

PROCESSES ALTERING PATTERNS OF URBAN OPEN SPACE  
WICHITA AND COMOTARA: A CASE STUDY

by

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## CHAPTER I

### URBAN OPEN-SPACE CONDITIONS

#### Introduction

While not common to the literature of urbanization, the Mad Hatter's Tea Party may well be the development model for urban landscapes.<sup>1</sup>

. . . The table was a large one, but the three were all crowded together at one corner of it. "No room, No room!" they cried out when they saw Alice coming. "There's plenty of room!" said Alice indignantly, and sat down . . .

. . . In due course, . . . all move one place on . . . The Hatter was the only one who got any advantage from the change: and Alice was a good deal worse off . . .<sup>2</sup>

In the past, abundance and expanse absorbed a restless, consuming, relatively small American population. Prosperity, opportunity, expansion and growth--frontier facts and myths --impelled people to use up and move on. Today traumas result for places discarded and overcrowded. The frontier is gone and no-growth efforts work only as delaying tactics. The timeless tea party is over--Alice and urban America have reached the end of the table.

The urban open-space pattern offers one starting point for surveying existing conditions and planning alternatives for the future. Being tied to the physical characteristics of the land, open space is pervasive in its presence throughout urban landscapes. Second, it comprises

a large part of the urban area in its functional uses. Utility spaces such as drainage and flood control areas, green spaces such as parks and greenbelts, and corridor spaces such as streets and airport runways take up fifty percent or more of urbanized and urbanizing land.<sup>3</sup>

Changing concepts of open space is one reaction to the realization that there have been oversights in the past. A growing literature reflects the shifting view of open space as a standby for other uses to open space as a primary land use. Chapin's statement provides one example of the new approach:

. . . we must look at vacant land and open land as something more than a residual category in the land use surveys. We must consider them suited to classification in some detail and as the subject of special attention in land use planning.<sup>4</sup>

Because of its extent, alone, open space as an element of the urban fabric should demand at least as much attention as that traditionally granted to other space uses. Further, the decisions and underlying values that generate the urban open-space pattern would seem to be necessary elements in a comprehensive assessment.

### Enigma of Open Space

Principles are being derived and methodologies proposed, but a clear perception of open space and its role in the urban milieu continues to elude both public and private land-use managers. One might expect some activity aimed at consensus building, but little has been forthcoming.

Arguments for and implied definitions of open space take one of two approaches. The first concerns land uses that provide open space either as their primary purpose or incidently. From such an approach comes hierarchical systems of open space--city park, playground, vest pocket park; or forest acreage, stream watershed, noise buffer zone--accompanied by specific reasons for retaining each particular open-space use. The second deals with the functions served by open space and develops reasons for retaining any and all open-space land uses. The functions of open space range from aesthetic to utilitarian and are seldom mutually exclusive.

One function of open space is concerned with positive human needs. These include natural scenic beauty and readily available escape, if only for a short while, from the city and its real or imagined discomforts. Some see open space as a major source of visual relief softening cityscapes. In fact the underlying justification for the allocation and maintenance of most open space has been the physical and psychological benefits that presumably accrue to those accessible to it. These anticipated benefits were the bases for a variety of governmental initiatives ranging from the zoning legislation of the 1920's to the beautification and recreation legislation of the 1960's.

Without any specific definition of its form, supporters of open space further see it as a means to enhance and protect the natural resource base. Concern for

thoughtful management of physical resources ranges beyond mere sentiment for a world undisturbed by man. Imbalances created by the replacement of permeable surfaces with concrete is adding the soil conservation agent, geologist and ecologist to the active, metropolitan, open-space planning unit.<sup>5</sup>

The final argument for preserving open space relates to its role in structuring urban form. The size, physical properties, location and shape of open space can have a profound effect on current and future development. Tankel identifies a hierarchy of scales of urban development (Street, Community, County, Region) and the role of open space at each scale.<sup>6</sup> The pattern of open space at any one scale has an impact on the pattern at other scales. For example, the permanent reservation of open space at the scale of Region, i.e. megalopolis, may have the effect of reducing lot sizes, depending on its accessibility and suitability for development. But the reverse phenomenon is of greater significance: large, average lot sizes may be associated with inferior regional and county-level open space.<sup>7</sup>

Nineteenth-century landscape architect Charles Eliot was among the first to distinguish between open space for service and open space for structure.<sup>8</sup> In the 1960's Tunard and Pushkarev spelled out four functions served by open space: productive, ornamental, protective and recreational.<sup>9</sup> Tankel suggests yet another distinction when he interprets



open space in two ways: first the kind of open space of which people are personally aware:

it is used--for the wide range of active and passive recreation activities, for circulation; it is viewed --from the home, the road or other vantage points; it is felt--it gives privacy, insulation or sense of spaciousness and scale . . .<sup>10</sup>

and second, the open space of which people may be unaware:

open space which does urban work--protects water supply and prevents floods by soaking up runoff, acts as a safety zone in the path of aircraft takeoff and landings; and open space which helps shape the development pattern--as space between buildings or communities, as space which channels development, as a land reserve for the future . . .<sup>11</sup>

Clawson fears the open space is largely a negative concept --the absence of something--for the general public. He offers a somewhat more specific catalogue of positive open-space uses:

1. open space surrounding public buildings
2. open space for recreation
3. open space for ecological protection or for the preservation of certain desirable natural characteristics
4. open space for urban structural and aesthetic purposes
5. open space provisions for future urban growth.<sup>12</sup>

Thus the term "open space" currently serves as a convenient shorthand for a variety of specific concerns about the process of competition between alternative uses of land and conversion from one use to another. Further, land may be characterized by a number of objective variables such

as size, ownership (private or public), surface permeability; but also by subjective variables such as aesthetic appearance. Platt suggests that each open-space concern, or land use implies an interest in a different variable.<sup>13</sup>

To the land-use planner, open-space perspectives have evolved from that which is left after all so-called "higher" land uses have been accommodated to a component of the comprehensive approach to community design. In dealing with floodplain management, area and surface configuration are critical; hydrologic efficiency does not depend on ownership.

In the landscape architect's concern for the aesthetics of the manmade cityscape, open space is by definition "good," and ranks among the attributes liked best about an urban place. Nondeveloped land which is not "good" is termed "vacant land." In the case of aesthetic control, the variable at stake is not necessarily ownership, size nor surface permeability, but rather subjective qualities relating to appearance.

Administrators of recreation programs look to open space to provide outdoor recreation and fulfill social and psychological needs of city dwellers. Public recreation relies principally upon land being in public ownership so as to afford access; size and surface condition are of secondary importance.

Conservationists apply the term to preserves and portray open space as part of the national heritage; a noble

virtue of land being preyed upon by urban sprawl. Municipalities alternately defend open spaces as implementing a democratic ideal and preserving historic sites, and condemn them as wasting potential tax revenue. The form of open-space lands today reflects the diversity of these open-space perceptions.

Thus open space, very simply, is not closed space. As the counterpart of development, urban open space is a natural and cultural resource, synonymous with neither unused land nor park and recreation areas. Open space is land and/or water area with its surface open to the sky, consciously acquired or publicly regulated to serve conservation and urban-shaping functions in addition to providing recreation opportunities.<sup>14</sup>

#### Private and Public Sector Response

Open space or its commonly perceived role in the urban environment manifests itself in three particular areas: leisure, housing and land control. The following discussion demonstrates that the open-space concerns in the three areas do overlap, but that the variety in the roles of the players in each area results at best in a weak concensus on those concerns. Communication between areas as well as efforts to arrive at a uniform perception of urban open space are limited.

## Recreation and Leisure

There is considerable overlap in the use of the terms "open space" and "outdoor recreation", as the predominant form of urban open space has always been the traditional park. Emphasis on the need for recreation space has been especially strong since the inception of the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission in 1958. Failure to make a park system an integral part of urban planning leaves park administrators with little but past experience to guide them. As a result minimum space requirements dating from the early 1900's and traditional surveys of recreational supply and demand are only now being re-evaluated. Currently park use of areas once considered too small forms part of a general shift in official attitudes toward the small city park as an urban-neighborhood amenity and instrument of social advancement. Coupled with this is the increasing inability of urban government to compete in the market for larger land parcels.

## Land Development

Perceived pressures from urban crowding, forces of the land market, and increased citizen involvement in decision making are forcing spatial rethinking of all land-use categories. The open-space argument at the micro, or street, level has evolved from advocacy of large residential lots to small ones. The tradition of what is public and what is private has until recently denied the open-space

benefits possible in clustering dwelling units. With the increasingly high cost of land, this nineteenth-century concept is appealing to twentieth-century builders because it lowers site improvement costs. A problem lies in who owns the open space. Except for some recent condominium developments, builders usually do not have the incentive to keep it or organize a sharing of ownership among residents. The community generally declines responsibility for maintenance. Mechanisms are lacking that combine shared uses of open space with shared ownership. Thus the open-space community or planned unit development is only mildly successful in the marketplace. Cluster planning, parks and community features such as pools and tennis courts help sell homes to middle- and upper-income singles and families if the home or apartment is already perceived as a "good buy."<sup>15</sup> Such a decision does not usually include an explicit acknowledgment of responsibility to maintain shared open space.

Despite the difficulties associated with the provision and maintenance of shared ownership of open space, some believe the objectives of a desired development pattern and a desired configuration of open space can be pursued as one and the same thing. Whyte, for example, envisions the preservation of open space as a weapon against urban sprawl. In Washington, D.C.'s Year 2000 Plan the protection of its green wedges is advocated as one of the levers to shape development.<sup>16</sup> "To envision" and "to advocate" hints at the strength of popular and legal support to date.

### Land Use Controls

Acknowledging the desirability of preserving open space, methods of land-use control are being devised to provide it. Environmentalists' efforts for more stringent land-use controls often culminate in building moratoria and no-growth ordinances, which come into direct conflict with traditional, private ownership rights. Present zoning regulations and the police power mechanism clearly do not suffice as effective measures, nor can they cope with powerful economic drives for development and the incentive to maximize profits through intensive use of land. Where governments choose to acquire property or easements they must contend with limited public funds. The annual loss of approximately one million acres of urban open space underscores the ineffectiveness of these approaches given economic realities.<sup>17</sup>

In contrast to the above is the technique of marketing development rights in a manner more consistent with constitutionally protected property rights and the realities of municipal finance. The transfer of development rights (TDR) is a conceptually attractive mechanism for the equitable treatment it affords landowners. Further, the TDR mechanism theoretically allows for the preservation of open space and low density development while compensating property owners without public expenditure. Although TDR is operating on a small scale in several states, the reaction of many is summarized by a California observation that TDR are "something that work wonderfully well in law review

articles and practically no where else."<sup>18</sup> Determining optimal TDR policies can be expensive because they require extensive information pertaining to external benefits and costs. Second, providing local governments with the authority to determine and execute optimal TDR policies does not assure that the policies chosen will be optimal.

Indications from their records of performance with direct land-use controls suggest the incentive to engage in "mercantilistic" practices that improve the fiscal or neighborhood-quality aspects within a jurisdiction at the expense of surrounding jurisdictions may be too difficult to resist.<sup>19</sup>

### Forging Resolution

Integrating open space into the total metropolitan, public goods package thrusts a highly competitive and value-laden decision making process into an already conflict-ridden political arena. Each decision making unit has an utility function wherein preferences for various commodity bundles are specified, and a set of resources (labor, capital, land) to be allocated toward maximizing that utility. In the close physical proximity of the urban setting, the utility of one unit is influenced and magnified by the resource allocation of others. These influences or externalities pose problems for utility-maximizing behavior.<sup>20</sup> Households operate from a value base which defines daily environments in terms of safety, amenity and convenience, and they commit their resources to attaining them. They settle for second- and third-best environments when



values are incompatible or resource allocations inadequate. In other words, a family may use a nearby vacant lot for recreation activities rather than a more-distant park with extensive facilities. They may also invest in private facilities for a few activities rather than use a wide range of free ones considered to be unsafe.

Considerable interest stems from the fact that these externalities are not spatially random. Conflict is locational in the sense that it results from conflict between the utility-maximizing goals of the individual decision making units and the allocative behavior of other decision making units located in the vicinity. Conflict may be between units at the same geographical scale or it may be between units at different scales. For example a neighborhood might perceive a proposed green space as warranting development as a recreation resource while a coterminous neighborhood views it as an attraction for a disruptive element of the population. The municipality could view that same space as a needed noise buffer and aesthetic asset to the cityscape requiring minimal investment of city funds, while the owner of the land parcel sees his opportunity for profit being wiped out. Such incompatible interpretations of "best interest" by mismatched contenders yield unsystematic, if not disastrous, results when one alternative is selected over another.

Due in part to the lack of a theoretical basis for action, urban planners have developed rules of thumb about



size and location of such facilities as parks, but, for the most part without ways of evaluating the results. Although it is not entirely true that location theorists have ignored the problem of public facility location in cities, their concern is relatively recent.<sup>21</sup> Traditionally it was assumed that such locations simply reflect the overwhelming non-public decisions on residential, commercial and industrial location. Further efforts to resolve both the political and locational conflicts are being refined. The optimal location concept is being advanced as an ordering mechanism for the issue of open-space allocation. There are both quantitative and qualitative optimums being pursued.

#### Technical Rationality

The last decade has seen advances in location analysis via optimization techniques and mathematical models. Such analysis has undergone a shift of emphasis--from the determination of an optimal-location solution reflecting a distance- or cost-minimizing objective to equity criteria that consider the distributional aspects of public facilities. The results of applying these models may be optimal and exact in reference to the models but are not necessarily optimal for the real world. While normative models give precise conditions for an optimal or first-best position there is no corresponding set of rules for achievement of a second-best or even a better position in a world where first-best is unattainable.<sup>22</sup> The greatest aid models

provide is a better understanding of the sensitivity of solutions to changes in parameters, constraints or criteria. It remains for the analyst to select from among the "good" solutions which most clearly fit a problem.

### Social Optimums

Optimum location, in maximizing social returns, is based on an integrated consideration of efficiency, equity and opportunity costs. Efficiency is a goal which traditionally translates into statements prescribing attendance levels or population densities appropriate to a given facility type, size or location. For example, recreation standards provide that the neighborhood park should provide 2.5 acres per 1000 people and be no more than 1/2 mile from any resident.<sup>23</sup> Uniform application of such standards has led to common patterns of traditional parks and playgrounds. Space and facilities being provided are changing in response to urban needs, but if the adoption of terminology is any indication, there may be new and equally unwise standardization of playlots and vest pocket parks. A single undifferentiated set of standards persists as professionals in park and recreation administration find them easy to compute, interpret, defend and sell.

Equity considerations are credited primarily to the conservationists and citizens groups. Operationally defined as equality of access, equity is measured by variations (between people) in distance to the nearest open-space

experience. There is an inherent "green is good for all" in much of the preservationist-conservationist writing, but such a conceptualization is viewed as just so much aesthetic rhetoric by more disadvantaged segments of the population. In concrete terms, citizens organizations are acting as catalysts for free parks which are readily accessible to a population of low income and mobility. Their goal is the conversion of unused intra-neighborhood space to the open-space forms of parklets and vest pocket parks.

The land market as it operates today is acknowledged as the principal obstacle to effective protection of private open space. Metropolitan governments' struggle to retain land as open space is characterized by the recurrent theme: allocation of opportunity costs. These costs constitute what is sacrificed by maintaining public use in terms of both a particular and adjacent land use. The market value of a land asset varies depending upon the value of uses which can be made of that land parcel. Current land-use controls have dramatic and direct effects on values as well as precise locational effects which may force particular property owners to serve the public interest without public expense.

Consider the typical instance of a city siting a public facility, such as a park, and subsequently rezoning adjacent property from single-family to multi-family residential. Through no effort of his own, that adjacent property owner may have holdings worth 100 times his initial

investment. In a second case the city acquires land for a landfill. The landowner adjacent to this property is left with open land worth a fraction of his original investment.

No planner or elected official can successfully explain away the harsh and fiscally substantial reality of these seemingly arbitrary and capricious acts. The open-space decision process is thus viewed as an adversary situation between would-be beneficiaries of open spaces and would-not-be bearers of cost. Of prime importance to the success of cost allocations is the changing concept of land from that of private property to that of limited resource and a public/private sharing of cost.

#### Probing the Urban Open-Space Condition

Despite "going, going, gone" reasoning, there are unused, overlooked and forgotten open spaces even in the most crowded metropolitan areas. The problem is not merely a quantitative or absolute loss of land, but a qualitative one of what land is disappearing where. Planned open spaces may successfully assume their proposed public and private role in structuring urban development, utilizing scarce land resources and enhancing the city environment when geographers and all other urban researchers stop treating urban open space as a minor land use. Geographers have worked on recreational land use but their published research seldom deals directly with such use in the city. Instead they have concentrated on areas to which people go to escape the

city.<sup>24</sup> Yeates and Garner in a contemporary urban geography textbook identify six major groups of urban land use, the sum of which does not allow for the totality of open space concerns.<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, theirs is one of the few texts to make a serious attempt to consider the role of the public sector in the organization and operation of the city.

### The Process Approach

The land-use pattern and process of space-use change that alters it are interdependent. Each acts to modify the other. Realization of this relationship is resulting in a shift in emphasis toward probing behind the pattern to expose the process which has brought that pattern into existence. Harvey, among others, has argued that a new and productive research focus in geography would be that of examining interactions between temporal process and spatial form.<sup>26</sup> Hall urges geographers to "be concerned with the decision forces affecting the distribution of space as a scarce public good and consequently with the values, the organization and the access to power in groups."<sup>27</sup> Bourne, while recommending examination of spatial outcomes of individual and group action, warns that the form-process dichotomy may be an artificial differentiation.<sup>28</sup> Berry concurs, saying that pattern and process are in fact features of a flow. Seemingly unchanging land-use patterns or neighborhoods are due to self-maintaining flows of repetitive decisions based on the uniform values of the people

moving in and out of the decision-area.<sup>29</sup>

Forbes observes that the process of space-use change flows through the visible, spatial structure of the city, dragging the slower and uneven process of morphological change after it.<sup>30</sup> The model of urban space-use change shown in Figure 1 is suggested as descriptive of the process. Supportive of decision making rather than location theory, the model demonstrates the coping strategies of space users, space producers and intervening government agencies. Descriptive, as opposed to prescriptive, the model introduces analyses of the (1) diversity of units (individuals or groups) receiving positive or negative impacts, (2) multiplicity of goals, (3) decision making sequence, (4) relative access to power of contenders, (5) incompatible programs, and (6) binding character of previous decisions.

Focusing on process generally and the model specifically is a productive approach to the troublesome question: Who gets what, where and how? Responses to the question reflect judgments between alternative values and spatial arrangements of society. In the following case study "who" refers to all individuals in the Wichita, Kansas area, while "what" represents the utility (positive or negative) derived from the open space-related goods experienced. The "how" question concerns the filtering and competitive processes by which that urban community spends its space budget. Introduction of "where" and its relationship to "who" and "how" poses the problem of optimal- or perhaps, satisfactory-

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COMPARED TO THE  
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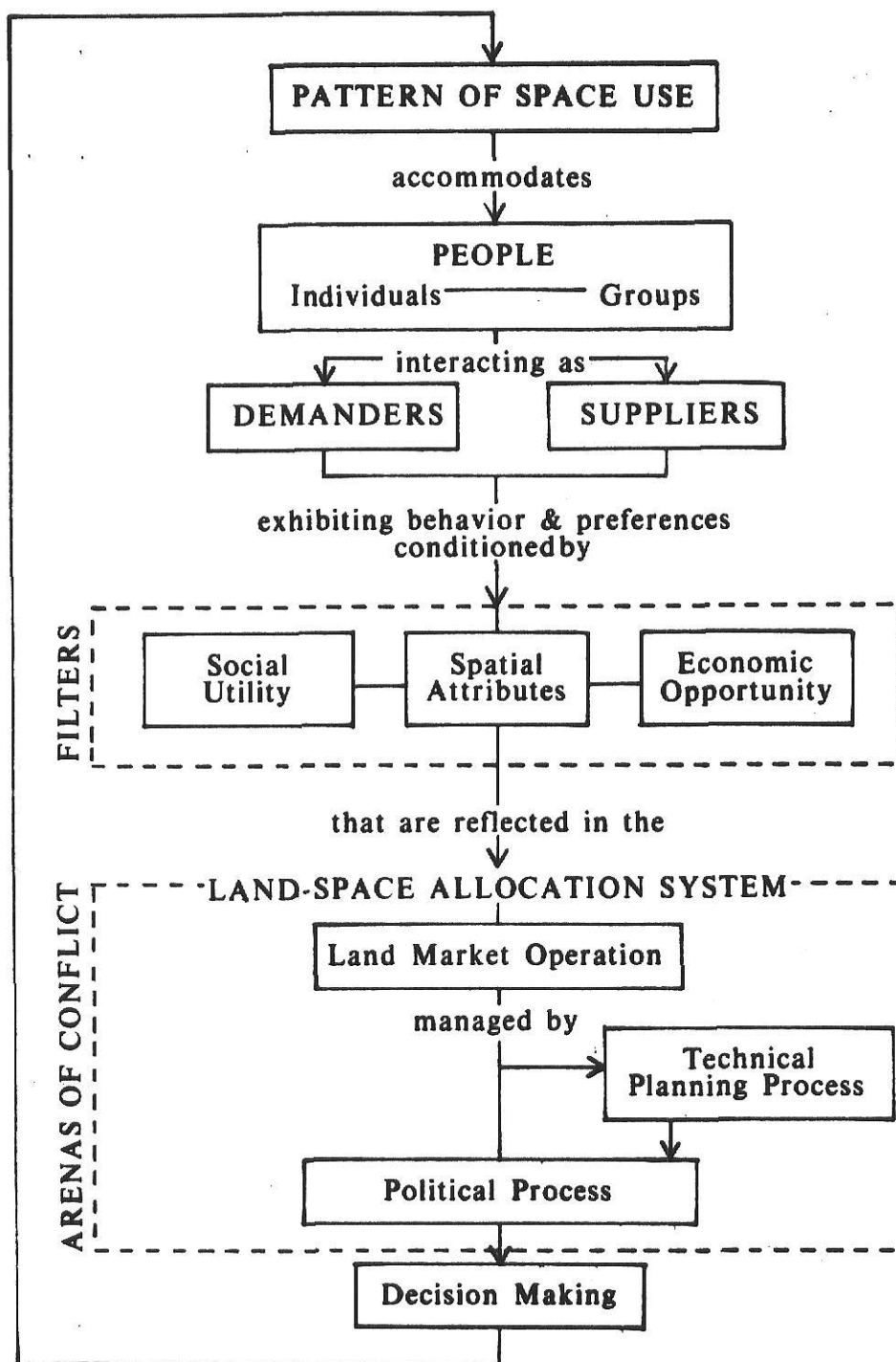


Figure 1  
Urban Space-Use Change Model



spatial distribution of those sources of satisfaction.

