescue – Fulfilling Another American Dream"* the National Governors Association set forth a viable solution to sprawl. **New Community Design (NCD)** embraces a number of concepts that altogether produce places that are pedestrian friendly, walkable, compact, mixed-use and having a relatively large amount of green spaces. The NCD alternative cannot yet be "scientifically" proven to promote active living. But common sense, limited research data, and anecdotal evidence strongly suggest that active living – regular physical activity –



can be facilitated by this community design approach.

Our nation wasted too many decades arguing over scientific proof that cigarette smoking kills. We should not wait decades to reach consensus that sprawl kills. Sedentary Death Syndrome is the new name that some medical professionals give to the many lethal health impacts of a sedentary lifestyle. Sprawl supports that lifestyle.

It is useful to think of three "f" categories of regular physical activity outside homes and work:

1. **Fitness** activities, like walking, jogging and biking, done intentionally to promote fitness and health;
2. **Functional** activities to fulfill mobility or transportation needs as alternatives to vehicle use;
3. **Fun** or recreational and game activities.

We also need to recognize that the

best community design promotes physical activity for all ages – from children to the elderly.

The national smart growth movement and the planning profession have not yet fully recognized that public health can be and should be promoted by certain land use and community design principles. It is rational to conclude that the sprawl, single land-use style of the built environment, dominant for the past 50 years, is a substantial cause of inactive living. The majority of Americans live in sprawl places and the majority of Americans are inactive and overweight or obese. The majority of Americans are addicted to automobiles, not just for commuting, but also for just about every other need for transportation.

We have a model for land use and community design that in all respects is the opposite of sprawl. This alternative goes by many names – NGA calls it NCD – and a checklist is believed necessary to accurately decide whether a project or place is truly the

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Urban Parks and Community Development

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place is by turning the traditional design and planning process upside down.

Parks that are catalysts for community development

Today, some cities are beginning to see that parks can be important catalysts in improving urban life. By integrating parks into the cultural lives of neighborhoods, and through public private partnerships added responsibility for maintenance, for developing programs and in some

cases, design, has been given to the community, we are seeing a renewal of parks in places some may have thought was impossible.

To create great parks and great cities, we have to be willing to develop a new vision for parks, - as economic incubators, as environmental centers, as places to teach ecology and to learn about social interaction. Parks can be places where residents can share a common heritage and learn about each other or can simply be places

where people can go and take a stroll, or a break, where a community's public life can be renewed and enhanced. Through vision, community interaction, good design, and leadership, we can create parks that belong to their communities, and work for their communities.

Taken from the 1998 National Planning Conference Proceedings

Policies for Active Living

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"real thing." Our report presents that checklist. The report also presents the most critical policy needs to promote NCD and, thereby, also promote public health by promoting regular physical activity.

First and foremost, we need to change zoning laws at the local government level so that mixed-use places are given equal standing as single land-use development. Several dozen local governments have already changed their zoning laws to do just this. And about six states have created model zoning codes that local governments can consider and use as appropriate for their needs. The zoning should facilitate true mixed uses, both laterally on the land and vertically in buildings. Places need housing, shopping, schools, public spaces, green infrastructure, and jobs within safe and convenient walking distances of each other. We need state and local policies that recognize the educational benefits of smaller schools within neighborhoods and communities that children can walk to, and that also can be used 24/7 for diverse community activities. Building giant schools on greenfield sites that

children must use buses or cars to get to has been instrumental in perpetuating suburban sprawl and physical inactivity.

A **second** policy priority is to change building codes so that they support reusing older, and often historic, structures. New Jersey and Maryland have created such codes and they are facilitating much greater urban revitalization that provides much desired housing in mixed-use neighborhoods.

Third, local governments need to make more use of their powers to levy impact or development fees to fund new infrastructure that new greenfield, sprawl subdivisions require. Now, the general public is subsidizing much of this new infrastructure. A number of communities are rapidly recognizing the need to have developers and builders pay their fair share. Sprawl home prices have been kept artificially low by spreading the infrastructure costs through higher taxes on the general population that not only sees no direct benefits of more sprawl, but actually suffers many hardships, such as increased traffic congestion and over-crowded schools.

Last, we also need enlightened transportation policies that provide more choices for citizens. A large fraction of Americans do not want to have only one choice: cars to get everywhere. Many want transit and many want walkable communities.

As time goes on, more people will learn that the sprawl, inactive lifestyle is literally killing them. It is not necessary to outlaw sprawl, only to give Americans more housing and transportation choices so that they can live in places that naturally support an active lifestyle.