### Description of the Study

Purpose. The ruin-and-run legacy of urban development plus the groping-upward response to urban open-space needs provide a number of topical and researchable questions. This study asks: What are the relationships between observable open-space patterns and actions and values of public and private decision makers? Evidence of those relationships is sought within the framework of the model of urban space-use change and is expected to support the following: (a) A gap exists between formal supply and functional demand in terms of aesthetic, ecological, recreational and form structuring functions of urban open space. (b) Individual and group aspirations or values, attributes of available space, and economic opportunity are the primary filters responsible for the shaping of open-space demands. (c) The various open-space functions compete and are satisfied or denied within three principal arenas of conflict: operation of the land market, the technical planning process, or the political process. Focusing on the processes by which urban open spaces are created is expected to more clearly identify the critical decision factors and by extension increase the ability to influence "who gets what, where and how."

Case Study. Although the level of explanation made possible by the process approach and the relationships outlined in the urban space-use change model might be generally supportable for urban open space, it is necessary to select a specific example so that analysis can be based on real conditions. Wichita, Kansas, and Comotara, a multi-use real estate development in its rural-urban fringe are unique impact and decision fields over which the model can be superimposed. In part the choice is attributable to the fact that "it is there." Data are readily available and exploiting it adds to the information resources for the region.

The sites are appropriate for testing the model as the issues addressed are real and present concerns. Public planning documents, "Formulation of Goals and Objectives for Wichita-Sedgwick County" and the "Parks and Open Space 1976-2000 Sedgwick County Kansas" have been publicly debated with the first rejected and the second adopted. Comotara is firmly established as a planned, residential and industrial entity on the periphery of the city. Further, these two areas make possible the examination of open-space management in a city and coterminous planned development subject to the same cultural, economic and political pressures. Comotara's integration as a subsystem of the metropolitan area can be explored. Conversely, public and private distinctions can be highlighted. Wichita as supplier of public goods is subject to civic accountability yet lacks service

competition. Comotara is currently being developed and operated in the competitive private market.

#### A Plan of Study

Initially the literatures of geography, planning, land use, public administration, facility location, and recreation and park administration are sampled in order to construct the general climate in which open-space demands and decisions have and are being made. This will assist in helping to (a) identify activities of demanders and suppliers of open space in the land-space allocation system, (b) define and describe the urban space use-change "filters" underlying that activity: social utility values, spatial attributes, and economic opportunity, and (c) examine land market operations, the technical planning process and the political process as arenas of conflict and decision.

Second, the study examines and assesses evidence of the model components in Wichita and Comotara. Assessments are made in terms of (1) recreation/open space plans for 1946, 1965 and 1976, and other archival material; and (2) interviews with decision makers in municipal agencies and the Comotara development (Comotara Properties, Inc.), and opinion formers within neighborhood or special interest groups. Finally, the distinctiveness of Wichita-Comotara is assessed by examining studies and formal plans from comparable cities.<sup>31</sup>

In summary, if the process of urban open-space decision making appears to be ineffective, it must be attributed in part to the fact that too little is known about it. This case study is an attempt to learn more about the steps leading to an open-space decision outcome. This is accomplished by following the decision-making process as it unfolds and taking note as the steps are impinged upon, influenced, blocked or accelerated by a range of individual, institutional and contextual variables. Events in Wichita and Comotara further allow contrasts to be drawn between private and public sector initiatives.

Chapter Two helps develop the case study by defining the components of the urban space-use change model. The box-arrow design of models tends to orient thinking toward the boxes--the observable conditions and activities. The urban space-use change model focuses on what might normally be the arrows in a model--the context in which activities are carried out. This serves to define and explain the boxes in terms of the accommodations, interactions, preferences and management generally exhibited during open-space deliberations--directly and indirectly, intentionally, and unintentionally. These discussions are necessary to identify precedents and current thinking as well as institutional and issue attributes. The case study chapter (Three) completes the adaptation of Forbes' model by focusing on the boxes using data from Wichita, Kansas and other U.S. cities.

## NOTES FOR CHAPTER 1

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<sup>3</sup>Where Not to Build, a Guide for Open Space Planning (Washington: Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1968), p. 20.

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<sup>5</sup>Open Space: Its Uses and Preservation, Economic Research Service Miscellaneous Publication No. 1121 (Washington: U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, 1968), p. 6.

<sup>6</sup>Stanley B. Tankel, "The Importance of Open Space in the Urban Pattern," Cities and Space: The Future Use of Urban Land, ed. by Lowden Wingo (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1963), p. 61.

<sup>7</sup>Tankel, p. 60.

<sup>8</sup>Charles William Eliot, Charles Eliot, Landscape Architect: a Lover of Nature and of His Kind, Who Trained Himself For a New Profession, Practised It Happily and Through It Wrought Much Good (Freeport: Books for Libraries Press, 1971, cl902), pp. 593-607.

<sup>9</sup>Christopher Tunnard and Boris Pushkarev, Man-Made America: Chaos or Control? (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974, cl963).

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<sup>12</sup>Marion Clawson, "A Positive Approach to Open Space Preservation," American Institute of Planners Journal, 28:2 (May, 1962), 125.

<sup>13</sup>Rutherford H. Platt, The Open Space Decision Process, Research Paper No. 142 (Chicago: University of Chicago Dept. of Geography, 1972), p. 2.

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<sup>26</sup>David Harvey, Explanation in Geography (London: Edward Arnold, 1969).

<sup>27</sup>Peter Hall, "The New Political Geography," Institute of British Geographers, Transactions, 63 (November, 1974), 48.

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<sup>30</sup>Jean Forbes, "Activities and Space Use Change," Studies in Social Science and Planning, ed. by Jean Forbes (New York: Wiley, 1974), p. 130.

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## CHAPTER 2

### URBAN OPEN-SPACE USE CHANGE

#### Introduction

Open space as a functional land use includes both public and private urban space, with emphasis placed on the term "use." Statements as to what constitutes a proper type and degree of use assumes the same approach taken in other urban land-use decisions. When open space is not merely the space left over after planning, decisions about the allocation of land to different forms of open space reflect applications of public-location theorizing and decision making.

#### Urban Open-Space Decisions as Applied Public Location Theory

Public facility location is both a part of and apart from urban location analysis. Characteristic of most public facility location problems is concern for public goods and the need for equity as well as efficiency in a locational outcome. A second characteristic is the hierarchical nature of most public facility systems. This is demonstrated by the fact that facilities are often cataloged by size or frequency of use (daily, weekends, etc.). The problem is further characterized by the "publicness" of the decision--



the lack of competition in service delivery, multiplicity of inputs, public accountability, and inherent conflict.

Recent studies have focused on the distinctive context of the public facility location problem. Mumphrey and Wolpert have shown how efficiency and equity considerations are accounted for in practical decisions on public facility locations.<sup>1</sup> They explain that efficiency and equity are typically in conflict and function as mutual constraints. For example the efficient pattern of uniformly distributed parks of like function is an inequitable pattern based on the lack of uniformity in neighborhoods' needs for park and open-space services. Conflict leads to the application of a concession mechanism which transfers adverse effects of a public facility location from a particular group to society-at-large. The disutility is not, however, eliminated. This is seen in Seley's discussion of dimensions of conflict over public facility location and his demonstration of methods for analyzing it.<sup>2</sup> His approach divides location-decision conflict into relevant questions of fact and value. Goals dealing with questions of fact address where, when and other measurable outcomes. Goals dealing with questions of value address attitudinal outcomes such as support for the opinions of planners or the planning process. He contends that political conflict is often premised on trivial aspects of a situation--meaningless ideology or emotional postures.

Both Harvey and Dear consider distributive consequences of public facility location and the forces and

mechanisms producing those consequences.<sup>3, 4</sup> Since resources are limited, political, economic and social priorities have to be established. As accessibility is found to mean different things to different people, distinctions are drawn between the human impact of providing accessibility to public facilities and mere proximity to a public facility. What an individual perceives as being reasonably accessible may bear no relationship to its physical proximity.

From a related perspective, Hodge and Gatrell analyze the effect of urban spatial form--size, shape and arrangement of residential areas on the equitable location of public facilities.<sup>5</sup> They demonstrate that underlying form is both a constraint upon and a result of locational processes stemming from our political, economic and social systems. For example, the size and arrangement of residential areas of various social groups creates spatial variation in demand for equitable open-space allotments. Resulting land-use patterns further affect the amount of location choice for additional open-space sites.

#### Urban Open-Space Decisions as Applied Public Decision Making

The continuing search for "best location" is often termed the geographer's unsolved problem.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile it is the political scientist who has had significant influence on the development of systematic studies of municipal location policies. Almost all policy decisions have a spatial

dimension or consequence and locating a public facility is inherently a political act. To expose such locational decision making in practice, the geographer is legitimately concerned with the political processes of decision making and policy formulation.

A recent statement on the urban milieu is made by political scientists Lineberry and Sharkansky. They recognize a triangular model of community power identifying three power poles: political, private and administrative.<sup>7</sup> The dominating pole will vary between cities and with policy areas within a single city. In the case of open-space considerations, for example, parks may be under the control of municipal administrators or bureaucrats, waterways management under the control of political decision makers and open-space aesthetics at the neighborhood level under private control.

Among the major approaches to identification of power holders who affect decision making is that designed by Dahl. It is called the event analysis or decision-making approach (after its method), the political-science approach (after its academic proponents), and the pluralist alternative (after its usual findings).<sup>8</sup> Key community issues and those who seem significant in affecting their outcomes are identified. Current decisions are selected by the researcher from meetings, newspaper accounts and interviews with participants and past decisions can be reconstructed through similar procedures and from archival sources. The approach is

not without methodological weaknesses as:

People are asked for reports of their own and others' behavior with regard to particular decisions, the reports of journalists are used, and the reconstruction of past decisions may reflect severe distortions of memory and perception.<sup>9</sup>

By emphasizing key or controversial decisions the approach also ignores the cumulative significance of routine decisions. For example, if a city continually invests in intensive maintenance for its most elaborate parks, which are often found in upper income neighborhoods, low income areas may have substandard facilities--a routine decision with potentially significant consequences.

Public decision making is rarely rational. Lineberry and Sharkansky outline five reasons why decisions in public or private bodies seldom measure up to the exacting standard of pure rationality: (1) the sheer pressure of time; (2) the costs of obtaining adequate political (community preferences) and technical (efficient means) information; (3) the mixture of sometimes incompatible or incommensurable goals that are pursued simultaneously within an urban system; (4) structural fragmentation of the political system; and (5) the constraints of political feasibility.<sup>10</sup> Policy formulation in practice is viewed as the science of "muddling through."<sup>11</sup> This method of "successive limited comparisons" is indeed a system. It is not a failure of method for which administrators ought to apologize. In the process one simultaneously chooses a policy to attain certain objectives and chooses the objectives

themselves. By the impossibility of doing otherwise, administrators often decide policy without clarifying objectives first.

General formulations of objectives, when available, are not very useful in specific situations. Even when an administrator resolves to follow his own values as a criterion for decisions, he often will not know how to rank them when they conflict with one another, as they usually do. Policy questions arise in the form which put to administrators such questions as: Given the degree to which we are or are not already safeguarding fragile natural environments, is it worth sacrificing conservation efforts for more readily accessible recreation facilities? Is it necessary or correct to limit the rights of land owners to develop their holdings along waterways in order to preserve given levels of water quality? Does the city's need for play areas (as best it can be determined) take precedent over the objections of residents to anticipated noise and other nuisances?

A simple ranking of policy objectives is not enough. One needs ideally to know how much of one value is worth sacrificing for some other value. Administrators, unable consequently to formulate the relevant values first and then choose among policies to achieve them, must choose directly among alternative policies that offer different marginal combinations of values. Somewhat paradoxically, the only practicable way to disclose one's relevant marginal values

even to oneself is to describe the policy one chooses to achieve them. Thus, while unable to answer easily the questions posed above, a city manager may allow alteration of natural landscapes to provide a minimum standard density of recreation facilities of a given design. Landowners may go unchallenged until runoff from their development presents a human health hazard. Area residents' opposition may be allowed to build as new play areas are added for which there are few supervisors and no regular maintenance.

Comparisons of policy alternatives, together with policy choice, proceed serially. Policy is not made once and for all; it is made and re-made endlessly. The policy maker expects his policies will achieve only part of what he hopes and at the same time will produce unanticipated consequences he would prefer to avoid. Proceeding through a succession of incremental changes, he builds on his successes and remedies previous errors.

Hall and Massam point out that connections between theory in geography and theory in political science are poorly developed.<sup>12, 13</sup> Nevertheless, the approaches discussed are suggestive of a convergence of interests in behavioral research and an example of what Berry would term "modern" geography.<sup>14</sup> The essence of Berry's paradigm is that geographic explanation be viewed as dealing with the antecedents and consequences of environmental and locational decision making. This involves the assumption that the world is a "complex living system in which individuals,

social groups and institutions are dynamically interrelated actors involved in continuing processes of decision making."<sup>15</sup>

Pursuing such a paradigm involves recognizing a decision-making sequence. Bourne elaborates:

this sequence might lead from (1) stimuli, needs and desires, perceived or indeterminant to (2) decision responses, to (3) consequent actions, to (4) resulting spatial outcomes, and finally to (5) feedback between action and response, between outcome and decision, and between environment reaction and perceived stimuli, needs, etc.<sup>16</sup>

Aspects of both Berry's and Bourne's conceptualizations will be found in the process approach used in the urban space-use change model as well as in the case study of Wichita and Comotara.

#### Modeling Urban Open-Space Use Change

To fully operationalize the process approach involves the recognition of a decision-making sequence such as is found in Forbes' "Process of Space Use Change,"<sup>17</sup> and from which is derived an urban space-use change model. The model (Figure 1), a variation on Forbes' model, depicts the dynamic system allocating space as a scarce public good and allows one to trace a particular case through the process. Complex marginal adjustments are demonstrated via trade-offs and compromises in a world where all objectives cannot be achieved. Patterns of space use are conditional statements of the process itself and physical manifestations of human activity. People, individually or in groups, interact as



demanders and suppliers exhibiting preferences and supporting behavior conditioned by social utility values, spatial quality values, and economic opportunity. In the hypothetical case illustrated in Figure 1, a range of conceived functions for a decision-making situation is presented. A typical situation might be that of dealing with commonly-owned land in a residential development--a PUD (planned unit development).

Social utility values are expressed in open spaces maintained for their aesthetic, ecological, recreational and/or urban structuring properties. In addition these functional areas are applications of spatial quality values implemented via efficiency, or equity, locational techniques. These utility and territorial attributes of space combine to define "turf" or activity boundaries for individuals and neighborhoods. Economic opportunity is shorthand for the evolving and complex blend of public needs and private rights as applied to the control of land.

These decision conditioners or "filters" are reflected in a land-space allocation system where exchanges and alterations in the land market are managed by technical-planning and political processes. Decision making is a psychological event, a sociological drama, and a process of data and information manipulation which may or may not alter the pattern of space use. In the instance of a PUD residents, developers and municipalities participate in a variety of coalitions in order to control the aesthetic,



recreational, urban structuring and economic opportunities resulting from clustering development. The perceptions of values to be gained or lost become the facts of the case and are argued in a succession of forums.

In this conceptualization land, for which there may be no operationally definable "best use," assumes a passive role in a bargaining structure made up of groups whose interests are often conflicting but interdependent. People are the initiators of action and may assume dual roles in the process. Each individual may exert weight in the system --as a resident and therefore both potential supplier and demander of space and as part of a professional group within the land market, as a planner, or as an elected official. The planning operation is also two-sided--control of development on one hand, promotion of development based on an approved policy on the other. The first role is that of referee or synthesizer of demands, the second that of proxy demander of space.

The validity of the model can be demonstrated through some kind of simulation "play." Forbes finds the term "play" more appropriate than "game" for the operations of a system more closely resembling "action of a great drama, or a major orchestral work than the playing of a game within rules which are known in advance and which do not change as play proceeds."<sup>18</sup> Such a simulation is made in terms of one public facility example and component of urban space-use patterns--open space. Even the singleness of this

demonstration does little to alleviate the complexity of conditioning "filters" and intensity of activity within three "arenas of conflict."

### Filters

One of the most perplexing tasks for open-space decision makers is weighing conflicting values and, in particular, doing so with adequate sensitivity to fragile values such as aesthetic concerns. Discussions sponsored by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences have arrived at a basic consideration of value conflicts as a whole.<sup>19</sup> Their study stemmed from the question of how a national, environmental research institute might provide analysis and guidance to policy makers and used the proposed Tocks Island Dam on the Delaware River as a case study. It was soon apparent that issues involved in conflicts between what are generally accepted to be hard economic and soft social values (between commercial development and preserving natural vistas) can be articulated if not resolved. But in fact environmental disputes also involve conflict among what might be considered competing soft values such as preserving wilderness trails versus meeting recreational needs of inner-city residents. The study points out that it is not so much that analytic and legal tools inherently skew policy choices toward some kind of values and away from others, but that these tools, designed for the technical task of measuring agreed upon ends, "seemed inadequate to

the task of explicitly addressing controverted issues of value at all."<sup>20</sup> For example, cost-benefit analysis assumes that there is general agreement on values in terms of which costs and benefits to affected groups are defined, measured and weighed against one another. The Tocks Island Dam calculations demonstrated the use of unquestioned decision rules and numerical values, the bases for which were often forgotten.<sup>21</sup>

Finally our ways of evaluating policy options and implementing policy choices do not rise above our ways of talking about what is at stake and what is to be done.<sup>22</sup> Society does not easily generate frank and illuminating discussion about questions of values that divide it. One can only trace the discourse through indicators of broad, cultural value categories.

Cultural meanings of land and open space, as one such category, are concerned with human expectations. Expectations associated with land ownership can be divided into the need for individual access and community access to land. Individual access to land involves the opportunities open to an individual to control sufficient space in which to maintain his expected standard of living. In this instance land is a symbolic expression of personal success and individual human dignity. Community access to land includes the provision of space for essential community support services (parks for example), community security from disruption (such as from non-complementary land uses), and

the encouragement of a sense of control through access to the planning process. In turn these elements break down into expectations dealing with (1) functional or social utility, (2) spatial attributes, and (3) economic opportunity.

### Social Utility

The social utility element may be subdivided into expectations dealing with aesthetic functions, ecological functions, recreational functions and urban-structuring functions. Aesthetic expectations or functions are expressed in terms of the degree to which land should provide a positive sensory impact. The term aesthetics appears in many federal and local guidelines for project planning, including the Council on Environmental Quality guidelines for responding to the National Environmental Policy Act. But aesthetic arguments concerning a particular land-use decision have until recently been statements based on emotion or personal preferences. An early (1968) attempt at quantifying landscape aesthetics identified three types of factors: physical features, biological and water-quality features, and human-use and interest features.<sup>23</sup> The first two factors were easily measured in the field and included dimensions of mountains, valleys, water movement and the presence, and condition of flora and fauna. The third factor includes more intangibles such as the presence or absence of vistas, the presence of "misfits"--objects that

are out of character with the natural surroundings, and degree of urbanization. The evaluative scheme was predicated on the assumption that landscapes unique either in a positive or negative way are of more significance to society (and thereby warranting either preservation or destruction) than those that are common.<sup>24</sup> Exploring the concept of scenic benefits as an aspect of spatial behavior, Ulrich concludes that visual environment is a factor in urban route choice and objective procedures for the assessment of visual landscapes are feasible.<sup>25</sup> In spite of the subjectivity being measured, there is evidence that people tend to agree in their perceptions of variety, unity and vividness in landscapes.<sup>26</sup>

As a second sub-element of social utility, ecological expectations express the degree to which land should perform ecological work, mitigate the extremes of environmental forces, and provide a sense of natural balance. Concentration on the compatibility of natural processes and man's uses is demonstrated in the work of McHarg, Lewis and Hills. Their orientation leads to certain working assumptions. Specifically, where natural processes are clearly carrying out a vital function, such as regulation of stream flow, this function should be protected. Where a benefit is perceived in nature, such as a scenic vista, this benefit should determine the best use of that land. Where a use restraint is understood to be a product of nature, such as on a floodplain, this restraint should be respected. To use

McHarg's phrase, a "presumption in favor of nature" is to be made.<sup>27</sup>

Lewis has designed regional plans that identify significant resource patterns and where these patterns are most likely to be damaged or destroyed by future development.<sup>28</sup> Although such an outcome can only be predicted, he argues that those resource patterns should determine the form of future development. Hills, in turn, outlines a planning process for integrating gradients of environmental, institutional and individual welfare decisions in land use.<sup>29</sup> It is a continuous process as enlightened decision makers develop alternative planning scenarios based on surveys of the physical, political, social and historical opportunities and constraints. Those scenarios are modified as inputs are obtained from the people affected and as the effects of plan implementation are realized.

Brooks suggests that a notion such as the "rights of Nature" is analogous to taboos or religious beliefs. It is possible that future historians will see our romantic views of nature as having served a social function in enabling humanity to cope with environmental complexity it could not scientifically understand.<sup>30</sup> O'Riordan expands on this notion that nature is working by laws man may never fully understand. As with the notions of justice or truth,

"Nature" is a call to keep the inquiry open, to close no books on live possibilities, and to suspect--always to suspect--the reliability of the human arts and institutions on which men are staking their lives, and, more to the point, other people's lives.<sup>31</sup>

This suggests that we prefer natural environments to synthesized ones because we are more familiar with techniques of managing the natural ones. In the words of Krieger, "Plastic trees are frightening."<sup>32</sup>

Among criteria of valuation for ecological, as well as aesthetic, decision making are uniqueness and naturalness. If natural systems that are not duplicated elsewhere have a higher value than those more widely distributed, then a piece of undisturbed nature is more valuable than an equally attractive natural system maintained by human cultivation. This has not always been so. To Brooks it represents a distinctively modern attitude brought about by the increasing rarity of natural environments and by the growing sense that "people need something in their environments that is not of their own making or shaping, if only because they would be lost in an universe that simply mirrored themselves."<sup>33</sup>

One could add that few areas seen as "natural" have not been modified by man's presence in an area, particularly if settled for as short a time as one generation. Both the facts of and sentiment for "natural areas" could be served by the artful development of man-made, and distinctive, pleasing native enclaves. This latter position is reflected in the work of our urban park designers.

Private citizens and public officials tend to equate urban open space with public parks. Whether parks are points of personal retreat or social interaction they



represent recreational expectations as an element in the constantly evolving meaning of the good life. The public and private expenditure of funds would seem to support such an assumption, whatever its mix of fact and faith. Gold takes exception to accepted notions of urban parks, eloquently postulating that user orientations are not park directed and that social restraints, access, site characteristics, goal differences and personal safety are all factors explaining the non-use of urban parks.<sup>34</sup>

In the 1960's public service administration goals of decentralization, accessibility, and participation contributed to an awareness that the parts that make up the whole city could be quite dissimilar and that the needs of the parts differ. Subsequent metropolitan area, social planning studies were structured on the premise that low socioeconomic status was a manifestation of high recreation and open-space need.<sup>35</sup> At the same time deserted city parks, while adequate in terms of park standards, were judged irrelevant to most of those who live in cities. Little charges that the simple conclusion that certain urban residents (racial groups, social classes, age cohorts) have no interest in or need for community open spaces fails to differentiate between green space and social space (space for social activity).<sup>36</sup> This notion is more fully explored in later discussions of community territoriality.

The use of urban open space to forge urban development patterns is a less-recognized open-space and social-



utility function. Historically, the integration of city and countryside is highlighted by the City Beautiful era of the late-nineteenth century. Olmsted's design of New York's Central Park and the Burnham plan for Chicago called for "formulation of grand city plans to stir men's imagination and create urban order and beauty."<sup>37</sup> A second movement, Howard's Garden City, had its greatest effect in the 1930's in conjunction with Perry's neighborhood unit or superbblock principle. In both, the objective was to bring amenity and privacy into the city by isolating residential areas from industrial areas via large and interconnecting green spaces.<sup>38</sup>

Three open-space elements are associated with goals for metropolitan growth and new towns in the late 1960's.<sup>39</sup> First are separators (areas) and buffers (edges) intended to isolate incompatible elements of one type of land from another for practical reasons of controlling such conditions as noise and fumes, and for aesthetic reasons of identifying and defining areas. At the same time they can be unifying elements providing continuity and creating open-space systems. Second, centerpiece open space, enclosed by development, functions to give a sense of place and orientation as well as providing breathing space within intensely developed areas. Finally, distributor open spaces are channels for movement, the principal linear elements of an open-space system. Streets and waterways link the various open-space uses and centerpieces and may be functionally combined with

buffers or separators or serve purely as distributors.

### Spatial Attributes

Spatial attributes of landscape address expectations as to the degree to which land should provide an optimum physical arrangement or setting for community, social diversity and amenity. Fundamental philosophical questions emerge for those concerned with assessment and expression of needs for open-space goods. Is it equal opportunity for all, or more (or different) opportunity for some? In simplified measurement terms, is it the application of general standards (efficiency techniques) or comparative need (equity techniques)?

Standards provide the basic measure for the equality or efficiency technique of determining local open-space needs. The park and recreation profession has expended considerable energy throughout this century to devise and publicize minimum space and facility standards for urban populations. Regretably, the result is a single, undifferentiated set of standards that are adopted as the ideal rather than the minimum. These standards evolved without regard for what actually existed and it was not until 1970 that a study provided information about existing quantities of urban open space and noncommercial recreation, and it covers only 25 U.S. cities and their inner-city areas.<sup>40</sup> Largely because appropriate data are available for the first time, findings in this study are expressed in terms of a

city-by-city comparison to the undifferentiated standards that the study argues against. The national minimum standard of 10 acres/1000 population is applied to Newark and Oklahoma City although their respective population densities are 16,273 and 576 persons per square mile, and their climate and ethnic compositions are among other distinct differences.<sup>41</sup> Thus the 15,040 acres comprising the city of Newark is 3687 acres short of the standard and Oklahoma City (406,848 acres) has a 30 acre surplus of recreational open space.<sup>42</sup> Los Angeles has a 12,000 acre deficit whereas Phoenix has a 12,000 acre surplus. The study concluded that "continued reliance on traditional undifferentiated standards is unrealistic."<sup>43</sup>

How well open space works is not necessarily proportional to the quantity of land preserved. Other values, such as shape, spacing and design are important. Whyte observes that the question of shape or "linearity" bears a direct relationship to the distribution of open-space benefits.<sup>44</sup> The more attenuated the open space, the more interface with developed residential land and the more varied the potential for individual use such as hiking or cycling. Trails and green strips also add to the marketability of real estate without substantially reducing the amount of developable land. By combining piecemeal fragments of open space into a more comprehensive pattern or system, benefits accrue to the entire community.

The relationship between the well-being of people living in an urban community and physical features of their residential environment is also fundamental to the need for open space. James catalogs probes in various disciplines demonstrating that physical characteristics are roughly as important as social characteristics in explaining well-being problems.<sup>45</sup> Sociologists have tested the hypothesis that socio-cultural conditions may influence, aggravate, or cause mental illness. Ecologists express alarm over the consequences of losing natural environments and speak of such disruptions as threatening human existence. Economists are involved in developing methodologies for assigning benefit values to urban environmental improvements. Finally, recent interdisciplinary conference findings suggest eight environmental characteristics as being important to a sense of well-being among city dwellers. Included are low noise and air pollution levels, provision of areas for outdoor play and relaxation, and aesthetic satisfaction.<sup>46</sup>

Social scientists have only recently focused much attention on human interaction with the physical environment and the concept of territoriality, used broadly to include real estate as well as cognitive preserves. Territoriality, as defined by Soja is

a behavioral phenomenon associated with the organization of space into spheres of influence or clearly demarcated territories which are made distinctive and considered at least partially exclusive by their occupants or definers.<sup>47</sup>

Distribution and management of territorial property seems to have significant social-psychological functions, including the strengthening of social rank distinctions, the reduction of disorder and complexity, and the binding of individual or group behavior to produce a sense of continuity.<sup>48</sup>

The notion that satisfying social (as well as economic) objectives underlies spatial behavior was initiated among geographers by Gould in the mid-1960's. Subsequent work by Brown, Horton, Moore and others explores the composite of site and situational utilities that affect space searching behavior and the underlying concept of place utility--an individual's level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with respect to a given location.<sup>49</sup>

Differentiation of individual place utility applicable to open-space concerns must be drawn from recent studies of urban recreation destination selection. Accessibility is a paramount consideration as seventy-five percent of leisure time (minutes, hours, a day, or weekend) is spent near residences. But only nine percent of our nation's recreation facilities are located in urban America and only three percent of these public recreation lands are considered reasonably accessible.<sup>50</sup> From this research activity and resulting array of terminology Capelle synthesizes the following subsets of a spatial reference system.

The world provides many possible destinations, only a few of which are realistically available . . . (opportunity set). The household or individual is aware of only some of those (awareness space) . . . and only a few of those are frequently visited and become

permanent components of the activity space.<sup>51</sup>

Not fully appreciating the concept of community territoriality, recreation and open-space planners assume that a park a few blocks away--whether Central Park or a vest pocket park--can provide both green space and social-activity space. But the existence of recognized and named neighborhoods, areas of homogeneous and segregated residential patterns and ethnic composition, and pronounced barriers and boundaries to human interaction which are not solely based on physical features all attest to the operation of powerful local territorial mechanisms.<sup>52</sup> Community boundaries, especially in poor neighborhoods tend to be highly restrictive, so that city streets serve the activity-space functions of suburban yards. Definition of territory may also be internally generated by the dynamics of inter- and intra-group relations or imposed from above through the operation of political-administrative structure. An example of the latter would be seen in differences in space use and perception for coterminous areas owned by the city and the state as in the case of an university campus. Physical barriers often separate distinctly different populations, landscapes and power structures. In either case, territoriality serves to regulate patterns of spatial competition, conflict and cooperation.

### Economic Opportunity

Seldom is a piece of urban land suitable for only one use. The arbitrator among competing uses is often the willingness-to-pay, a function of ability-to-pay. The use that can pay the highest price for a given land parcel will secure it. "Highest and best use," as it is referred to in real estate circles, simply denotes the winner of a private market competition for land. It is equated with "wisest use" in the sense that it involves individually-motivated, voluntary decisions serving the interests and expectations of an economically-influential segment of society. To date such use has tended to reflect most strongly the expectations dealing with economic opportunity rather than those expressing social utility or spatial quality expectations.

Inter-temporal conflicts in land use generally arise from the fact that land-use conditions in one period foreclose options for other land-use conditions in subsequent periods. The conversion of land from its natural state or open-space uses demonstrates both economic and natural irreversibility.<sup>53</sup> Development tends to eliminate certain economic options because land-use conversions are typically to a higher-value use. Natural-state options may be lost--permanently as man perceives time. The economic approach to reconciliation of land-use conflicts seeks methods of identifying and quantifying trade-offs, thus implying that all values are subject to compromise. An emerging and divergent



environmentalists' approach identifies ideals, imposing sharp constraints to guarantee their realization.

It is perhaps part of our national ethic that the achiever wins and everybody else loses. However Ecology is a vastly different concept--its premise is that we either all succeed or we all fail.<sup>54</sup>

Conventional Western perspectives on spatial organization are shaped by a concept of property in which pieces of territory are viewed as commodities, and the concept that society is best served when individuals maximize personal profit in the use of land and other resources. The famous eighteenth century expression of the absolutist view of private property is that of Blackstone.

There is nothing which so generally strikes the imagination and engages the affections of mankind, as the right of property; or that sole and despotic dominion which one man claims and exercises over the external things of the world, in total exclusion of the rights of any other individual in the universe.<sup>55</sup>

Those who buy, sell and use urban land are traditionally shielded by the Blackstonian creed, and more specifically by the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: ". . . nor be deprived of life, liberty or property, without due process of law, nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation."

A nineteenth century challenge of the commodity concept of urban land comes from the economist Henry George. He points out the sense in which land value derives from location value and value of improvements.<sup>56</sup> George said landowners have no right to the land itself, nor to the value which social integration adds to the land because land



value derived from the community should be returned to the community.

Radical changes in the American economy and life styles of the mid-twentieth century find the nation poorly equipped by law or psychology to cope with the mounting problems of land use. Platt notes that the pure, private property concept applies satisfactorily to a narrowing range of natural resources and economic activities.<sup>57</sup> But, undoubtedly no issue is more politically charged and complicated than changes in law and practice governing land use. The right to own land is seen as the cornerstone of economic life and personal freedom.

Much of the uncertainty among the current manipulators of land is related to the lack of clear values and objectives on which to base policies aimed at substantial innovation in controlling the ownership and use of land. To solve economic issues and reconcile the right of individuals to own with the need of society to plan suggests altering basic notions of property. Differentiating between land ownership and land use questions the very meaning of land as a legally defined area and element in the human and non-human life support systems.

The justice of private gain or private loss because of public action is central to analysis of governmental intervention. Public action for the most part reinforces pressures of the private market. Governmental specification of land use aims at maintaining or improving the exchange

values of the land affected. The landowner accepts regulations in exchange for the knowledge that he and his fellow landowners can avoid poorly planned, privately initiated development. This doctrine of nuisance rests relatively undisturbed within zoning practices legitimized by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1926.<sup>58</sup> Platt concedes that while zoning as an instrument of order has succeeded in producing a chaos of its own, it is so firmly entrenched that there is little possibility that the Supreme Court will do more than review some of the more controversial applications of this police power.<sup>59</sup>

Although there is precedence for arguing for land-use regulation on a police power-externality basis, the taking issue appears to override. The power of eminent domain or condemnation is not mentioned directly in the U.S. Constitution, but the Fifth Amendment is interpreted to mean that if "just compensation" is paid, private property may be taken for public purpose. The issue is the price to be paid. Government is in the position of having to buy back at commercial prices land it once gave away for free. Availability of funds is a direct function of the tax base which, in turn, is a direct function of urban development and "highest and best use." Efforts that deny the most profitable use of land reduce the amount of revenues that could be realized through the ad-valorem tax.

A most important deficiency in the present system from a fiscal viewpoint is the failure to collect betterment

(George's value derived from social integration).

Betterment defined in its broadest sense includes not only increases in land value arising from positive community action (sewer line or street extensions) which are occasionally collectible by the community under existing legislation, but from the exercise of negative restrictions on development. Thus if a local community prohibits development on one plot of land, it creates substantial gains for the owner of a second plot. While legitimately belonging to the community, a viable means of measuring and separating out that portion of value is lacking.

Further consequences follow. There is an inequity between individual landowners since one may gain a great deal and another nothing, thus creating moral pressure on those officials responsible for decisions. The growing number of tough federal, state, regional and local restrictions is magnifying inequities. There is a growing disrespect for zoning, which remains the principal tool of the local planner. The citizenry (or selected segments) increasingly see zoning as an exclusionary device, an instrument for excluding completely undesired land uses and people from communities rather than simply restricting particular uses to certain zones within the community. Those bearing disproportionate burdens in the name of a better environment are striking back, demanding justice.

Environmentalists discovered the value of cost-benefit analysis as a device to rationalize public decisions

on the municipal open space in 1958. This was the year that Greeley published a letter in the Lexington, Massachusetts Minute Man to the effect that if the town would buy 2000 acres of vacant land it would save taxpayers money.<sup>60</sup> In the suburbs, environmentalists made their own calculations to prove that the preservation of land, any land, was cheaper than the zoned alternative--usually single-family houses on 1/2 or full-acre lots. The Open Space Institute among others published this new "municipal math" far and wide.

Developers fought back. The Urban Land Institute under a grant from the National Association of Home Builders, tried to prove that single-family homes could generate tax revenues that would pay for the municipal services they would require if calculations were made differently. In a compromise effort, Whyte and others proposed cluster development as a way to save open space, maintain zoned densities and reduce construction costs. Developers saw a larger opportunity--PUD. They proposed uncommonly high densities and large open-space allotments. It was argued that, through economics of scale, a PUD could provide many of its own municipal services.

From the dialogue, one senses that any substantial change needed to handle the socio-environmental problems that face us requires public intervention. The idea that government might actually own urbanizing land and make the development decisions is surfacing. New town development

is generally posited on this premise. There is the feeling that government should purchase amenity lands in order to protect them from development. Finally, there are proposals that governments purchase and time the release of developable land.

On the other hand, there is underlying uncertainty about the capacity of government to manage land in more effective fashion than the private market. Sentiment prevails for the position that private institutions are both more efficient and somewhat morally superior to public ones. Public intervention refers to government intervention, but whom does government represent? What is the ultimate level and nature of governmental involvement? What are the philosophies guiding management and decision making? What are the goals (long- and short-term) of such involvement? This solution and its unknowns are rejected in favor of continued tinkering with the present land-use system based on the traditional economic cost-benefit approach, whatever its flaws in excluding non-monetary social elements and externalities associated with ecological balance. By example, the consensus among 300 Canadians and U.S. representatives of governments, land development and academia at the 1975 Public Landownership Conference was: (1) The concepts of private ownership and the supporting market system are fundamentally correct, although flawed in their present expression; (2) Public ownership of land should be used as a tool to manage a land market that is disorderly, but not

destructive.<sup>61</sup> This suggests continued avoidance of the problems of conflicting social values, of unintended effects and of hard political decisions.

In summary, land-use specialization, a feature of urbanizing land, is clearly not characteristic of most urban open space. Although represented as one element in the land-use inventory, this space use performs a variety of functions--aesthetic and utilitarian, public and private, planned and unplanned. The actual open-space pieces accumulating on the urban landscape reflect, and can in part be explained by, prevailing values and norms for natural landscapes, outdoor recreation and the "highest and best use" of land. This is in spite of the fact that the predominate functions and uses change as city dwellers modify generally unspoken but real open-space judgments categorized here as expectations dealing with social utility, spatial attributes, and economic opportunity.

#### Land-Space Allocation System

Recognized or not, the previously discussed values are in fact the bases for inputs to a land-space allocation system. The conceptualization of land-space allocation as a system is drawn from Easton's approach to political analysis. By his definition a system is any set of interdependent activities consciously selected in expectation of a payoff in the form of greater understanding.<sup>62</sup> Boundaries, also consciously drawn symbols of inclusion-exclusion,

determine what is to be examined in detail. The system is "natural" only in the sense that the variables appear to cohere significantly. By conceptualizing the "land-space allocation system" as a system one delineates it from the environment in which it exists and to which it is open to influence. As an analytic rather than a membership system, the focus is on selected elements of human behavior or roles rather than on specified collections of individuals. Paralleling Easton's definition of a political system, the "land-space allocation system" is that system of interactions through which binding or authoritative space and land-use allocations are made and implemented.<sup>63</sup> The system performs work in processing and converting a variety of inputs into outputs. The system operates with inputs coming from various environments in the form of demands and supports, with outputs and with feedback mechanisms injecting the effects and consequences of outputs back into the system. The "land-space allocation system" is therefore not only a set of processes routinely converting inputs into outputs; it is a complex, cyclical operation that has a dynamic of its own and that is capable of being purposive and goal-directed.

Demand inputs are "expressions of opinion that an authoritative allocation . . . should or should not be made by those responsible for doing so."<sup>64</sup> They may be requests for specific action or vague requests for "better . . ." or "more . . .", and may come from the environment or from



within the system. A conversion process trims down and formulates the great mass of initial demands in ways that make it possible for the system to deal with them meaningfully.

The second input variable is the concept of support. It is a willingness to accept the system even though particular demands are not met. Overt support refers to actions that are clearly and manifestly supportive while covert support refers to supportive attitudes or sentiments as in a general declaration for the sanctity of fee simple ownership. For urban open space, overt support is obvious in instances of non-deteriorating levels of public financial support for recreation programs (as a percentage of total operating budget). Covert support is demonstrated by a seeming lack of public interest in participating in park-related decisions.

It is possible to differentiate support directed toward three objects that are components of all political systems. These objects in the "land-space allocation system" include: (1) the land-space use community which consists of the members of the system "seen as a group of persons bound together by a political division of labor";<sup>65</sup> (2) basic values, system structure and norms; and (3) the authorities who hold power at any given time.<sup>66</sup>

The outputs of the "land-space allocation system" are the authoritative decisions and actions of the system's leaders that bear on the allocation of values for the



system. They are the results of conversion or decision-making processes and can be divided into prescriptive statements and concrete performances. As a further distinction, outputs are the immediate or primary results of authoritative decisions, while the secondary and tertiary ramifications that occur over time--and are revealed in the land-space use pattern--are conceptualized as outcomes.

From a maintenance point of view, the ability of the system to sustain itself suggests that it is well adapted to modern conditions. Arguments that the land and space-allocation system was well adapted to earlier times but is not suited to modern conditions are statements as to the system's allocative aspects. The allocative perspective is incapsulated in Lasswell's famous question, "Who gets what, when, how?"<sup>67</sup>

Values and their allocation are at the core of the distributive approach in the sense that they deal with the "what" of the question. Questions concerning "who", "when", "how", and by extension "where", brings one to the examination of the system's three spheres of interaction or "arenas of conflict": (1) the land market operation, (2) the technical planning process and (3) the political process.

#### Land Market Operation

People in a community make decisions that result in the spatial, land-use pattern. With no central authority, each person follows personal ideas of what is individually

best, and various groups undertake limited collective actions. This kind of decentralized decision making is often referred to as "the market." It is characteristic of a market economy that decisions about how resources should be used are made for one piece of property at a time and by individuals who can base their decisions on the known pattern of uses of all other pieces of property. The individual decision maker is largely free to ignore the effect of his decision on other people and other properties not directly involved in the transaction. Of course, there are many decision makers and each decision that one makes can cause many others to reconsider their own choices.

The urban land market deals in real estate resources --land (real property) and capital. The real estate market matches users with elements of supply without the benefit of normal concepts of cost. The basic principle is the same as in an auction--each land parcel goes to the highest bidder in a satisfying rather than an optimizing process.

The bidder withdraws from the auction with the real estate he now controls, but comes back sooner or later to see what that real estate will bring on the market and to see whether something better or more suitable is available. Families and businesses change with respect to their real estate needs as time goes by, and . . . the relative location of each parcel is altered by the changing form of the community. So the auction is continuous, with only a fraction of the users and the properties on the market at any one time.<sup>68</sup>

Open Space Suppliers. The economically motivated owner/supplier of land wants to manage it in such a way that

its value is maximized; its highest and best use realized from his personal standpoint. His demands involve selecting the use that maximizes the value of land and disposing of it at just that moment when its value to him has reached its peak.

The public sector indirectly manipulates the land supply by influencing the landowner's estimated future income and expenses, and the present or future market value of the land.<sup>69</sup> The strongest local policy influence on annual expenses is taxation while the impact on income is felt through zoning limitations affecting the property's economic use. Study findings suggest that current income considerations are usually not as important as expenses in the supplier's calculations.<sup>70</sup>

Developer behavior is attributable not to any systematic approach to land assembly and facility production, but to a general awareness of "what's going on" in the local development scene. Whether the project is a small residential tract or a new town, the developer's profit depends primarily on the skill with which he acquires land and his success in marketing what he builds. These two interact since the location of his development helps determine how readily he can attract consumers. The three main considerations in real estate decisions are, in the words of realtors, "location, location and location", and the estimated effects of property characteristics on marketability of the product outweigh the effects of the cost of production.<sup>71</sup>

In the typical situation the individual developer limits himself to the type of building he knows best, for example homes in the \$55,000-\$65,000 range, and identifies land that would be considered suitable by purchasers of such dwellings. The price market preferred by the developer influences his selection of site characteristics and therefore the project location. Kaiser's tests relating to site characteristics indicate that higher-priced subdivisions are more sensitive to socio-economic prestige levels (generally incorporating relatively large amounts of private open space) of the site than lower-priced subdivisions, while middle- and lower-priced subdivisions are more sensitive to zoning, availability of public utilities (including public open space) and amount of nearby development.<sup>72</sup>

Characteristics of land sites important to residential developers in Iowa are identified as distance to public utility connections, price of undeveloped land, distance to the nearest elementary school and social characteristics of the area.<sup>73</sup> Developers in Greater Vancouver identify four factors of overriding importance in the location decision: proper zoning, price of land, access to trunk sewer lines, and availability of developable land.<sup>74</sup> Rolph finds that specific factors influencing developer decision making are proximity to employment, availability and cost of utility hookups, and "neighborhood reputation."<sup>75</sup>

Developer decision-making characteristics are also traceable to a firm's experience and size. This finding is

borne out by surveys in North Carolina and Santa Clara County, California. Kaiser and Weiss find significant differences between locational decisions and the rankings of site characteristics for large-scale developers (developing more than 100 lots per year) and small-scale developers of single-family housing for cities in the North Carolina Piedmont. Larger developers tend to choose sites closer to the CBD, an elementary school and employment centers, with public utilities available, whereas small developers tend to select the opposite kind of site.<sup>76</sup>

It is posited in the Santa Clara County study that branch firms as part of larger corporate enterprises display perceptual and behavioral differences when compared to locally-based firms. Branch firms show greater concentration on the first-home market and have experience with a variety of housing types. A large percentage of local firms had no experience with townhouses, condominiums or PUD's. The variance in market focus led the firms in the survey to choose land parcels with different property characteristics. Local firms built on sites which they considered to have good neighborhood reputation and good aesthetic characteristics (trees, views, etc.). More developers identified with branch firms were willing to tolerate a site's poor proximity to parks and recreation, lack of positive aesthetic characteristics and low school district reputation than were local firms.<sup>77</sup> More local firms did in-filling projects, developing parcels located in areas surrounded by existing

development. Branch firms, more sensitive to the cost of raw land, were attracted to urban fringe locations for their low and medium-priced developments.