Taken from the 2002 National Planning Conference Proceedings



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Funding Parks

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and corporate donors. **Private foundations** are what first come to mind when most of us think of funders. Most of the foundations that give to urban parks and recreation today are local or regional in their orientation; few are national. Their purpose may be to sustain and strengthen the civic fabric of the community, improve its health and environment, safeguard the future of its children, or enrich its cultural life. A creative park organization looks for the ways in which its mission matches any of these aims. (A wise one also avoids any funding that will pull it off-mission.) Foundations typically want to support innovations that will be sustained if successful. They want to invest in lasting changes. Since they do not have the means to sustain improvements over the long term themselves, they tend to support catalytic agents that may bring about long-lasting changes, and they look for signs of a system-wide, public commitment to maintaining improvements or other ways of protecting the investments they make.

Individual donors are a significant component of the private sector support for parks. With individual donors, personal ties take on great importance--ties to the place, to the people who are asking, or to the purpose of the donation. Individual support comes in the form of dollars--sometimes in very substantial amounts--and through acts of stewardship. Nonprofit park groups, and some public agencies as well, have grown adept at corralling volunteer labor for special events and clean-up days. But voluntary stewards of the parks are active far beyond the limits of one-day events--leading tours or little leagues, clearing invasive plants, acting as informal play-

ground guardians, organizing fundraising events. Nonprofits play an invaluable role in activating and organizing such individuals.

Contributions from individuals offer consistent support, so long as the ties are maintained, because many give year after year, unlike most foundations.

Corporate donors are generally market-oriented in their choice of contributions. At the simplest level, that means they fund where their markets are, and they seek to build good will as well as support good work. Corporate donors often want to sponsor winners--for example, a popular concert series in a park, a renovated ballfield (such as those supported by the National Football League), or outstanding environmental education programs (such as those supported by Texaco). Adept fundraisers turn to corporations to sustain successful innovations.

Some corporate donors support projects that strengthen their ties with their own employees. Supporting a park may also simply make good business sense by protecting and enhancing a business's investment in a particular locale. Hence, local merchants, utilities, and hospitals sometimes become strong supporters because a successful park anchors the neighborhood.

4. Finding the proper balance

While some local governments have yet to tap private resources for their parks, others are debating how much is too much. When private funding outstrips public, questions of who really controls the

park can easily arise. Recent studies of the revenue streams for city parks show a broad spread in the proportion that comes from private sources (including user fees), even without accounting for private donations that do not pass through the city budget. Tupper Thomas of Project Park in New York City recommends a 60/40 ratio of public to private dollars, to ensure that the public nature of the park is preserved.

Ironically, private partners can increase the sense of public ownership of parks, by involving community members and drawing more users into the park. A neighborhood park in Cleveland, for example, was reclaimed from drug dealers through the efforts of private nonprofit groups, and is sustained as a community-wide asset by residents' involvement and diligence. It is a story common to many cities.



Strategies to replace public funding with private contributions are unlikely to succeed because donors don't want to spend their money that way. They don't want their funds used instead of tax dollars, and they don't want to invest in a losing cause. On the other hand, public/private partnerships might very well succeed in increasing both private and public investment in parks.

Taken from the 2002 National Planning Conference Proceedings



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OKAPA Legislative Advocacy Workshop

On **January 14th, 2003**, at **ACOG, 21 E Main Street** in Oklahoma City, the Oklahoma Chapter will hold a workshop on **Legislative Advocacy**. This workshop will develop necessary skills for advocating planning issues with State Legislators or Senators. **Stephanie Vance** of **AdVanced Consulting** in Washington, DC, will provide valuable insight into how the chapter members can maximize our impact at the Capitol.

Stephanie has contracted with the APA nationally and has offered similar training in several other states. An \$800 grant was awarded by the APA Chapter Presidents Council to OKAPA to assist with this program. Topics will range from determining what factors best influence elected officials to developing long term relationships at the Capitol. The cost will be **\$25 plus parking (approx. \$5)**. A map of Bricktown and the parking lot

is available on the OKAPA website at www.okplanning.org or you can contact Mike Southard for additional information.

The workshop will assist the chapter in developing a legislative program which we have lacked for over twenty years. In order to “Act Local—Think Global,” planners must become better advocates for our causes and for our communities. As long as we sit on the sidelines, other organizations and professions will act on our behalf. Elected officials at the State Capitol need to see their community planners and we need to become better partners to orchestrate necessary changes.

Information on Stephanie Vance and her firm, AdVanced Consulting, is available at www.advocacyguru.com.

Please RSVP by email or fax to Mike Southard at (405) 878-1587 or

msouthard@shawneeok.org so that we can estimate the attendance.

This workshop is as a precursor to the **legislative luncheon** event on **February 12th** at the **State Capitol** that is co-sponsored by the Oklahoma Floodplain Managers Association