Conventional wisdom of residential land development practice, held not only by developers but by local governmental authorities as well, says that environmental features won't sell. Typically a builder charges standard prices for given house models, perhaps adding a premium for larger-than-average lots.<sup>78</sup> Thus, in new housing areas, builders' prices are to some extent administered rather than market prices. Builders generally don't take into account the accessibility of public open space, although land values are found to vary directly with proximity to an urban park.<sup>79</sup> While most developers stress that satisfied customers are crucial for continued business, their actions show little concern for the everyday behavior of people who will live in the housing. If anything, image with respect to social class or housing style is felt to be the most vital element during the process of design.<sup>80</sup> Asking the general question of whether environmental features will sell is like asking whether automobiles will sell. Market experience shows that sales depend on quality and price as well as detailed consumer characteristics.

Open Space Demanders. Since Tiebout's article, "A Pure Theory of Local Expenditures" (1956),<sup>81</sup> economists have viewed the location decision as a conscious choice of one



particular package of local public services over others. But recent studies conclude that public services and other community characteristics play only a minor role in determining residential location choice as compared to quality of housing.<sup>82</sup> The only exceptions are low-income households which appear to attempt to maximize their real income by enhancing their access to local public services such as recreation and aesthetically-pleasing activity space.

A small number of management people make locational decisions for corporate demanders/users of space. The location decision is quickly and severely simplified by decision makers. Although classic economic location factors are usually mentioned first, the subjective, judgmental and personal nature of corporate locational decisions is apparent. Through indepth interviews Stafford found the single most important locational factor to be personal contacts and cooperation of local officials.<sup>83</sup> Secondary factors in order of importance were: transport facilities, adequate sites, local amenities, with taxes last.<sup>84</sup>

Even with these qualifiers, demanders/users of real estate do negotiate open-space goals and values as they search the market for residential property. Open-space amenities are positive contributions to a major factor in the homebuyer's locational decision--neighborhood reputation or quality.<sup>85, 86</sup> Again the choice is wider than the user can or wants to make himself aware of. In her study of real estate agents, Palm demonstrates that the sources of real



estate information may be subtle and the supply imperfect.<sup>87</sup>

Approximately 60 percent of the households in North America are homeowners.<sup>88</sup> The individual or family that wants to live in a single family dwelling is generally obliged by the nature of the housing inventory and customs of the market to assume the role of property owner. A variety of inducements to homeownership are provided by governments and where housing policies are defined on a national level, they generally include some kind of suggestion that homeownership serves a national and community purpose.<sup>89</sup> The National Family Opinion Study as reported in Land Use Digest finds that most potential buyers (92.7 o/o) are still interested in a single-family dwelling rather than condominiums and apartments.<sup>90</sup> In spite of high interest rates and spiraling inflation, more than half of the buyers queried favored space-consuming ranch-style houses over other styles.

In surveying 2000 households on New York regional issues, the Tri-State Regional Planning Commission reports 44 percent favor allowing the continuing spread of single-family housing.<sup>91</sup> In answer to a question concerning a possible future move, 88 percent indicate they expect to purchase a single-family dwelling.<sup>92</sup> A 1973 survey of environmental attitudes and preferences among Milwaukee residents reveals that nearly all recent buyers of new and used conventional, detached single-family dwellings

preferred that type (conventional) from the very beginning of their search for a home. In addition a high proportion of recent townhouse buyers interviewed preferred the conventional detached house. Prospective buyers interviewed also shared this strong preference for the conventional single-family dwelling.<sup>93</sup>

Finally, one hundred-fifty households who moved within the Columbus, Ohio, metropolitan area were surveyed on the role of various dwelling-unit and neighborhood attributes in selecting new homes.<sup>94</sup> Dwelling-unit attributes, including spaciousness of the lot or yard, were preferred more often than most alternative neighborhood attributes. Nearby parks and other forms of open space ranked tenth among the seventeen housing dimensions considered.

The Milwaukee homebuyers were asked, in the context of choosing a new home, for their preference between surroundings incorporating views of open-space acreages with the commonly-found alternative, which is to view others' homes. There was an overwhelming preference (approximately 89 o/o) for the now unconventional views--and complementary land use policies--as opposed to the common views of other homes and yards, which are related to conventional development practices.<sup>95</sup> Confronted with the possibility that open-land views would increase purchase prices by about \$2000, a substantial number of respondents revised their preferences. However approximately 53 percent of the sample elected to accept this additional cost.<sup>96</sup>

Local government as a demander of open space is the least effective as an initiator of land-market transactions. Property taxes, bonded indebtedness, federal open-space programs and revenue sharing notwithstanding, the public sector is poorly equipped to be "highest bidder." So with the sound of the gun in the race for open space, the cry has been "buy now, plan later." Urban fringe acreage is the best buy if the city can get there first. Generally the need for open land in specific locations is not recognized until such land has been surrounded or even covered with urban development.

Gold suggests that "later" is now. The open-space race is over and existing systems of public recreation spaces will be all that most communities can afford to maintain.<sup>97</sup> The traditional order of priorities--land acquisition, facility development and, finally, recreation program growth--is being reversed.

#### Technical Planning Process

Banfield and Wilson observe that governments perform two kinds of functions.<sup>98</sup> One function involves the supply of public goods and services, including planning. Municipal planning as a service devises plans for the use of physical space and administers land-use regulations. These service functions are the responsibility of salaried professionals and the bureaucracy of which they are a part.

At the same time governments are serving another kind of function which Banfield and Wilson call "conflict management." Conflict management involves the resolution of disputes over the performance or lack of performance of governments' service function. The management or resolution of conflict is the responsibility of elected officials.

These two functions of government and spheres of interaction are performing simultaneously within the land-space allocation system (Figure 1). In some instances the service function or technical planning process is dominant or more evident, while in other situations public policy is formed largely through conflict management within the political process.

Open Space Planning Practices. Unlike many of the processes that give rise to spatial patterns, open-space planning is not readily visible. It is a bureaucratic decision-making process, relatively inaccessible to instant public viewing. Because inter-agency relations are commonly involved, there is even an element of secrecy.

Goals of land management policy are often expressed as specific middle-range objectives which assume away basic values and goals implicit in them. To provide 10 acres of open space for every 1000 people is an example. The low divisibility as well as the high individuality of need for goods and services are ignored. Or, policy is expressed in highly generalized objectives that are seldom challenged and

typically decorate the objectives sections of planning reports calling for conservation of natural resources, preservation of open space, protection of natural ecosystems, and maintenance of individual and community rights and opportunities.

The explanatory power of legislation and published plans is limited as there can be considerable divergence between what they say they hope to achieve and what actually occurs. All plans have proposals for change in some locations combined with proposals for no change in others. Just how many land-use changes have been prevented by the deterrent effect of a published plan can't be known. The planner sees his prime responsibility as that of simulating and demonstrating consequences of particular sets of goals and objectives. This neutral role concentrates on applying principles of design which emphasize control over land use and construction. Reliance on zoning ordinances, municipal building and environmental codes as plan implementation tools reflects this physical-planning orientation. The approach stresses design of the physical form within which social activities take place rather than attempting to analyze or control the activities themselves. Altshuler explains: ". . . the city planner . . . controls so little of his environment that unquestioning acceptance of its main features is a condition of his own success."<sup>99</sup>

Composing the plan is carried out in planning offices without direct public input. The planners collect

the necessary social information, analyze the statistics, and discuss the technical and legal issues involved. The composition of the plan relies on the integration of statistical trends with knowledge of appropriate land-use techniques. When the plan is revealed, however, the need for explaining the thinking behind it becomes necessary.

Diamond outlines additive as opposed to successive stages in the evolution of urban planning that emphasize why rather than how planners proceed as they do. Planning goals according to him proceeded through four cumulative and not necessarily complementary stages each of which have open-space impacts:

1. "the city beautiful" emphasizing high quality visual beauty
2. "the city safe and convenient" emphasizing environmental quality
3. "the city efficient" to guide growth
4. "the city just" providing for disadvantaged groups.<sup>100</sup>

Planning jargon talks about alternatives and trade-offs, but in practice planning often evolves as the application of certain technical skills and professional judgments to available resources. Planning and related resource-use decisions are actually a muddling-through process, not a unidirectional, goal-oriented procedure. Planning objectives are squeezed out in bargaining among various notions of what is in the public interest. The best is sacrificed for better resource allocation, defined in terms of land-use controls that people will accept. Good policy is acceptable policy; the reverse may not be true.

Planners increasingly demonstrate a lack of confidence in open-space standards which deal simplistically with only one or two aspects of a complex phenomenon. They state that they are taking many factors into account in designing open space and development areas, but beyond that, there is little demonstration of the relative importance of landscape attributes or the aesthetic, ecological, recreational, or urban-structuring values they reflect. Based on a survey of 85 regional planning agencies in the northeastern United States having experience with open-space planning, Berry and Steiker draw this conclusion:

. . . there is a good chance that the planners will, for the most, agree that a plan merits approval if it has a commanding topographical focus, lattice, or other pattern and if functional, contemplative, aesthetic, ecological and recreational values associated with landscape attributes spatially overlap with each other and with the topographically dominant area.<sup>101</sup>

Even in the hands of the skillful open-space planner, the results provide no criteria for evaluation or comparison of plans. Working from the assumption that more than a specified, minimum open-space acreage is desirable, Coughlin sought to isolate the marginal value of adding or subtracting space for open-space functions. A sample of regional planners and faculty from university planning programs were asked to assign scores to increasing levels of characteristics relevant to open space. The selected characteristics were:

- a. acres of open space per 1000 residents
- b. percent of total area preserved as open space



- c. percent of 100-year floodplain land kept as open space
- d. percent of steep slopes (i.e. slopes of greater than 15 o/o steepness)
- e. percent of wooded land preserved
- f. percent of native plant and animal species that can be expected to survive in a relatively natural state over the long run in the preserved open space
- g. distance of farthest household from nearest small neighborhood park
- h. distance of farthest household from nearest large regional park
- i. number of parks of varying size classes.<sup>102</sup>

The results are summarized in a set of curves with characteristics (c) and (d) displaying "Positive Marginal Value", and characteristics (a), (b), (e), and (f) displaying "Positive, Then Negative Marginal Value."<sup>103</sup> A second part of the questionnaire asked respondents to assign a score to each characteristic that expresses its relative importance in the creation of an open-space plan. In this exercise, accessibility ranked as the most important and percent of floodplain preserved was second.<sup>104</sup>

While the resulting relationships are not at variance with common sense, few of the findings are statistically significant. An unresolved tension exists between the desire to state complex variables as simply as possible and the realization that the interpretation of simplified alternatives varies widely among respondents based on the set of assumptions they bring to the questions.

In summing up his efforts, Coughlin could only urge more precise definition of what is meant by open space and more precise specification of the density and character of

development. In addition planners were urged to articulate what they believe to be the important relationships between the physiography of the region and the pattern of open space.

Much of the work associated with land conversion is technical and the most pertinent information and approval mechanisms are spread throughout local government. The Santa Clara County, California, developers' most utilized source of information about government policy was personal contact with city officials. Next in importance was word-of-mouth from other developers. Publications of building associations and other non-governmental printed material such as newspapers supplied some information. The least utilized source was official, published government documents--master plans included.<sup>105</sup>

A developer often submits his conceptual plan for informal review to give municipal agencies an opportunity to examine at the initial stage of a development proposal those matters of interest to a particular agency. The Urban Land Institute as part of a current research project investigating the coordination of environmental and land-use controls surveyed developers to determine the actual effects of various control systems. A consensus among the developers interviewed was that procedures for processing development proposals are often more important than the regulations themselves. The major problem with present procedures was coping with the length of time required to obtain decisions

from regulatory authorities.

Two types of delays are being encountered: 1) inadvertent delays due to lack of review capacity, jurisdictional conflicts, or work overload; 2) deliberate delays intended to discourage or prevent development.<sup>106</sup>

The existence of such "red tape" may be viewed as a government policy tool for assessing the effects of new development. On the other hand, the official attitude may be that if one makes no decisions, one makes no mistakes.

The Water, Fire, Health, and Parks and Recreation Departments were perceived by the majority of Santa Clara County developers as seldom or never requiring major changes in development plans. Nevertheless, approximately 25 percent of the firms had been required to construct facilities clearly intended to service more than their own project residents or to dedicate land to the public sector.<sup>107</sup> The Planning Department and, specifically, planned unit development zoning, was overwhelmingly cited as the cause of delays ranging from 30 days to about 1 1/2 years.<sup>108</sup>

The need for site rezoning is not seen as a particularly troublesome prospect by real estate consultant, Gene Phillipppo.

Generally the combined elements of qualified consultant, well-conceived plans, a market demand and a thorough presentation will produce a reasonable result. The developer must be prepared to cope with real issues of value judgment about apparent, but unreal antagonistic interests. Notwithstanding environmental, ecological, and no-growth efforts, there are few well-conceived projects, properly prepared for rezoning, which fail, for poor reasons.<sup>109</sup>

The builder-developer has taken note and increasingly is employing such specialists as architects, land planners, draftsmen and engineers.<sup>110</sup> Once the zoning application is filed, Phillippo advises attention to the planning staff's objections and the adjacent property owners' responses.

"The views of the property owners must be taken seriously, for the city planning staff will usually support them or use them to support a negative response to the proposed project."<sup>111</sup>

Developers see density as the popular issue. From their perspective, planners, officials and city codes place particular pride on density concepts (the reduce-the-density-whatever-it-is concept).<sup>112</sup> Phillippo cautions that the developer who fights city hall on the density issue is likely to lose. Furthermore the developer will probably get nowhere with the economic realities approach--decreasing densities increases the cost of housing. He instead proposes the landscape allowance concept as a trade-off. The trade-off for the density is a locked-in landscape budget. The higher the density the higher the budget and, presumably, the better the ecological impact of the project with no increase in price.

The public's changing attitude toward growth and the formalizing of the working relationship with public officials are prompting some very conservative development decisions. Increasingly, any "deals" are made in a public forum, not in the "backroom." By concentrating on single-

family detached projects on regulation lots near utilities, developers hope to minimize the public's opportunity for opposition and the need for contact with city officials.

Open Space Policy Decisions and Implementation. In reviewing research on the provision of local services other than planning, Antunes and Mladenka draw some general conclusions.<sup>113</sup> The best predictors of the allocation of funds in next year's budget is the allocation of funds in this year's budget. Just as incrementalism is the rule in planning and budgeting, so too is it the rule in implementation. Sources of innovation and change in local services are varied. Among the most important are crises and the diffusion of professional norms within the bureaucracy. A crisis acts as a catalyst, making possible rapid change where only slow change or no change would normally occur. The Kerner Commission reported that the lack of park and open-space opportunities was the fifth ranking reason for urban tension and riots in the 1960's.<sup>114</sup> The subsequent War on Poverty, federal categorical grants, civil rights movement, and public opinion all have had tremendous impact on public recreation facilities.

Bureaucrats as professional public managers are plugged into a national network exposing them to a steady flow of information, norms, and professional gossip--all of which can influence skills, attitudes and behavior. Thus a change in local park administration is more likely to occur

because of the diffusion of information via the American Planning Association than because of a decision by local elected officials.

Jacob writes of "convenient clean parks" as the "booty of the winners" in urban politics.<sup>115</sup> But the Antunes and Mladenka review does not support this conventional view that neighborhoods which are poorer, have larger shares of minority residents, or are politically weak receive the short end of the service stick. Measurements of actual neighborhood allocations find a more complex pattern of service distribution than the "underclass hypothesis" suggests.<sup>116</sup> This adage indicates that the rich get richer and the poor get poorer, but researchers find a distribution pattern in Oakland, California that favors both extremes. "Some mechanisms were biased toward the rich. Other mechanisms favored the poor. We discovered no mechanisms that favor the middle."<sup>117</sup> Generally, distributional decisions do not represent a balance between competing demands. Many people, including Blacks, appear to be fairly satisfied with the services they receive and evidence indicates that relatively few citizens communicate a grievance over service delivery directly to municipal officials.<sup>118</sup>

In the absence of widespread dissatisfaction, the municipal bureaucracy is left to its own devices in determining the pattern of service deliveries. Apart from reasons of administrative convenience or political necessity, urban service distributions are justified on the basis

of three criteria: equality, need, and demand (consumption). But two values cannot be maximized simultaneously, and if green spaces are distributed according to an equality principle they cannot also be distributed according to need, or in response to usage criteria.

There is nothing inherently superior about any one of these criteria. Equality of service delivery appeals to a basic American value of fairness and is the only policy criterion given constitutional credence. A good case can be made for need criteria, but people's expressed needs sometimes correlate neatly with their self interest. When demand takes precedence as the service criteria, those groups or areas which consume the most this year often get the most next year.

Whether administrators make criteria trade-offs consciously or simply let them happen, the adherence to professional norms and decision rules (10 acres of park space per 1000 population--equality criteria; school age population distribution determining park location--need criteria; levels of recorded park use determining resource allocation--demand criteria) allows them to resist interference from elected officials and interest groups. Antunes and Mladenka question whether or not the elected leadership is eager to embroil itself in the politically risky process of resource allocation and distribution.<sup>119</sup>

In summary, the urban planner assumes a degree of control over open space based in part on technical skills



and in part on the conviction that "I know I'm right because I am a professional planner." The role assigned to open-space supplies in the comprehensive scheme for the city has evolved from being an element of urban aesthetics to environmental-quality factor, guide to urban growth and finally to social-justice indicator. In practice, professional vision of the most desirable allocation of open-space resources is often compromised by the need to follow policy that will be acceptable to local politicians and the general public.

The notion that the limits of local government bind planners to a passive role in the process of land conversion and open-space allocation is nevertheless, a false one. Private developers can often be required to dedicate part of their land parcel to parks and recreation areas or reduce the density of proposed housing. More commonly, open spaces are by-products of the public-private negotiations leading to approval of a land-development proposal.

### Political Process

If economic processes, technological development, and demographic forces were the only factors by which the competition and conflict among individuals were resolved, there would be relatively close correlation between personal resources available to maximize utility and success or failure of an open-space locational strategy. In fact, many metropolitan residents attain more open-space value

than their personal resources or private adjustments could possibly secure, while others realize far less than their resources might attain under different conditions. But private strategies can be a personally expensive way of implementing a preference for open space. A public strategy is thus used to defend or attain such value at lower personal cost (although the cost may still be high as in the case of organizing large numbers of people) through the use of political institutions and public policy.

Public Open-Space Strategies. "American urban development occurs in a systematic, highly predictable manner. It leads to the results desired by those who dominate it."<sup>120</sup>

Down's statement is a bit strong perhaps, but it can be demonstrated that the use of government power to pursue a locational strategy yielding private benefits is common practice among middle and affluent working classes.<sup>121</sup> The very rich have the personal resources to successfully defend locations without government help, and the poor do not control the institutions that presently structure locational options and objectives.

Other things being equal, change, whether beneficial or detrimental, occurs ultimately at the site where resistance is weakest. As an example, opposition to a rezoning application by a neighborhood group or individuals has had significant influence on the ultimate decision of the

Atlanta, Georgia zoning authority. Given no opposition, rezoning applicants succeeded in 70 percent of the cases; but if opposed, the average rate of success fell to 43 percent.<sup>122</sup> If neighborhood opposition could show conflicting planning criteria or a desire to protect the community or habitat it was usually successful. Demonstration by the opposition that the proposed rezoning would harm restoration efforts had a 100 percent success ratio (resulted in denial of rezoning every time it was used).<sup>123</sup> Arguments concerning adverse impacts on residential quality also had high success ratios (Table 1).

Table 1  
Opposition to Rezoning Applications  
Atlanta, Georgia

Arguments Used by Opponents	Opponents Success Ratio
proposed use will cause breakdown of the community	86 o/o
residential character of the neighborhood must be preserved	73 o/o
proposed use is detrimental to the area	73 o/o
proposed use will lower property values	71 o/o
proposed use will trigger an exodus out of the neighborhood	70 o/o

Source:

Nicholas Ordway and William C. Weaver, "Preparing for a Zoning Ambush," Real Estate Review, 7:1 (Spring, 1977), 43.

The least successful arguments used by opponents were those which made vague reference to "health, safety and welfare." Narrow technical objections as to lot coverage or height of building were also likely to be ignored by decision makers.

In the case of open-space planning, benefits are sometimes abstract and obscure, and are geared chiefly to future generations. The costs of implementing planning policy through changes in the physical, economic or social structure of the city are, on the other hand, direct and more immediate. The likelihood that those bearing the costs of open-space planning policy will organize is nearly assured. The probability that the beneficiaries of open-space planning policy will organize to support that policy is much lower. Knowledge of the distribution of stakes and resources relative to an open-space planning issue is not a sufficient basis for predicting the role that groups and individuals will play in deciding that issue. There will always be politically influential actors who are not using all of their political resources. As the issue begins to take shape the political decision maker takes note of who is involved and who is not. Knowledge of the many individuals and groups with stakes in an issue who are not using their resources can influence official decisions.

From his perspective as manager of part of the urban landscape, the property owner is aware of regulatory restrictions which constantly shuffle the options that go into his highest and best use calculations. He weighs a

land-control proposal in terms of what he gets for what it costs him. Some of the pluses and minuses are unmeasured, nonmonetary, and may even more directly impact someone else, but the calculus is still valid. For example, urban residents consistently support retention of distant wilderness areas for whatever vicarious benefit they achieve, at very little cost. To have anything other than a passive role, the property owner must normally engage in group action. He is thus involved in local civic activity that by definition seeks to deal with the collective interests of people whose motives are individual. Involvement of the unorganized public is low and socially restricted--typically to the middle-class, male, owner-occupied, better educated, and long-term residents.<sup>124</sup> By contrast group involvement is higher and potentially more diverse socially. Even at open public meetings, the majority of the audience are present to represent their group, having been familiarized with the meeting and the issues through that group.<sup>125</sup>

People economize with their time and effort. Participation in hearings, etc., is limited to those who expect to receive some positive return from the effort and who fear high costs of failing to do so. Participants are as rational with their limited budget or time and energy as the economic man with a pocket full of money or the public agency with a scarce supply of political capital. Yet planners and elected officials often discount testimony from those who feel strongly about an issue as being irrational,

emotional or otherwise irrelevant (unless supportive).

At the outset, agreement on planning and policy objectives often constitute a problem.

Objectives are not just out there, like ripe fruit waiting to be plucked; they are man-made, artificial, imposed on a recalcitrant world. Inevitably, they do violence to reality by emphasizing certain activities . . . over others. Thus the very process of defining objectives may be considered a hostile act.<sup>126</sup>

People are not inclined to sit around and chat about general planning goals. They react to specifics. Once the process has generated specifics--projects, ordinances, expenditures --the investment may be substantial. Decision makers and planners tend to develop commitments to things that cost money to produce and are not pleased with opposition at that point.

Governmental Response. A frequent assumption in planning is that the greater the effort to explain agency plans, the greater the likelihood of public acceptance of its proposals. In fact human response to presumed gains or losses is not altered by information unless the direction of those impacts is changed. People, like agencies, are particularly receptive to information that supports their biases.

As an extension of this point, Eklund identifies two sets of evaluative criteria that are utilized in the development of community land-use controls and in the evaluation of individual development proposals.<sup>127</sup> The first--status-

maintenance criteria--relates to the social composition of the community. The preferences for such composition are based on William's concept of "social access" and refers to "efforts to assure the availability of interactions, as well as the interactions themselves."<sup>28</sup> The predominant mechanisms by which the criteria are applied are the police powers of zoning, subdivision codes and building codes. The second set of criteria results from tax-base considerations. Tax-base-maintenance criteria concern the attraction of land uses which generate net revenue for municipal government. Residents apply status-maintenance criteria to all land use proposals and these criteria predominate in the evaluation of residential development proposals. Residential housing stock rarely generates sufficient tax revenue to meet the costs of the municipal services it demands. To offset these costs, community officials are forced to apply tax-base-maintenance criteria to other land uses.

The high density housing that generates open-space possibilities is a source of tension. Residents' negative status-maintenance evaluations are based on a wide range of perceptions of the economic status of apartment dwellers, their transience and lack of community commitment, as well as increased noise and traffic congestion. On the other hand, local officials may evaluate apartment units with tax-base-maintenance criteria. By controlling the number of bedrooms, a community can insure that the development does not increase the demands for educational resources. Second,



the community may demand complete provision of services and amenities by the development, including street and sewer maintenance, recreation facilities, and open-space buffers. With these provisions, a high-density development may be a net revenue generator. A resident may recognize the positive tax-base-maintenance evaluations of such a development for the community as a whole, but still fight against its location within his own neighborhood.

Proponents and opponents provide studies backing their position and the perceived credibility of an impact study is an important issue facing its sponsors. Decision makers expect unqualified conclusions but most impact studies can not predict effects so precisely. Effects of a specific development as assessed by its sponsors, plus examination of its cumulative effects by community representatives often yield incompatible and confusing results. Thus, of the thousands of impact statements filed each year, only a small percentage are given enough credence to affect the decision process.<sup>129</sup> In the last analysis, local officials dismiss data provided by each side and base their decision instead on personal beliefs or political considerations.

Another misconception is that increased citizen/official contact leads to greater understanding and a compromising of positions.<sup>130</sup> In a Boulder, Colorado study, City Council members were unable to predict the judgments of even the most vocal interest group members known to them.<sup>131</sup>

Stewart and Gelberd conclude that repeated contact had not resulted in a clear understanding of the interest groups' views on basic issues confronting the city. This implies that the views of citizens who are not represented by a vocal interest group are even less well understood.

The Urban Observatory Program studies of citizen participation find that group effectiveness may depend on the ability to meet expectations of local government officials.<sup>132</sup> These studies suggest that successful community action groups are cooperation- rather than conflict-oriented. They are groups that have assembled some economic and political resources, and have some prior negotiating success. While many community-action groups understand the structure and operation of the political system they wish to affect, there is again little evidence that most city officials have gone very far toward understanding what their communities' citizen groups are all about.

Judicial Response. As power shifts away from developers (and business generally) to citizen groups, courts as well as political officials have taken note. Judicial rulings reflect the interest of new pressure groups and general changes in public attitudes. Developers' claims --to private property rights and the resulting profits--are no longer unchallenged.

Analysis of recent court decisions indicate that many courts have been willing to uphold restrictive land-use

regulations regardless of their impact on property values if that regulation protects important environmental resources and support regional as opposed to local concerns.<sup>133</sup> The Adirondack Park Agency was successful in preventing residential construction along the shores of a lake. The court decision held that:

Aesthetic considerations alone generate a sufficient impact on the public welfare to warrant an exercise of the police power where such considerations relate to unique features of the locality.<sup>134</sup>

On the other hand, California courts, while responsive to pro-environmental interests, have generally invalidating restrictions for aesthetic purposes only, as an unconstitutional taking of private property.<sup>135</sup>

Of current concern is the apparent intention of the U.S. Supreme Court to reverse the California ruling on *Agins v. City of Tiburon* (591 P. 2d 514; modified, 598 P. 2d 25). The owner of land rezoned open space sued for compensation and the California court ruled that "zoning action that merely decreases the market value does not violate the constitutional provisions forbidding uncompensated taking or damaging of property."<sup>136</sup> A U.S. Supreme Court reversal would change a settled point of law in every state. As a result local governments could be faced with having to pay compensation to property owners adversely affected by a zoning change.

Somehow both short- and long-term treatment of open land and water resources must reflect the pluralism of

America's values and needs. As suggested by the Rockefeller Task Force's report, The Use of Land,<sup>137</sup> America must "make peace with pluralism" in searching for appropriate open-space controls. Negotiating development may be a breakthrough in minimizing open conflict but does not reverse the consequences of tighter restrictions on the use of land.

We are witnessing the formation of new alliances and coalitions across racial, ethnic and class lines in an effort to influence the allocation of very scarce resources, and resulting land-use patterns. Increasingly a key pattern in land-use politics is the collusion of developers and civil rights groups to promote pro-development ends and profits.<sup>138</sup>

New growth management techniques being applied in the political arena are shattering many landowners' expectations of profitability--expectations regarded as property rights. The costs of delay impact upon the planning and political processes. But these are only the more obvious costs. Others are equally important.

#### Outputs and Outcomes

Lasswell's "Who gets what . . .?" may need to be re-phrased as "Who keeps and who loses what?", as broad-based demands for justice and equality tend to fade along with fiscal surplus. Municipal austerity and the rise of legal challenge to service discrimination makes it imperative to know who is getting what. But Galileo's dictum to

measure what is measurable and make measurable what is not measurable has yet to be fulfilled in urban administration. One perennial problem in service management is whether to focus on measures of output or outcome. Outputs represent measures of the quality and/or quantity of urban service resources provided by the municipal government. Outcomes represent the actual conditions in a neighborhood after receipt of a service.

Although open space-outcome data is an important indicator of need, the correlation between open-space outputs of municipal administrations and actual open-space outcomes at specific locations will not be perfect (or even very strong). The output-outcome issue is the basis for *Beal v. Lindsay* (468 F. 2d 287 =2nd Cir. 1972) in New York City. The city's efforts at maintaining parks--its outputs--are equal, but the outcomes--the prevailing quality of one particular park compared to the others--are not. In this case the courts absolved the city of responsibility for equalizing conditions or outcomes, holding that constitutional responsibilities were met by providing equal services.<sup>139</sup>

Allocation to programs, impact on goals, and distribution to groups are bound together in the policy process. Dollar allocations indicative of policy priorities and the kinds of policy commitments made by policy makers in a political system are the inputs to a policy-implementation system which produces impacts on social conditions or at least has the potential of doing so. In a very real sense,

governments have actual control over only the first process. Therefore one should not disregard the effort indicators or outputs. First, there is a powerful symbolic component to distributional efforts by governments. Second, some governmental efforts do bear direct and obvious relation to some more limited social indicators. Third, efforts are what governments really produce and the distribution of the commodities that political authorities control most directly is important in its own right.<sup>140</sup>

Whether in the public or private sector, the activities of service providers combine with many other factors to produce the final state of the variable which is utilized to assess the effectiveness of the service organization. Inequitable distribution of services among neighborhoods may develop as a result of conscious discrimination by persons in positions of authority. Alternatively, neighborhoods may develop in response to patterns of service delivery as individuals seek out desirable service packages, or as the quality of services affect property values and thereby ties locational choice to economic status.<sup>141</sup> Well-maintained parks attract new housing development at their boundaries which in turn creates neighborhood demand for continued and expanded park expenditures. Public decision makers are encouraged to support what is both a significant public investment and an area of civic pride.

Only in the case of political demand can one conclude that inputs from the neighborhood cause service level.

The level of service received is a function of forces which are not proximate to the neighborhood: decisions and attitudes of service providers, organizational constraints and arrangements, legislative mandates, etc. Little is known about the mix of forces, but it does seem that service rules are set up with little regard for their distributional consequences.

Compounding these difficulties is the fact that neighborhoods are not static. People move in and out. Facilities deteriorate. Service delivery efforts reduce some demands and create others. Residents' preferences, perceptions and behaviors change. A satisfactory distribution today can be patently unjust tomorrow. Some social conditions can be altered only by truly heroic governmental efforts. Jones notes that production and impact analysis of city services seem unable to capture the cumulative nature of the social conditions which affect government activity and which governmental activity is designed to affect.<sup>142</sup>

Mitchell and Lovingood's investigation of spatial relationships between park density and selected population, family, housing and economic characteristics reveal three general outcomes of these urban processes: (1) park density is greatest at the lower end of the socioeconomic scale; (2) central cities are better served with public recreation facilities than areas on the periphery; and (3) suburbs are devoid of formal public recreation.<sup>143</sup>



Concentration of parks in the core of cities reflects the open-space allocations made to concentrated populations of previous eras. The present areal association between parks and minority groups is a result of the migration of the middle and upper classes from established neighborhoods to the suburbs. Suburban communities have substituted private open space in the form of large residential lots and high-mobility capabilities for public open spaces.

Bourne's examination of urban structure and private land-use decisions in Toronto isolates processes of change which are resulting in greater within-zone homogeneity and greater areal and functional specialization.<sup>144</sup> This specialization reflects the growing imprint in cities of exclusionary zoning, environmental externalities, agglomerative forces in the construction industry, and increasing social segregation.<sup>145</sup> Open spaces are the product rather than producer of these configurations.

### Conclusion

Who decides which urban land shall be used for each purpose and which land shall be held vacant for some future use? Clawson's answer is everyone and, in the sense that everybody's business is nobody's business, no one.<sup>146</sup> Landowners, land speculators, developers, builders, financial institutions, home buyers and numerous government agencies, especially at the local level, are all involved.

Clawson contends that no single group or person can be charged with the failures; there is no single point at which major change can be made, nor any single person whose decisions can change the process.

A considerable amount of the conflict generated by the proposed allocation of urban land to open-space use is the result of differing underlying belief systems held by the major actors. The primary proponents of land-use change are either corporations or local government. Bourne finds no substantial a priori grounds on which to differentiate these change agents. Conventional (and usually nominal) distinctions between public or private and residential or commercial do not necessarily reflect differences in spatial behavior.<sup>147</sup>

Participants bring formal and informal open-space criteria to bear upon the decision-making process. The planning viewpoint of the city is as a system to be manipulated towards efficiency. Interest groups holding conservation (no-growth) views or promoting the rural myth are comparatively invisible and mainly consist of reactive, ad hoc defenses from community and citizen groups. In yet another corner, Pahl voices the experts' despair at the rise of the citizenry in the decision-making process.

. . . a city made of mess and kitsch is hard to accept in the name of popular demand. The point is that people have a vision of a home, not of a city: their images are essentially private. "People" don't have public visions.<sup>148</sup>

Local political leaders are strongly indisposed to making decisions involving conflict within the community. Public officials seek to avoid making tough decisions, to avoid confronting issues before it is absolutely necessary to confront them and where decisions must be made, defer to experts, to other levels of government, or delegate responsibility to nongovernmental groups which can reach some sort of consensus.

The degree to which a value consensus exists, either on a specific policy or on the more general proper role of local government, affects the probability of certain interests or values being expressed as demands for the allocation of public resources. The expression of political demands depends to a great extent on whether value intensity can be maintained while the policy is being deliberated and whether those holding common interests or values possess political resources that can effectively be expressed as political demands. Furthermore, many commonly held values are never expressed as demands for public resources and one can not assume a direct correlation between the needs of individuals in the urban environment and demands made for allocations. Political decision makers tend to bridge the gap between needs that individuals have and political demands they are unable to make. Therefore, policy outcomes are to a certain extent determined by the needs that local decision makers perceive to exist in the urban environment.<sup>149</sup>

The decision-making system has its expression in organization and institutions, in processes--ways of doing public and private business--and in policies, the residuals of settled controversies.<sup>150</sup> The model for urban open space-use change assumes that there are causal relationships between: (1) community values and open-space outcomes; (2) public resources and public policy outputs; and (3) private resources and public policy outcomes. Controlling criteria for the underlying, decision-making process are market facts, professional standards and value judgments.

In market decisions, fact questions relate to the number of potential users for a particular type or configuration of open space at the time of the decision. The fact component is often weak, inadequate or nonexistent. Most decision makers usually do not have access to the controlling facts. Only the largest, best staffed or most alert of deciders, public or private, can obtain them or know how to use them. But when market decision makers believe they are operating on a basis of fact, inaccuracies or misunderstandings can be as important as the facts available.

Judgments involved in market decisions include judgments regarding the continuity of present trends--stability of demand for single-family dwellings, or the comparative advantage of one location over another. Value decisions made by public agencies are in the form of decisions to invest in day care centers as opposed to parks as opposed to highways.

None of the actors involved can act effectively unless most of the time he is making reasonable accurate judgments concerning the probable behavior of the many other parties in the transaction. If he is frequently wrong, he will shortly be out of business. If he proposes anything radically new or different, there is the possibility of a turndown by the municipality, financial backers, or ultimately the market. These conditions give a very conservative bent to open-space decisions made at every level.

Thus, the interplay of the private market, special interest groups, business, political machines and civic leaders--each controlling a limited information network and a limited geographic area--yield operating decisions. This tyranny of small decisions produces a slowly changing, aggregate spatial pattern which is both consequence and antecedent of the decision process affecting change in open-space use.

## NOTES FOR CHAPTER 2

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## CHAPTER 3

### WICHITA AND COMOTARA

#### Introduction

The preceding chapter overviewed the complexity of attitudes, institutions and procedures which bear on the allocation of urban space for varying uses. A framework for the examination of open-space decision making was presented. What follows is an attempt to apply that model to real events. Discussion now shifts from the level of generalization to the specific case of Wichita, Kansas, and Comotara, a coterminous planned development.

First, a brief introduction to the city and description of the historical evolution of its open space is warranted to establish a familiarity with the current land-use fabric. Background information is taken from archival materials--comprehensive plans for 1923 and 1946, park and recreation plans for 1965 and 1976, planning department and park department reports, and newspaper accounts. Second, since the study taps into the ongoing flow of land-use alteration as it affects open space, selected events of 1970-1979 are examined involving the activities of four municipal agencies, Comotara developers and citizens groups. Information was obtained from published reports, hearings and minutes, newspaper accounts, and personal interviews

with members of the Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Department (MAPD), Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (MAPC), Environmental Resources Advisory Board (ERAB), Wichita Parks Department, Board of Park Commissioners, Midtown Citizens Association and Citizen Participation Organization (CPO). Data on the Comotara development came from maps accompanying Community Unit Plan (CUP) applications, newspaper accounts, promotional literature, a 1975 study on design standards for Comotara, and personal interviews.

Individuals were selected for personal interviews on the basis of their involvement with Comotara and/or municipal open-space decision making. They in turn often recommended others knowledgeable on the issues. No attempt was made to talk with all members of the involved boards, commissions and citizens groups. Interviews were based on a list of prepared questions and notes were usually taken during the interviews, which lasted from 45 minutes to an hour. While specific remarks were very interesting and often colorful, no attempt was made to tape or transcribe any interview. Locational decisions are not impersonal and in all cases I was asking pointed and opinionative questions, seeking candid answers. What follows reveals both the success and failure at getting the full story on the politics of land development generally and open space specifically in Wichita, Kansas.

### Social Patterns of Space Use

Although Kansas' largest city, neither Wichita nor Sedgwick County has experienced the urban growth (and no-growth) pressures felt elsewhere in the United States. All urban processes are present but there are no demonstrable extremes. The city is situated in south-central Kansas, the middle of the Great Plains, the heart of the United States, and shares certain common characteristics with other SMSA's (Table 2).

Table 2  
Wichita SMSA in 1970

Population	Wichita	all SMSA's
Total	389,352 <sup>a</sup>	
Growth <sub>rate</sub> 1960-70	2.0 o/o	16.6 o/o
Pop/mi <sup>2</sup>	159	360
Urban	86.2 o/o	88.2 o/o
Ethnicity		
percent Black	7.1	12.0
percent Spanish surname	2.2	5.5
percent Female	51.4	51.6
Income		
Families below census poverty line	8.0 <sup>b</sup> o/o	8.5 o/o
Median family income	\$9,409 <sup>b</sup>	\$10,469

<sup>a</sup>rank = 75 of 243 SMSA's

<sup>b</sup>rank = 145 of 243 SMSA's

Source:

U.S. Bureau of the Census, County and City Data Book, 1972 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973), pp. 548-587.

Wichita covers 99.57 sq. miles. Population density figures have declined due to annexation during a time of diminishing population growth.

Table 3  
Population Density in Wichita

Wichita in:	population	area (sq. miles)	density (pop/sq. mile)
1950	168,279	25.7	6548
1960	254,698	51.9	4907
1970	276,554	87.09	3175
1978	261,862	99.57	2630

Sources:

Data for 1950-1970: John J. Hartman, "Social-Demographic Characteristics of Wichita-Sedgwick County," Metropolitan Wichita: Past, Present and Future, ed. by Glenn W. Miller and Jimmy M. Skaggs (Lawrence: Regents Press of Kansas, 1978), p. 34.

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The city manifests most the trends of American cities for the twenty-year period, 1950 to 1970. But rapid growth of the 1950's did not continue in the 1960's as it did in most SMSA's which experienced rapid growth rates, declining core populations and rapidly increasingly Black populations. Wichita, as well as Sedgwick County as a whole, experienced a population loss in the early 1970's. The trend has reversed and the County is again slowly gaining population.

Within the City, population changes have not been nor are they projected to be uniform (Figure 2). Population

Figure 2  
Population Changes  
in Wichita, 1970-1978

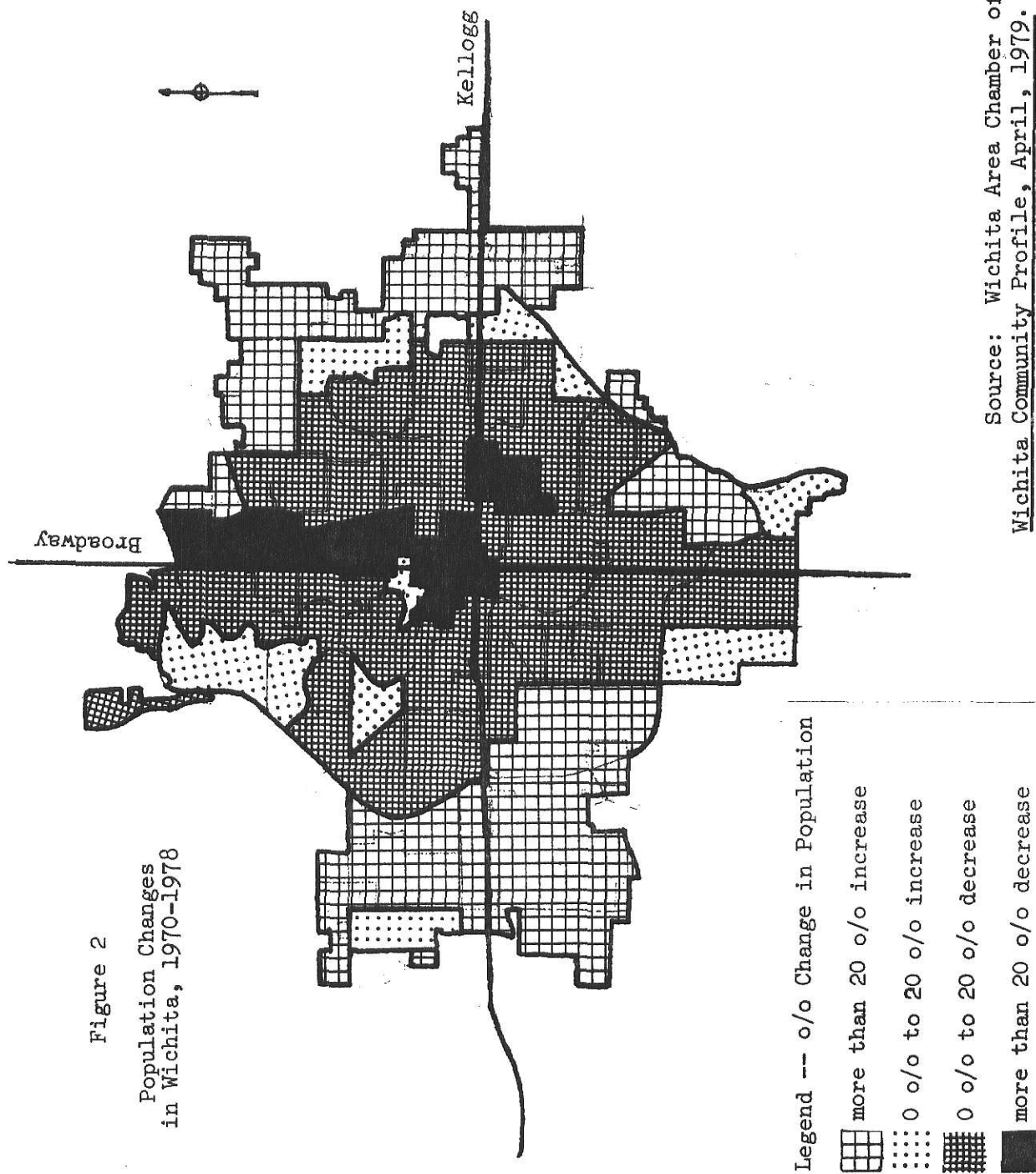




Table 4

City of Wichita Population Increases by Quadrant<sup>a</sup>,  
1960-1970

Quadrant	Population Increases	Percentage of City's Population Increase
NW	11,764	43.2
SW	3,235	11.8
SE	1,145	4.3
NE	11,074	40.7

<sup>a</sup>The lines dividing Wichita into quadrants were Broadway Street from the north city limits south to 55th St. South, and Kellogg Street from the east to the west city limits.

Source:

Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Department. "Parks and Open Space 1976-2000 Sedgwick County, Kansas; Draft" (Wichita: Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Department, 1976), Table 2-B, ff II-04.

increases in the 1960's in the west and northwest portions of the city were due primarily to the extension of utilities, annexations, and the construction of the Wichita-Valley Center Floodway which removed the threat of flooding. Moderate increases in the southwest quadrant were due to single-family and mobile home development. Marginal increases in the southeast quadrant for 1960-1970 have been followed with extensive apartment development and since 1973 the quadrant has recorded the highest number of dwelling units platted. About 30.8 percent of Wichita's residential growth by the year 2000 is expected to occur west of the Floodway.<sup>1</sup> Population increases in the east and northeast are expected to be sustained (estimate to absorb 55.3 o/o of

the growth expected by 2000) by the continued development of Comotara and the possible construction of the Northeast Circumferential, a limited access by-pass.<sup>2</sup> While the northeast is amenable to all types of development, the other outlying areas of Wichita should experience only residential and light commercial growth at the expense of core areas.<sup>3</sup>

Examination of maps included in the 1976 park and open-space plan reveals the spatial residential patterning of various age cohorts of Wichita. Large numbers of children under ten years of age and teenagers are found in outlying areas of the city. Young and middle-aged adults are scattered throughout the city with the exception of the central and north-central industrial corridor areas. While Wichita's older citizens are dispersed throughout the city, they are also well represented around the core area.

Areas having the greatest percentage of low-income households are the central city and the areas immediately surrounding it, with the exception of the northwest. The north corridor along Broadway Street and portions of the northeast also have very high percentages of low-income households. A good portion of these low- and moderate-income areas also have a large number of children under ten years of age. Low incomes in the core area coincide with concentrations of elderly and non-white populations. Usually coupled with lower incomes are higher-than-average densities, overcrowding and poor housing conditions making public open space potentially more critical to these areas

than others.

Wichitans are relatively young, educated, financially comfortable, married, homeowners and spend free time either shopping, driving their cars or watching television. These are conclusions from a 1976 survey conducted for The Wichita Eagle-Beacon, the local newspaper.<sup>4</sup> Demographic data reported in the Eagle-Beacon's 1979 survey of the Wichita SMSA reported the following: forty-three percent of the population are between the ages of 18 and 35; seventy-four percent are under 55. Forty-four percent live alone or as a couple and forty percent have families of three or four members. Seventy-nine percent live in single-family houses while twelve percent are apartment dwellers. Eighty-one percent have annual family incomes of \$10,000 or more and forty-six percent make \$20,000 or more. Five percent make less than \$5,000.<sup>5</sup>

Asked to identify primary leisure activities--both inside and outside the home--eighty-nine percent said watching television. Home maintenance and repairs ranked second and driving, third. Prominently-mentioned recreation included (in order of popularity) fishing, camping, bicycling, hunting, tennis, boating, softball and golf.<sup>6</sup>

#### Physical Patterns of Space Use

"The topography of the city's setting is not one of material grandeur, but it is studded all over with the most appealing potentialities."<sup>7</sup>

That is a rather genteel way of saying that Sedgwick County is relatively flat with little noticeable relief. The land slopes gently from the highest elevation point (1540') in the northwest part to the southeast (1220'). Wichita is surrounded by productive farmland. Natural woodland makes up about one percent of the county's area and is located near waterways.<sup>8</sup> The principal waterways are the shallow Arkansas and Little Arkansas rivers. The flatness of the area results in broad areas of floodable land (Figure 3).

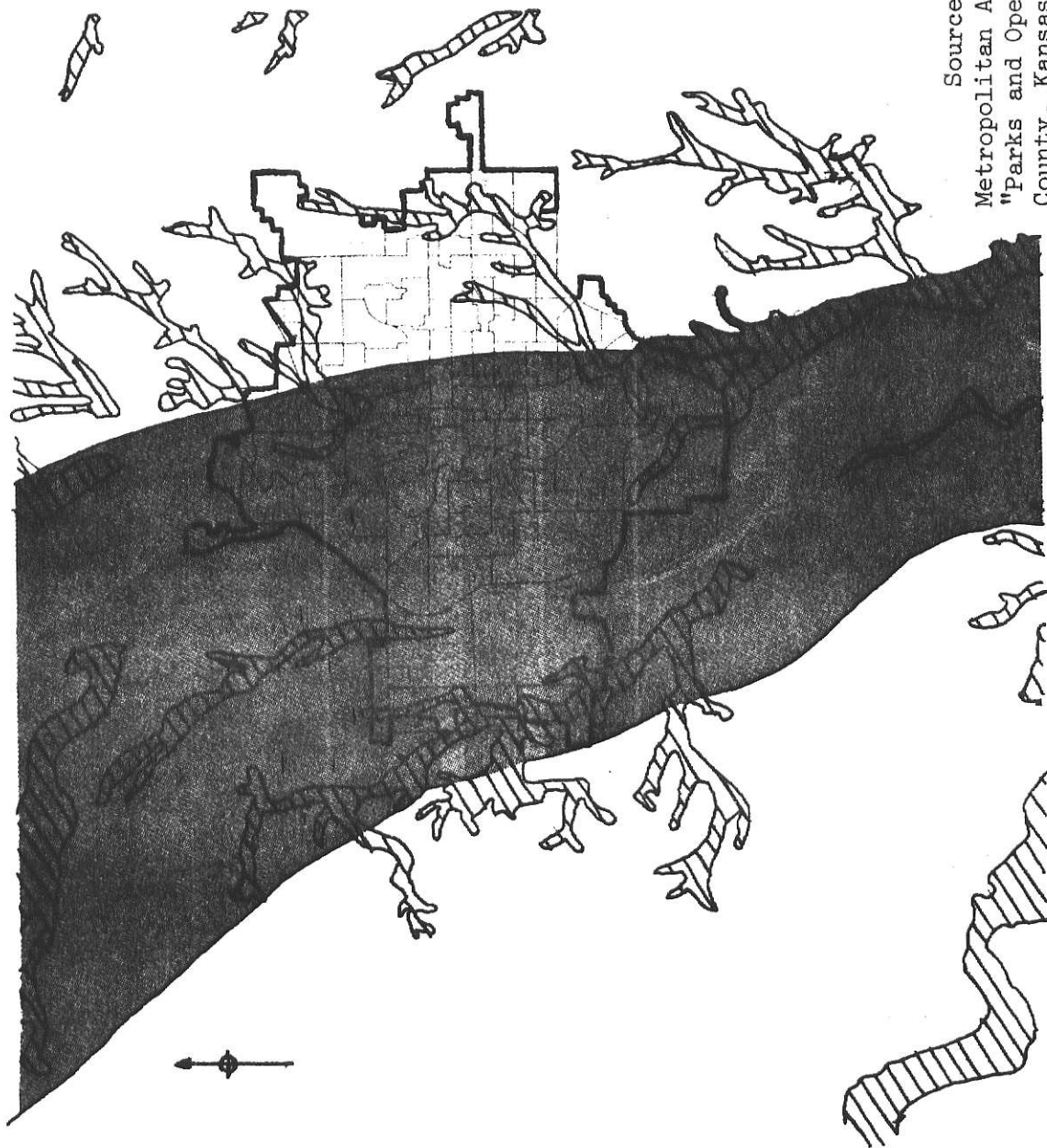
In 1867, government surveyors laid out this barrier-free territory along section lines which in turn were used to determine the alignment of the streets. In 1923, Wichita was "a square city with long straight streets running in true compass directions."<sup>9</sup> Only the most recent real estate developments have altered this situation in isolated areas by 1978.

#### Open-Space Pattern Development

At the confluence of the Arkansas and Little Arkansas rivers were water, shade and a safe river crossing--three factors of considerable influence in the origin of western communities and subsequent civic planning. Wichita was established in 1870 at that location by a syndicate of Topeka businessmen, and promotion of the settlement began immediately thereafter.

Figure 3

Drainage and Floodplain  
Characteristics  
of the Wichita Area



# Legend

Flatlands Potentially  
Floodable by Ponding



Area Floodable  
by Stream Overflow



Source: Wichita-Sedgwick County  
Metropolitan Area Planning Department,  
"Parks and Open Space 1976-2000 Sedgwick  
County, Kansas; Draft" (Wichita: MAPD,  
1976), Map 4-C.

The first officially recorded plat for the Town of Wichita by William Greiffenstein and David S. Munger, March 25, 1870, dedicated two park areas.<sup>10</sup> During the boom years of the 1880's thousands of acres were annexed and Eastern investors began pumping millions into Wichita property. Farm acreage near the city considered suitable for subdivision marketed for \$14,000 per acre in 1887 and unimproved downtown lots sold for as much as \$15,000.<sup>11</sup> During this "orgy of real estate speculation" both original park sites were sold.<sup>12</sup>

Leadership rested with the city's entrepreneurs; politics and government were mere adjuncts to business. That leadership advised against installing civic amenities because they would "raise the tax base and bonded indebtedness, and that might drive away new business."<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless by 1897, four parks totaling 37 1/2 acres were established in the southern and southeast parts of the city.

In the late 1880's, Wichita's inflated real estate values burst and the city's leaders went broke. With the economy in shambles and no new leadership in sight, the city elected its first full-time mayor, and in 1889 the bureaucracy was born.

#### 1900-1964

New layers were inserted between business and government with the establishment of the city commission in 1909 and again in 1917 when Wichita changed to the city

manager form of government.<sup>14, 15</sup> The first planning committee was a group appointed by the Rotary Club in 1917.<sup>16</sup> An official city planning commission was established as an advisory body by state statute and city ordinance in 1921.<sup>17, 18</sup> The city's first comprehensive plan was submitted by Harland Bartholomew, a St. Louis planning consultant, in 1923.

The plan intended to give direction to growth; the alternative being "duplication, haphazardness, waste and ugliness."<sup>19</sup> Bartholomew later observed:

Wichita in 1921 was too large an area for its population. The pattern of development was in the form of a cross with the eastern arm overbalancing the others. Large vacant areas lay between the arms of<sup>20</sup> this cross, unserved by public goods and services.

Open space concerns were prominently addressed in sections on recreation, zoning, and "civic art," which dealt generally with the city's visual appearance and specifically with the enhancement of river frontage and the canal banks.

By 1922, Wichita with a population of 83,232 had twelve separate tracts totaling approximately 436 acres in park usage. Seventy-eight percent of that acreage was concentrated in a Central Park-type system consisting of Sim and the Riverside parks, adjacent to the river and near the central business district.

Only three percent of Wichita's 13,120 acres was "play space" and none of it located in the easterly path of greatest growth.<sup>21</sup> Park recommendations were chiefly a response to the playground movement and "the natural



tendency of the city to be sordid and ugly."<sup>22</sup> Perceptions prominent in the playground movement were expressed in the 1923 Plan.

. . . the children of . . . thickly built up sections of the city are literally "play starved"

. . . there are subtle dangers to the community in thwarted and misdirected play of children<sup>23</sup>

One acre of recreation space for every 100 residents was recommended. This was estimated to equal about one acre out of every ten "in a city of normal population density."<sup>24</sup> Two-acre playgrounds were to be established at every school. Small parks of one and two acres, permitting "the freer entry of fresh air and sunlight," were to be developed on land left over from subdivision or street development.<sup>25</sup> Neighborhood parks of approximately 20 acres "for natural relief" were to be equispaced, as the only major topographic features in Wichita were the rivers and large amount of low land southwest of the city.

Reflecting this perspective, Zoning Ordinance no. 7583 (enacted March 20, 1922, and amended March 5, 1923) recommended 3500 sq. foot lots for single family dwellings with front, side and rear setbacks of 20 ft., 6 ft., and 20 ft.<sup>26</sup> Multiple-family zones called for 1160 sq. foot lots with setbacks of 20 ft., 5 ft., and 20 ft.<sup>27</sup> These setbacks were seen as insuring residential-level open space.

In these early institutional initiatives, open spaces were recommended as a sound civic investment--decreasing crime, enhancing property values, and "they never

wear out as sewers and pavements do."<sup>28</sup> Ironically, Wichita's 1920 park budget of \$53,000 barely covered maintenance costs.<sup>29</sup> The planning document suggested a commitment of \$1 per resident per year--in Wichita's case approximately \$83,000.<sup>30</sup>

From 1921 to 1943 an in-filling process and annexation of 1933 acres increased the city's size to 22.72 sq. miles.<sup>31</sup> Wichita in 1940 was relatively compact with 65.1 percent of its population of 102,291 rather evenly spread over most of the city in single-family dwelling units.<sup>32</sup> But by 1943, the population had increased to 184,115 with large concentrations in multi-family war-housing developments in the east and southeast portions of the city. The population increase of 80 percent was evidenced primarily in greater population concentration as the area within the city limits expanded by only 13 percent during the period.<sup>33</sup>

From 1922 to 1940, under the direction of the Park Board established in 1921 and the strong influence of Park Director L. W. Clapp, Wichita acquired park and recreational areas to reach a level of 628.4 acres--one acre of park land for each 162 persons. In 1946, the city planning commission adopted as official policy a revised comprehensive plan for the City of Wichita, which was again prepared by Bartholomew and Associates. The 1946 Comprehensive Plan called for an attractive, orderly, convenient and clean city for which there were public and private spheres of responsibility. Public responsibility included streets and parks while the

private sector was responsible for residential areas.

Revised subdivision regulations called for increases in single-family lots to 7500 sq. ft. and multi-family lots to 5000sq. ft.<sup>34</sup> Commenting on the zoning established in 1921, the 1946 Plan stated that "larger lots have tended to protect the value of property and insure more desirable living conditions."<sup>35</sup> Subdividers were now required to dedicate river bank easements for "improving or protecting the stream, drainage, parkway or recreational use."<sup>36</sup>

In 1951, the department of city planning was established and a county planning commission was formed. City and County physical planning functions were combined, with essentially the present structure of the MAPC, by a joint resolution in 1958.<sup>37</sup> The total acreage of city park land increased to 844 acres between 1946 and 1954, and from 1954 to 1963 a further increase to 1453 acres was recorded. In 1960, annexation doubled the city's size so that by 1963 the ratio of public park acreage to the city's population was approximately 1:181.

Although scattered development was consolidated through annexation, the city attempted to establish a guided growth policy. Assuming that developers preferred economy in development, areas best suited for future intensive urban development were identified based on cost studies of drainage, subdivision improvements, travel, and the extension of public services. Quadrants of the city ranked in order of lowest to highest potential development cost were the NE, SE,

NW, SW.<sup>38</sup> The "Guided Growth Land Use Forecast" recommended advance acquisition of parks and recreation sites as they would attract development and stimulate growth in areas consistent with the guided growth program as well as provide for better site selection and more economical purchases.<sup>39</sup>

#### 1965-1975

In 1965, Open Space, Parks and Recreation Plan, 1965-1985 was prepared and issued by the MAPD as an element of a 20-year Comprehensive Development Plan, and as part of the compliance with Section 701 of the Housing Act of 1954 (as amended). Its authors took into account national findings of the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission and found them applicable to the local situation:

. . . the kind of recreation people want most of all is relatively simple--a path to walk along, an attractive road for a drive, a place to swim, a shady hillside for a picnic . . .

. . . people want these things where they live--and where most people live is in our growing metropolitan region . . .

. . . The physical supply of land and water for recreation is bountiful; for reasons of ownership, management or location, access to it is not.<sup>40</sup>

The 1946 Plan stated:

a ring of large naturalistic parks encircling the urban area and connected with pleasure drives would be desirable, but only after other parks and recreation needs are met for each neighborhood.<sup>41</sup>

Implementation of the 1946 Plan had focused on the small, intensively-used neighborhood parks around which development could occur. The results were "islands of open space" interconnected by the street pattern of the city.<sup>42</sup> Public

concern was now directed toward acquiring the larger community and semi-regional watershed which Clapp had targeted for park acquisition years before. Further neighborhood-level development was left to private developers, to neighborhood associations, or in conjunction with normal renewal activities if and when they occur.<sup>43</sup>

The plan was the result of an assessment based on examination of service areas that are largely equivalent to those identified for neighborhood schools.<sup>44</sup> These thirteen service or planning areas within the city and county were bound by railroad lines, rivers, and major traffic arterials. Analyzing each separately, specific locations for 20-acre community parks were suggested based on investigations of land use maps, zoning maps, USGS maps, field surveys, and the "application of standards."<sup>45</sup>

Locations for semi-regional parks (minimum of 200 acres each, largely naturalistic in character) were recommended based on the entire metropolitan area as the planning unit. Eleven perimeter locations were identified with the creek and river systems of the Wichita-Valley Center Flood Control Project serving as a logical framework--"to link the open space, park and recreation system,"<sup>46</sup> "to protect the Arkansas River Floodway,"<sup>47</sup> "to protect acreage in fruit and vegetable production near the cities of Haysville and Derby against increasing pressures of urban development,"<sup>48</sup> "to reserve open areas for future recreational development."<sup>49</sup>

Practical problems of implementation were discussed in the 1965 Plan. Local governmental bodies were encouraged to make full use of the financial aid available through the Federal Open Space Land Program and the Land and Water Conservation Act. Given \$1250-\$2500 per acre estimated purchase prices, less than fee simple acquisition was also recommended. Specifically recommended was legislation permitting local governments to obtain easements or use permits for open space and recreation purposes.

Unlike the 1923 and 1946 Comprehensive Plans the 1965 Plan did not include a section on city appearance. In 1970, the MAPC issued the document Toward a More Liveable City to more fully consider methods of unifying existing and future open-space units into an aesthetically-pleasing system.<sup>50</sup> The focus was a network composed of the River/Floodway loop, the Canal Route corridor, and linking greenways along freeways (I-235, a section of the Kansas Turnpike, and the proposed Inner Loop and Northeast Circumferential), expressways (Southeast Boulevard K-15, Southwest Boulevard K-42, Zoo Boulevard, 25th St. North from I-235 to I-135 and the proposed diagonal extending from I-135 to the proposed Northeast Circumferential) and sections of selected arterials (Webb Road, Oliver, Meridian, 21st St. North, Pawnee, McLean, Amidon and Central) (Figure 4).<sup>51</sup>

Many of the 1923 beautification proposals for the Arkansas River were not implemented or started until the

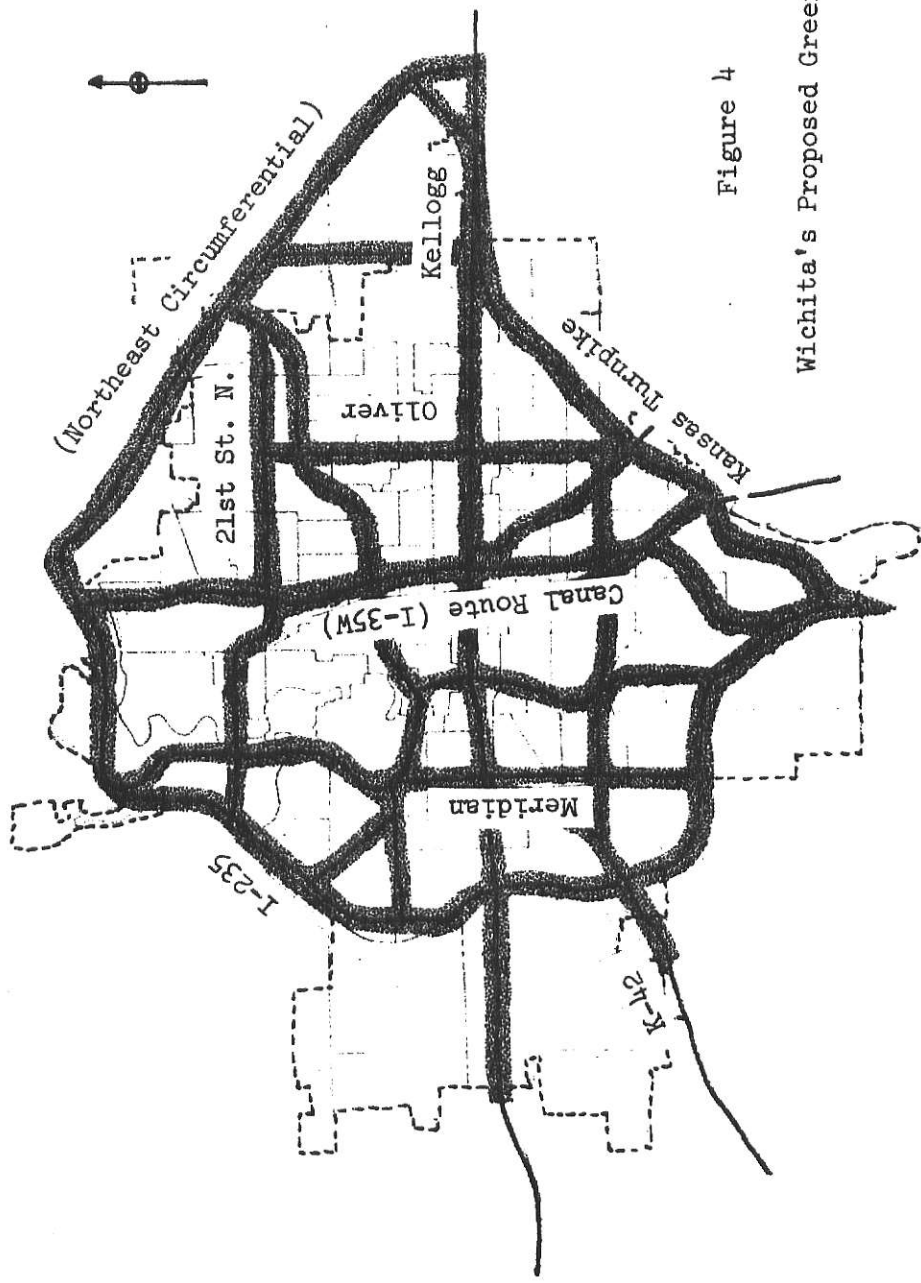


Figure 4

Wichita's Proposed Greenway System

Source: Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan  
Area Planning Department, Toward a More Liveable  
City (n.d., n.p.), p. 41a.



late 1960's, and then by way of urban renewal projects. Others, such as a system of pleasure drives, were being designed in 1968. The problem of maintaining constant water depths in the Arkansas River for the core area was solved in 1979 with construction of the Lincoln Street Dam. Currently the public owns approximately 2000 acres of land adjacent to the Big Arkansas River and approximately 200 acres along the Little Arkansas.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, the City owns certain land rights along at least one bank of the entire length of the Big Arkansas within the City as well as along most of the Little Arkansas, except for a section near 21st St. North.<sup>53</sup> The intent to acquire Little Arkansas property was first stated in the declared policy of the first city manager-commission in 1919-1921. Clapp's advice to extend that policy "until municipal ownership is carried beyond any extant dream of such effort" was not heeded.<sup>54</sup> The 1970 report points out the bank rights are not fee simple. Legal determination of what city privileges obtain has yet to be determined.

The 20-mile-long Wichita-Valley Center Floodway is the largest continuous open space in the urbanized area. The floodway's originally designed use is very limited, accommodating run-off on the average less than three days per year.<sup>55</sup> The rights initially obtained were for flood protection. Beautification and recreation rights were not specifically included, therefore the recreational purposes for which it has been increasingly used are unofficial and

attendant problems real. Erosion, vandalized fences, damaged grass cover and access roads have resulted in increasing maintenance costs. Local residents have complained frequently about motorcycle noise, trespassers and the absence of law enforcement in the area.

Local determination of the City's rights in the floodway has been made. In 1974, the City recondemned the floodway to include recreational use. Subsequently, suit was filed by landowners. The central issue was whether the re-condemnation required additional compensation to the landowners. The District Court of Sedgwick County granted the landowners judgments for damage they would incur because of the additional public use. The Kansas Court of Appeals later upheld that decision (*City of Wichita v. Miller*, 573 P.2d 641). Additional compensation of \$75,041 plus interest was paid to land holders.<sup>56</sup> Thus current limits on the floodway's recreational status are ecological and financial rather than legal.

Another development intended to be a major open-space element is the segment of highway I-135, commonly referred to as the Canal Route. The decision was to align this "through City"-interstate highway with an existing drainage canal and to include recreational and landscaping plans to insure the blending of that freeway with the community. But environmental and financial repercussions of changing a natural drainageway to a man-made one have forced a cutback in planned amenities. Given the inflationary

pressures on this recently-completed elevated expressway, the improvements intended to screen sections that squeeze through residential backyards and to draw people to rather than exclude them from the space underneath may be delayed indefinitely. Whether there is now a multi-purpose throughfare or offensive barrier through the center of the city is not clear.

### Summary

Thus Wichita's public open-space pattern results from concern for the aesthetics, recreation opportunities, and flood control needs of the City. Those concerns have been slow to combine and produce multi-functional open spaces. Rather, prominence of aesthetic concerns was replaced by recreational concerns which were in turn followed by concern for flood hazard management on the part of public decision makers. Private open space, on the other hand, results, for the most part, from the singular concern for residential lot sizes.

Wichita's public and private open spaces also reflect the social and physical patterns of space use. The placement of neighborhood parks mirrors that of schools and residential development. Location of residential development and growth of the City generally reflects constraints imposed by the Arkansas River floodplain and Wichita's primary open-space configuration centers on the River area with the city limits. There would seem to be less correlation

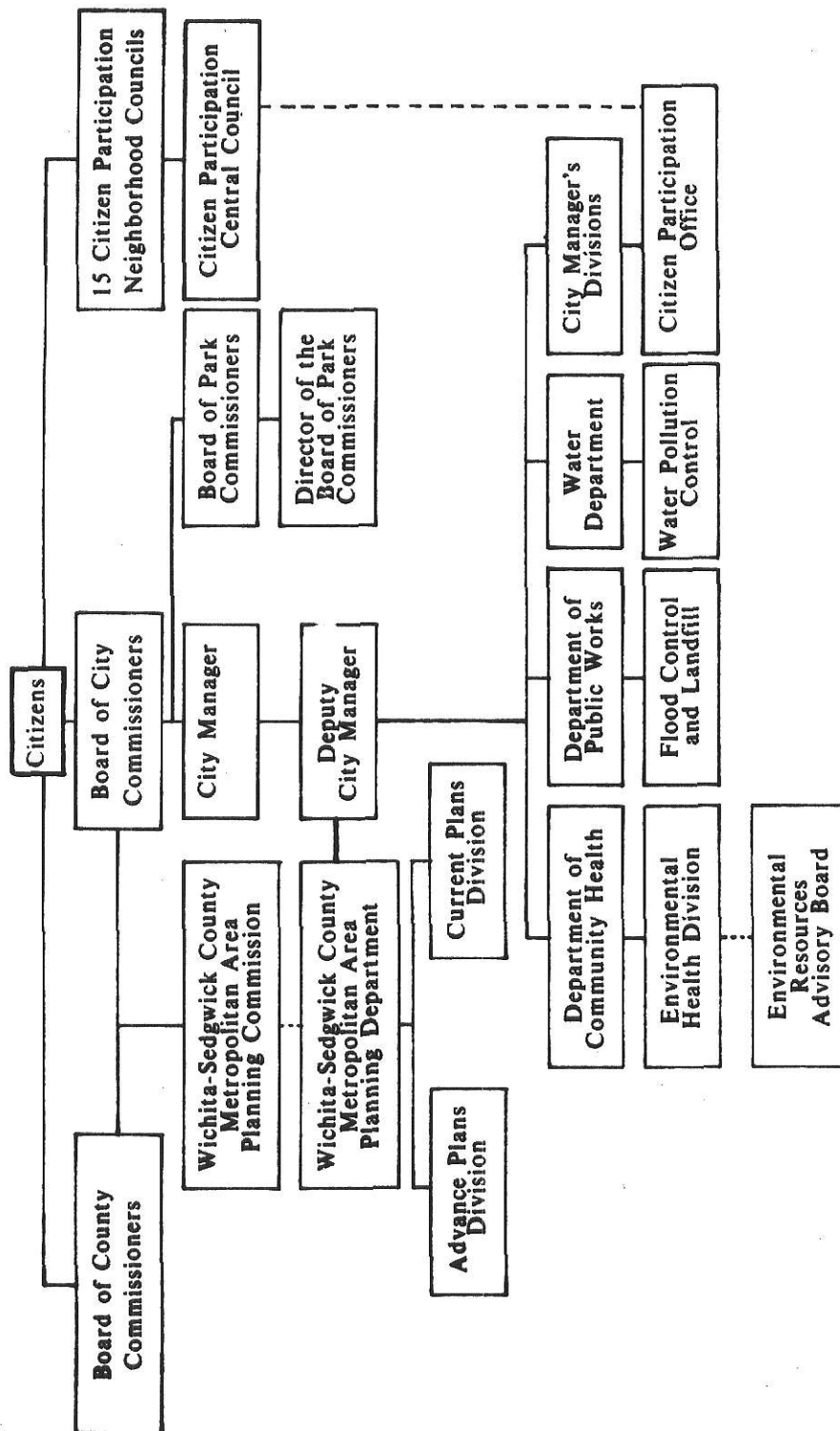
between open-space forms and varying open-space needs and preferences as determined by demographic characteristics.

#### Land-Space Allocation System and Municipal Government

There is a basis for suggesting that two closely related factors are involved in the politics of decision making in Sedgwick County--governmental structure and the behavior of politicians.<sup>57</sup> The 1979 City of Wichita Organization Chart gives some indication of the fragmentation of the decision process producing the evolving open-space configuration (Figure 5).

#### Municipal Agencies

The five members of the City of Wichita Board of Commissioners are elected from the city-at-large and constitute the governing body. Many observers feel that prior to 1972 the City Commission was dominated by community-business interests. After that date the Commission is viewed as liberal and progressive in thrust, concerned with broad social problems and more open.<sup>58</sup> Although there may have been shifts in the political philosophy of Commissioners they appear to be politically and fiscally constrained. Expenditures in major government areas have remained proportionately unchanged, regardless of the composition of the Commission. Table 5 reveals that continuing need absorbs much of the fiscal resources of Wichita City government.



**Figure 5**  
**Administration of Open Space**  
**City of Wichita, 1979**

Source: Wichita, Budget and Management Division. Organizational Charts, 1979. (Wichita: Budget and Management Division, 1979).

Table 5  
Expenditures For Selected Categories And Years, City of Wichita, 1950-78  
(expressed in percentages)

Year	General Government	Public Safety	Public Works (Highways)	Sanitation and Waste Removal	Public Health	Contributions and Donations	Library	Parks	Total
1950	10.96	41.10	17.38	12.99	3.36	0.82	4.53	8.87	\$ 3,556,131.66
1953	10.25	40.19	20.19	12.95	3.33	0.97	3.80	8.31	5,494,217.85
1956	11.41	42.56	17.66	12.01	3.09	1.15	4.44	7.67	7,232,194.63
1959	11.07	44.67	17.20	10.99	3.19	0.57	4.66	7.66	8,152,058.04
1962	9.29	47.60	21.08	6.47	3.30	0.91	4.65	6.70	8,631,368.00
1965	7.16	49.87	22.17	5.26	3.40	0.83	4.59	6.72	9,885,450.00
1968	8.03	48.48	20.55	6.12	3.20	1.13	5.50	6.99	13,521,982.00
1971	12.65	42.74	25.60	5.15	2.59	0.25	4.61	6.41	20,478,942.00
1974	14.85	43.23	20.40	6.13	2.66	1.04	4.56	7.11	23,844,456.00
1977	21.69	36.13	19.33	6.23	3.59	0.51	4.83	7.68	32,022,529.00

Table 5 (continued)

Year	General Government	Public Safety	Public Works (Highways)	Sanitation and Waste Removal	Public Health	Contributions and Donations	Library	Parks	Total
1978	18.43	39.01	20.90	5.54	3.24	0.35	4.31	8.23	\$38,433,818.00

## Source:

1950-1959 data: Wichita. Dept. of Administration. Financial Report, 1959 (Wichita: Dept. of Administration, 1960), p. 82.

1962-1968 data: Wichita. Dept. of Administration. Financial Report, 1969 (Wichita: Dept. of Administration, 1970), p. 125.

1971-1978 data: Wichita. Dept. of Administration. Financial Report, 1978 (Wichita: Dept. of Administration, 1979), p. 156.



The City Commission sets both immediate and long-range policy and makes appointments to the various boards and commissions.

Board of Park Commissioners. Five citizens are appointed to the Board of Park Commissioners by the City Commission. The Park Board's appointment of the Director of Parks is reviewed by the City Manager. The Park Board operates under state statute (K.S.A. 13-1353) and controls parks, parkways and boulevards, recreation and forestry.<sup>59</sup> The Board may acquire and maintain properties to a limit of five miles outside the Wichita city limits.<sup>60</sup> No funds are available directly from the state. Kansas statutes enable the City Commission to issue general revenue bonds and levy taxes for Park Board activities and salaries. The issuance of bonds is the most common means of financing park and open-space land acquisition.<sup>61</sup>

This semi-autonomous position has caused some friction as the City Commission has little control over its appointees' decisions. Some tightening of control was imposed in 1977 when the Park Board was told it must comply with City Policy Number 8. That policy requires the purchasing, payroll and personnel of all boards and agencies to be handled by the City's Department of Administration. The Park Board complied only after City Commissioners publicly suggested enacting a charter ordinance which would take "an agency quite apparently in rebellion and revolt" from under

state statute.<sup>62</sup>

The Commission and City Manager routinely issue memos when citizens make suggestions or complain about park policy and decisions. But impetus for park development--land acquisition and program components--comes from Park Department staff under the direction of the Director of Parks, a position traditionally held by a decision maker with a strong personality. While autonomous, the Board of Park Commissioners is one of the least political boards and the Commission exhibits a high degree of concensus, usually unanimously endorsing staff recommendations.

Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Commission. The three-member Board of County Commissioners and the City Commission each appoint five members to the MAPC. In fact these appointments are divided among the individual members of the governing bodies and, as a result, MAPC membership tends to reflect the political and structural differences of its appointing bodies; the city appointees being characterized as pro-neighborhood and the county appointees as pro-business. County appointees have voted against neighborhood proposals, and opposed the comprehensive plan and zoning ordinances. A citizen-based movement in 1977 to relieve the MAPC of authority for zoning decisions was seen by some City Hall officials and planning commissioners as "personal vendettas against pro-business planning commissioners and the commission in general."<sup>63</sup>

Pro-neighborhood members succeeded in gaining control of the positions of Chairman and Vice Chairman in 1978 after lengthy infighting. The Commission, also termed "Wichita's wild bunch,"<sup>64</sup> has not lacked for colorful personalities, and at times it appears that MAPC members may be reacting more to what they perceive as the views of other personalities on the Commission than to the substantive issues before them.<sup>65</sup> This is reminiscent of the "Tuesday night fights," as the City Commission meetings of the late 1950's were described by the national press.<sup>66</sup> One county appointee who has been criticized by city commissioners for being rude to people appearing before MAPC says "We're not up there for huggin' and kissin'."<sup>67</sup>

Lack of political effectiveness on the part of the MAPC is not paralleled by a lack of economic consequences. Although the city and county commissions can over-rule the MAPC, they usually follow their recommendations on zoning cases. Given its power over land use, MAPC actions probably have greater economic and social consequences than any other advisory body of local government.<sup>68</sup> MAPC has responsibility for holding hearings on matters affecting planning, zoning and subdivisions within the City of Wichita and the unincorporated area within three miles of the City.<sup>69</sup> As a result of such hearings, MAPC makes recommendations to the city and county commissions as to appropriate particular or general policy. MAPC is assisted and advised by the MAPD which through its various divisions prepared the 1965 and

1976 open-space plans and other elements of comprehensive planning. It also reviews proposed land development proposals for compliance with subdivision and other land use regulations.

Environmental Resources Advisory Board. The Environmental Resources Advisory Board established in 1973, has the unusual composition of five city appointees, five county appointees and ten appointees by the city-county Department of Health. In spite of its name, its focus has been a narrow one--limited to areas of immediate concern to the Health Department. As one member put it, if people didn't drink water, the Health Department would have no interest in the area's streams and rivers.<sup>70</sup> Difficulty in maintaining a quorum further contributed to the Board's ineffectiveness.

Rising dissatisfaction with the lack of official attention being given environmental concerns provoked a proposal in March 1978 for a new city-county office of environmental resources to monitor and collect environmental data. The proposal came from a group of six who billed themselves as private citizens; five of whom were members of ERAB and all of whom were experienced private- and public-sector participants in municipal government. They pointed out to the city and county commissions and to the public generally in as unthreatening a manner possible that administratively, everyone does his job yet the results are a disaster.<sup>71</sup>

No one department of city or county government has the primary responsibility of monitoring public and private impact on our landscape. The Planning Department presents public and private projects; the Public Works Departments devise the cheapest and most expeditious means of implementing public plans; business proceeds with the most profitable means of implementation; the Environmental Health Department, the Water Pollution Department and Soil Conservation Service advise in limited areas; and then commissioners must make decisions. No segment of government in Sedgwick County has the responsibility of providing commissioners with comprehensive information indicating what may happen downstream, upstream, upland, underground or in five to ten years as a result of a specific decision.<sup>72</sup>

The proposed Department of Environmental Resources would consist of a professional staff that would centralize these efforts and advise the city and county commissions. The first priority identified by proposers is a Sedgwick County drainage plan, then a complete inventory of natural resources in the area including "truly unique spaces."<sup>73</sup>

Citizen Participation Organization. Wichita's CPO the federally-funded, locally-formulated experiment to increase citizen involvement in government is in its fourth year of operation. Residents from fifteen districts in the city are elected to area councils, lettered "A" through "O". Since city commissioners are elected at-large, the CPO councils are the only form of citywide district representation. A 1976 survey of council members revealed that the councils are dominated by middle-aged, white males and that the majority of the members had college degrees, owned their homes and were long-term residents of their neighborhoods.<sup>74</sup>

During 1977, CPO advised the City Commission on distribution of community development funds, the annual city budget, and metropolitan area plans such as the park and open-space plan. On a CPO-by-CPO basis it tackled park improvements and neighborhood beautification. The CPO Central Council, comprised of representatives from each area council, tangled with the MAPC. They voted to adopt a resolution of "no confidence," claiming that the MAPC was too divided philosophically to effectively plan.<sup>75</sup> In terms of influence area councils were most effective in neighborhood zoning matters. The organization was less effective in influencing the city budget "and wielded the smallest stick when it addressed general issues."<sup>76</sup>

Varying performance of councils raised the question as to whether citizen interest can be maintained in areas where there is no immediate problem. In Area L, which has an active and influential council, is based the Midtown Citizens' Association which was pressuring City Hall before the idea of CPO was conceived. Six of the nine council members there are Midtown members as well. In contrast, is Area C Council. This council was given the opportunity to recommend alternative uses in a disputed development proposal for a tract in the southernmost section of the city. But, according to that area's council delegate, Area C Council was prevented from making a recommendation for lack of a quorum.<sup>77</sup> Nevertheless, the majority of city commissioners say CPO, while imperfect, is currently the best

gauge of citizen attitudes--especially on neighborhood issues.<sup>78</sup>

### Government Structure

Although Sedgwick County government is characterized by partisan, fragmented political decision making, the city is known for its nonpartisan and highly professional government. Nonpartisan politics tend to revolve around personalities, the interests of temporary groups and good, i.e. honest, government. Since Wichita's government has been relatively scandal-free in its history, the issues of good government is largely symbolic and comes down to concern for who is getting what.

There is nothing random about patterns depicting who governs. In 1975, the chairman of the now-defunct Commission on Civil Rights accused city commissioners of failing to live up to a city ordinance requiring appointees to be chosen from "the broadest possible base of the community at large."<sup>79</sup> Since then, however, the situation has changed little. Roughly 80 percent of all board and commission members live in either the square mile making up the fashionable College Hill neighborhood, the affluent northeast, the triangular area defined by the Arkansas and Little Arkansas Rivers, or the extreme western section of the city. Only 15 percent of board and commission members live south of Kellogg Street (or Highway U.S. 54). A map of appointees, with few exceptions, coincides with a census map depicting



average and above household income.<sup>80</sup> The Board of Park Commissioners is no exception. All members live in affluent areas north of Kellogg Street.

The commission-manager form of government with its non-partisan at-large elections relies heavily on "volunteers" for representative input. Voluntarism translates into a reliance on people who have or can make free time--professionals and executives. The 1978 City Commission--two doctors, a lawyer, a realtor and a housewife--came from the same neighborhoods as their appointees, a result of how the political system has traditionally functioned.

These patterns suggest that blue collar citizens who contribute significantly to Wichita's economy have very little to say about its government. The Eagle-Beacon reports various interpretations of the effects of translating blue collar underrepresentation into neighborhood underrepresentation. CPO members in the southwest part of town complain of inadequate parks, unsolved drainage problems and insufficient bus service. While lacking representation the area also faces a reluctance on the part of city staff to encourage any further development in the upgrading of services in this section.

A spokesman for Area E CPO in south central Wichita is quoted as saying:

I think we get shortchanged, . . . But I don't think it's anybody's fault except the people in the neighborhood. A lot of them take the attitude they don't want anything from government.<sup>81</sup>

In North Wichita residents complain of drainage problems and dirt streets. At the same time, a planning department study indicates that residents aren't fully using the social and community services the city already provides.<sup>82</sup> In the old neighborhood around Friends University (West Central Wichita) representation is as sparse as in the southwest, but the CPO Chairman feels they are treated fairly.<sup>83</sup>

### Summary

Wichita's governing boards and commissions supplemented by professional staffs are generally perceived as corruption-free. The elective and politically appointive positions are filled by those in the community who can afford to accept them. Thus governing responsibilities fall to a relatively small group of white collar workers who have the time and financial resources to spend on community service. The Citizen Participation Organization has not become an established method of neighborhood involvement in government. Although the CPO positions on neighborhood issues are seriously considered by the City Commission, fewer people are seeking the area council positions and turnover is increasing. Substantive demands for alternative modes of citizen representation and public-resource allocation have not surfaced.

### Allocation Process

A review of the allocation process provides recent examples of open-space decisions that reveal the current and relative status of that aspect of land use in Wichita-Sedgwick County. Major events examined include the establishment and development of Comotara as a private planned neighborhood, and the public adoption of the 1976 Wichita-Sedgwick County park and open-space plan. Just as revealing are the day-to-day posturing and decisions directly and indirectly affecting the open-space patterns. Timely instances include the Washington Square Addition in the southern part of the city which, before its resolution in February 1978, involved the City Commission, Planning Commission, CPO, a private developer, area citizens, and the Park Board. Still unfolding is the effort to operate an Department of Environmental Resources.

### Open Space and the Private Sector

In examining the role of the private sector in open-space matters, attention is directed to the Comotara development. The growth predicted for the 1960's in the northeast quadrant of the city did not begin to materialize until the 1970's with that project. Comotara, a city within the city of Wichita intended to house 17,000 and employ 13,000, was a logical step in the "can-do" dynamics of real-estate developer, Jack P. DeBoer. DeBoer built his first Wichita apartment complex in 1965. In 1969, Professional Builder

magazine listed Jack P. DeBoer Associates as 34th among 160 home builders nationwide doing \$10 million or more construction a year.<sup>84</sup> By 1970, DeBoer ranked eighth, and the next year Professional Builder ranked DeBoer fourth among multi-family developers based on dollar volume, and second based on the number of units constructed.<sup>85</sup> He looked solid enough to the Ford Foundation that it bought an interest in his operation in Fall, 1971.<sup>86</sup>

With two Lear jets serving as regional offices to link properties and corporations in fifteen states, DeBoer Associates, Inc. began to feel the need for a more appropriate base of operations. In 1972, the search for a 300-acre site for a corporate headquarters mushroomed into 3419 acres and the ultimate real-estate vision--the new town. DeBoer described it this way:

It's an orderly plan for economic and physical growth. It's the end of development by piecemeal, and the beginning of development by plan. Economically . . . it's the beginning of a new industrial dawn for this town.<sup>87</sup>

The vision and locational decision were essentially DeBoer's. He involved none of the planning and marketing expertise in his employ while amassing the largest, single land accumulation for general development in Kansas. Located just beyond Wichita's northeast boundary, Comotara was intended as a logical extension of the metropolitan area, linked to the region via the Missouri Pacific Railroad, Piper Air Park, and proposed major highways--the Northeast Circumferential and the Inner Loop (Figure 6).

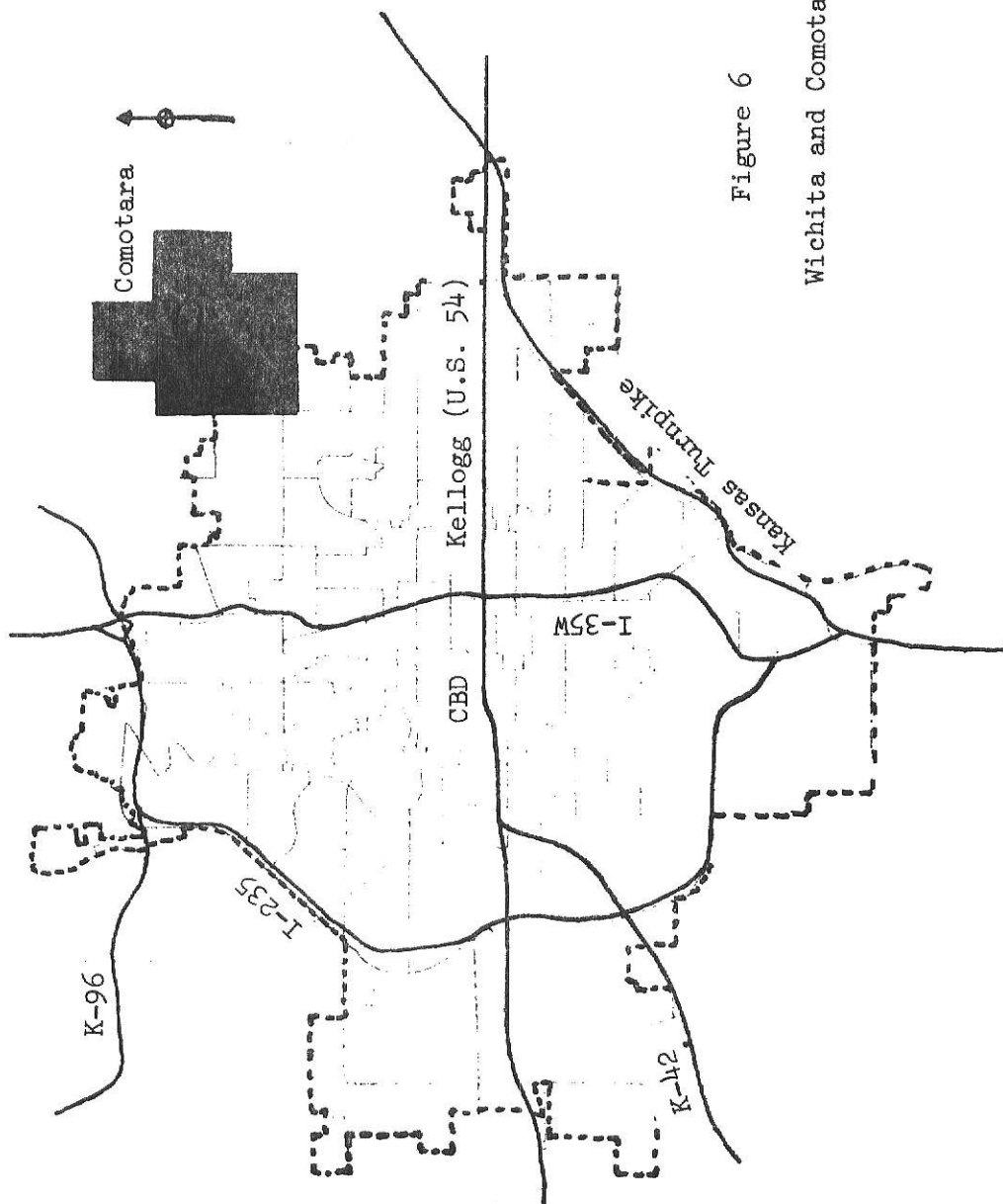


Figure 6

Wichita and Comotara

Source: "Comotara--City Within a City," Wichita, 50:4 (July-August, 1972), 23.

The name "Comotara" derives from "Como," a lake in northern Italy, and "Tara," an isolated hill in Ireland that for centuries was the site of a royal residence and the scene of great meetings. The initial land-use design was done by Oblinger-Smith, a Wichita planning and land consultant firm. In the original design, major features included a 40-acre lake, 350 acres of parks, golf courses and other open space acting as buffers between neighborhood-level housing, educational and commercial units, as well as regional-level commercial and industrial complexes.<sup>88, 89</sup> Total development costs including streets and other utilities were estimated to be \$400 million with completion expected in ten years.

Federal sources of funds were rejected as necessitating unnecessary delays. The city and county were approached informally about the extension of utilities to the property prior to the May 1972, public presentation of Comotara. Confidently DeBoer announced:

. . . there are a lot of things that are going to make this happen . . . and those key things involve the continued cooperation between city, county,<sup>90</sup> state and federal government and the developer.

Community review and approval proceeded smoothly. Annexation of the property making up the SW 1/4 of the section lying between 21st St. N and 29th St. N, and between Woodlawn Street and Rock Road was voted by the City Commission on July 25, 1972, and August 15, 1972.

The developer's next step involved compliance with the City's Community Unit Plan (CUP) regulations. One of the relevant city codes provides the following:

The owner or owners of any tract of land comprising an area of not less than twenty acres may submit to the superintendent of central inspection of the city a plan for the use and development of all such tracts of land for residential purposes . . . The planning commission shall make a report to the board of commissioners setting forth its reasons for approval of the application . . .<sup>91</sup>

Instructions appended to an Application for Community Unit Plan (Planned Development) for Property Located Within the Limits of the City of Wichita, Kansas state that the proposed CUP must be filed with the MAPD for comments. Two weeks are allowed for its review after which copies of the revised plan must be submitted to the Planning Department and a hearing set by the MAPC. Applicants supply a list of property owners within 1000 feet (if the CUP covers more than 25 acres) and notice of the hearing is sent to them. If approved at the hearing, the plan is sent to the City Commission.

Mainsgate Village. Comotara--First Phase, Development Plan (DP-46), received Planning Department approval in August 1972. This marked the culmination of activities initiated by a pre-submittal conference with two staff members who gave their opinions as to what would or would not be acceptable. The developer in turn made a judgment as to the cost of recommended changes given his market position and accumulating costs of interest on the land. Planning



Department approval may take 60 days to 6 months depending on the developer's decision. Most developers don't bother to oppose the staff's position.<sup>92</sup>

MAPC minutes for hearings held September 28, 1972, reflect that Case DP-46 and accompanying request for zoning changes (Case Z-1434) were unanimously accepted and forwarded to the City Commission with a recommendation of approval.<sup>93</sup> Jack Galbraith, Chief Planner, MAPD, outlined the plan as submitted as containing 10.8 acres commercial and 140.1 acres single-family, townhouses, and garden apartments. According to the plan for the 140.1 acres, density would not exceed the standard 7.0 units/acre or 521 total units, and would incorporate "usable open space."<sup>94</sup> No adjacent property owners appeared in opposition, and a representative for the applicant assured the MAPC that they "have been working closely with the Planning Department staff."<sup>95</sup>

These hearings are the main arena in case of a fight. Planning Department staff can only recommend. As perceived by developers, five friends on the Planning Commission generally can assure approval if the case has been carefully presented.<sup>96</sup> It is a situation in which five people potentially dictate to the city. Case DP-46 with requested zoning changes was unanimously approved by the City Commission October 17, 1972, after a brief explanation of the proposed "economic mix" which would incorporate commercial and office lots and residential lots of varying

sizes (Figure 7).<sup>97</sup>

VanDoren-Hazard-Stallings, Wichita engineering firm, was then contracted to prepare the plats as Comotara moved into the subdivision approval process outlined on each MAPD Application for Subdivision Approval. At this stage the municipality is looking for detailed reinforcement of the intentions expressed in the CUP. The developer on the other hand sees the plat as evolving from the CUP on the basis of changing social, physical and economic factors. The Final Plat, Comotara First Addition (Case S/D 72-99), was recommended unanimously to the City Commission by the Planning Commission on November 9, 1972, subject to the usual guarantee on installation or improvements of utilities, streets, etc. The applicant was further required to

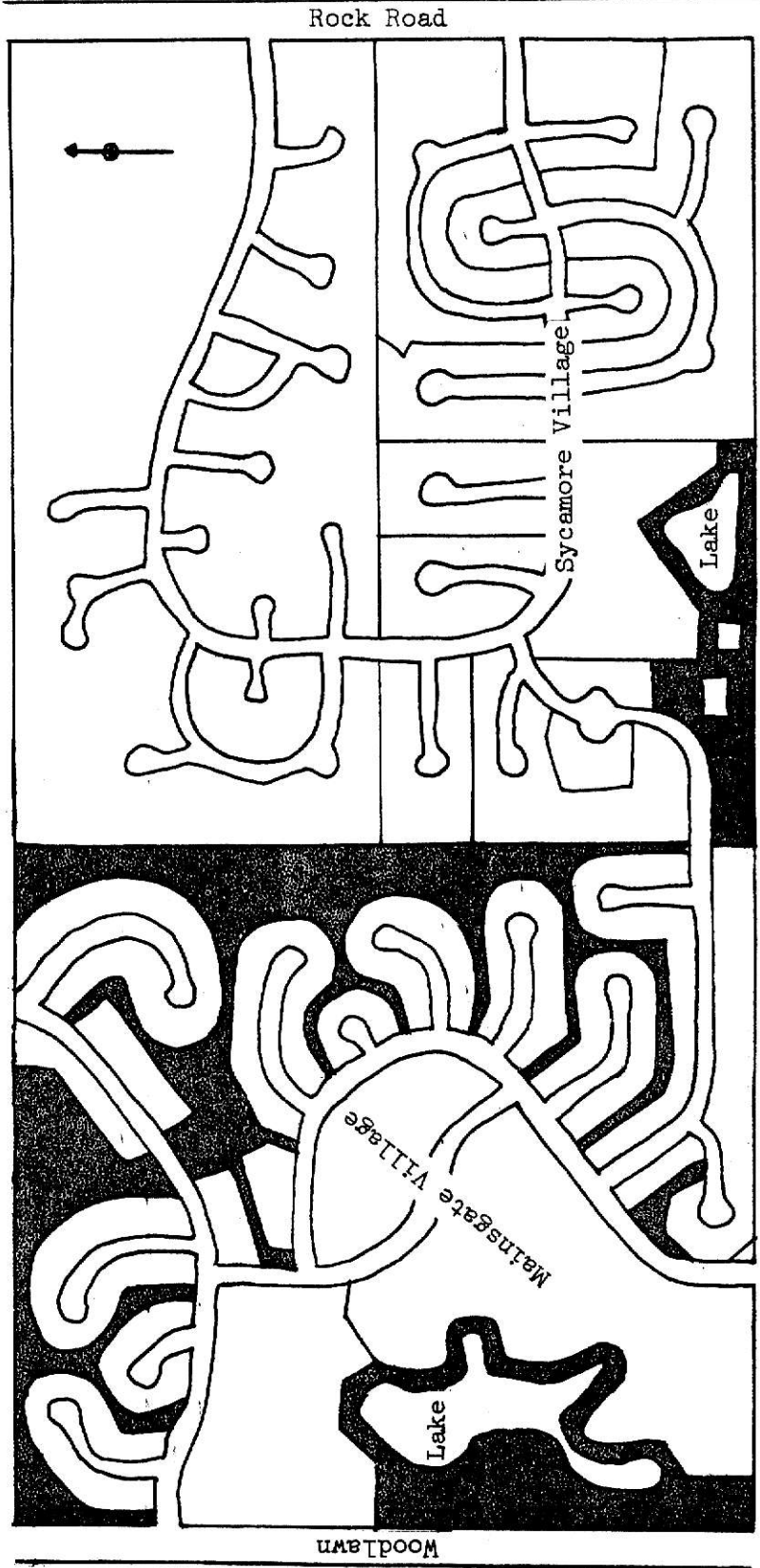
submit to the Planning Department a copy of the Homes Association Agreement which shall contain provisions for the development and continued maintenance of the common open space areas indicated as reserves on the plat and the common open areas.<sup>98</sup>

Meanwhile all DeBoer enterprises were in financial trouble. Underlying factors included a nationwide real estate depression, mounting interest rates and construction costs, and a large number of long-term DeBoer investments. "The whole world is proceeding at a slower pace than I was," DeBoer now says.<sup>99</sup>

By November 1973, Comotara was the property of the Ford Foundation and the First National City Bank of New York. Comotara now became one of the largest projects managed by K. S. Sweet, national financial and real-estate

Figure 7

Comotara, 1979  
Mainsgate Village and Sycamore Village



Legend

Common Open Space

Source: Wichita Land Company, Community Unit Plan for Comotara, May, 1975 (Wichita: Van Doren-Hazard-Stallings, [1975]).

planning firm, and Rahenkamp Sachs Wells and Associates, Philadelphia-based planning and environmental consultants. Site improvements were essentially halted until Spring, 1974, as the new management altered plans in order to take economic pressures off the developer.

Economic survival was felt to be ensured by the presence of three job-generating clients: National Cash Register, Metropolitan Life Insurance, and J. C. Penney. But local builder- and home buyer-confidence had to be re-established in what the media now termed "simply another subdivision with very big plans and an industrial park next door."<sup>100</sup> Expensive promotional literature extolled single-family housing at \$40,000 to \$60,000 which fronted on nothing but cul-de-sacs and had direct access to an internal network of paths. At the same time some open space and activity areas were re-designed to other uses. Minutes of the planning commission meeting of January 24, 1974, recorded approval of an amendment to DP-46 increasing the number of single family clusters which in turn increased the total number of dwelling units and overall densities.<sup>101</sup>

When Mainsgate Village subdivision construction re-started in Spring, 1974, lots were sold outright to builders in an effort to stimulate development. This left design interpretation to the individual builders and resulted in some unsightly tract housing and significantly altered drainage patterns.<sup>102</sup> Wichita realtors were no more adept than the builders at interpreting the Comotara package

or intent to buyers. Open space was pushed as a big plus feature of the neighborhood, but the accompanying maintenance responsibilities were not explained. The nature of the homeowners association required in the original plan was not understood and in some cases its existence simply not mentioned.<sup>103</sup> Further, the majority of buyers had no previous experience in homeowners associations.<sup>104</sup>

The homeowners' association of 154 single-family unit owners in Mainsgate Village--in conjunction with the Wichita Land Company from 1975-April 1977, and independently thereafter--found itself with thirty-three prestigious but troublesome acres of common open space and lake to maintain. On the basis of their location, condominium owners controlled access to the lake, the homeowners' association was responsible for maintenance of its western shore and neither group was not interested in assuming any greater financial responsibility (Figure 7). Other major expenses included property taxes (approximately \$3100) on land that was administered as permanent open space but assessed as developable land.<sup>105</sup> Initial association assessments (\$5/month/lot) came as a surprise to some residents, and common areas that weave through the single-family lots were not uniformly maintained, either out of ignorance or resistance to the provisions in the plan allocating responsibility to the homeowners' association.

Further, differences of interpretation of open space arose. Homeowners were split; about half wanting the open

space possibilities enhanced (path beautification and landscaping) and half wanting conventional yard treatment (security fencing).<sup>106</sup> The initial reaction of the Association's Architectural Control Committee was to approve any improvement proposed by a homeowner. The resulting fencing turned the common areas in the southeast quarter of Mainsgate Village into forbidding-looking alleys. Now considered a mistake, the area is irreversibly out of sight of the homeowners responsible for it and minimally accessible to standard maintenance equipment.

While the open space may be a status symbol, it became a burden. With an operating budget of \$9000/year, the homeowners' association was attempting to adjust its position by having the open space re-assessed. Second, the association hoped to sell the lake, with its attendant taxes, maintenance and liability insurance payments, to the developer of the commercial property--retaining only right of access.

Sycamore Village. Meanwhile, with Rahenkamp Sachs Wells came the beginning of formal market research and the development of a master plan document which was submitted to the MAPC. The document developed justifications for allowing exceptions to the street and drainage standards and an outline of a recommended municipal-review procedure. This document on the land-planning process was based on analysis of three factors: physical environment; municipal services such as water, sewer, roads and schools; and market demand.<sup>107</sup>

John Rahenkamp advocated carrying capacity analysis as a substitute for the criteria currently used in the public review of development proposals.

Investment must be related to capacity, and the public framework must include a method for collecting and assessing data related to natural systems capacity, physical infrastructure, and fiscal systems.<sup>108</sup>

He reasoned that impact measures and capacity restraints could be used to support the need for the public to intervene against a development proposal.<sup>109</sup>

In the cover letter dated March 24, 1975, emphasis was again placed on the concept of Comotara as an open-space community. More than 25 o/o of the total site was to be devoted to common open space for the purposes of conserving environmentally-sensitive areas, meeting increasing leisure demands, and linking the neighborhoods of Comotara with major community facilities and open-space areas.<sup>110</sup>

The resulting CUP for Comotara--Second Phase (Case DP-73) was prepared by Van Doren-Hazard-Stallings, May 1975; approved by MAPD, June 1975; approved by MAPC, June 12, 1975; and by the City Commission, July 1, 1975. A major element in this phase was the Sycamore Village development (Figure 7). The plans for Sycamore Village attempted to significantly reduce the specials (assessments for curb and guttering, streets, sidewalks, and utilities). Recommendations included narrower streets and the use of swales instead of the standard system for drainage and storm water management in residential areas.



Conveyance of runoff from collection swales and storm sewer to detention/retention ponds by overland flow can best be accomplished through the use of gently sloped grass swales . . . The swales can be readily maintained as grass areas within easements or the open space system . . .<sup>111</sup>

Design changes affecting open space were evident. Lessons learned in Mainsgate Village dictated less area be in commons and a configuration presenting fewer maintenance and administrative problems. The effort toward more meaningful, interpreted to be multi-functional, inter-connecting, usable and manageable, open space reduced direct backdoor access to common area. Finger-like open space abutting backyards gave way to a central open space corridor. Bike paths were designed to straddle lot lines rather than be placed in 12'-40' easement strips. Lots were made larger and those bounded by the open space corridor or hedgerows were assigned premium prices. Total open space allocations decreased but were still present in such quantity that city officials had no grounds for complaint.

The distance between Rahenkamp Sachs Wells and Comotara was not one of just miles. There were disagreements on the management of Comotara and the developer simply chose not to implement a number of what Rahenkamp considered accepted planning innovations. For example, considerable city-developer discussion (about three months of negotiation) ensued about the designer's recommendations against the use of standard streets, curbing and drainage. "Of course there were compromises," says John Rahenkamp, " . . .

but we got about 95 percent of what we went after."<sup>112</sup> The City eventually agreed to try the swales, but the developer later abandoned that plan, foreseeing problems based on Wichita's weather and soils.

If the City was conservative, local builders were even more so. Designer recommendations, including shorter lot frontage and more multi-family units and clustering, were traded-off for a perceived desire for privacy on the part of potential Comotara residents. In summary, Phil Snodgrass, Comotara's Vice President of Operations, flatly stated that Rahenkamp's plans were great for East Orange, New Jersey, but they didn't know "crap" about the Wichita market.<sup>113</sup>

No-confidence conditions were further demonstrated in a letter to the editor of Urban Land by Eric Kelly who was, in 1975, a project manager for Rahenkamp Sachs Wells.

. . . you describe as an "innovative land planning concept," a technique of preserving open space which involves the individual ownership of open space subject to a deed restriction requiring that it be maintained in a natural state. You state "to our knowledge it has never been tried before."

. . . However, it is my impression that a new community outside of Wichita has used this concept despite my recommendations to the contrary. They did not have particularly competent counsel involved in the project and since they thought of this technique, I suspect it has been thought of by many others.<sup>114</sup>

By early 1976, Rahenkamp was replaced as design consultant by Bill Yung, Wichita landscape architect and author of Oblinger-Smith's original site study of Comotara. In March 1977, the Ford Foundation acquired 300 acres in

exchange for its financial interest in Comotara.<sup>115</sup> K. S. Sweet was replaced with on-site management personnel known collectively as Comotara Properties, Inc., and by July 1977, Sycamore Village construction was underway.

Yung revised the Comotara--Second Phase CUP and subsequent subdivision plats reducing the number of multi-family housing units planned for the areas east and northeast of Mainsgate Village. Open-space plans included a linear park and lake system that would not only serve human needs but allow Comotara to internalize its potential run-off problems. Run-off at full development was not to exceed run-off levels expected if the land were left in agricultural production.<sup>116</sup>

Yung proceeded with the realization that current Comotara residents are potential critics and opponents of future development. Ironically, officers of the Mainsgate homeowners' association professed at that point to having no input to, knowledge of, or concern for Comotara's future plans.<sup>117</sup> The developer seemed content with association concern and responsibilities based on specific geographic limitations. Problems could arise about full access to an open-space system administered by residents with financial responsibility for limited parts. This situation was expected to fall to either an executive board representing all present and future homeowner associations or to a single all-inclusive board. The resident-association-developer relationship was evolving, the resident-association-city

relationship was as yet unexplored.

Summary. From the above, one can conclude that Wichita development generally and Comotara in particular do not reflect the pressures and accompanying restrictions and payoffs that must be made by developers operating in rapidly developing areas. Local developers can either work with or against the public sector and still meet their goals. Wichita's agencies have not used time as a weapon against developers to any significant extent. Comotara by its magnitude senses it must moderate its demands. A twenty-year-plus commitment to development precludes arguing for major exceptions to policy in any given subdivision. The developers thus far are satisfied to play the game, predetermining which contacts and concessions will smooth the costly review and approval process in Wichita/Sedgwick County rather than pressing for major changes in it.

Comotara's impact on the area does include stimulation of building generally and replication of some of its linear open-space elements such as biking and jogging trails. Greater attention is focused on the review/approval processes and further tinkering is expected. For an entity billed as an open-space community and offering extraordinary recreational opportunities it seems strange that there is so little municipal consideration of Comotara's potential impact on open-space objectives or even as part of a regional open-space inventory. From the following

discussion of public sector open space one must question the extent to which divisions of MAPD communicates with each other--Current Plans which reviews and approves plans and Advance Plans which writes the open-space planning documents --to say nothing of the other agencies involved. The transition from the private to the public sector is a sharp one.

### Open Space and the Public Sector

In examining the role of the public sector in open-space matters, attention is directed first to the 1976 Wichita-Sedgwick County park and open-space plan.

#### Wichita-Sedgwick County Park and Open-Space Plan

1976. The document "Parks and Open Space 1976-2000 Sedgwick County, Kansas," an element of the Comprehensive Plan, is an update of park planning analysis and the aspects of implementation. A new plan was necessary to be eligible for grants for land acquisition and improvements from the U.S. Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, and to facilitate working with state agencies. The plan looks like all 701 documents. Historical background is reprinted and updated from earlier plans. The state-of-the-art is reviewed. Current distinctions being made for open space and recreation space are outlined. Open space--a resource rather than a facility such as parks, or an activity such as recreation--is recognized for its conservative, protective and organizational functions.<sup>118</sup> The latest park and recreation innovations

are discussed as well as avenues of implementation--those in use locally as well as those being explored in other metropolitan areas.

Methodologically, accessibility is a key variable in identifying need and levels of park service. Although citizen input generally is structured by the CPO organization, analysis of need is no longer based on neighborhood areas. The parks themselves become the points from which the service areas evolve. This of course assumes that the parks are not under-utilized, nor empty. Areas identified as deficient in park acreage are weighted on the basis of family income, population density, and existing and projected land use and population levels. A second set of variables applied included number and age of children, number of persons 65 years and older, family size/household, occupation, and auto ownership. These rankings were then tempered by the presence of semi-public and private facilities such as school play areas, golf courses and private beaches. The resulting areas of open-space deficiency--viewed as synonymous with park and recreation space--are basically those so identified in the previous 1965 analysis.

Wichita's standard for open space becomes 11 park acres per 1000 residents. One-third of a mile or a 10-minute walk is stated as "a nice objective to strive for."<sup>119</sup> No further justification is made, nor asked for. The urgency of land acquisition is tempered by slowing rates of population growth and mounting operational and maintenance

costs.

Arkansas River development is a major emphasis in a plan which outlines \$1.6 million in acquisitions for 1060 acres, including 6 neighborhood parks of 10 acres, 8 community parks of 25 acres, and 800 acres for semi-regional sites. Estimated purchase prices have risen to \$2000/acre.<sup>120</sup> In addition the working agreement between the Board of Education and Board of Park Commissioners with regard to the buying and exchanging of park and school lands over the years is threatened. The Board of Education has now been advised by its legal counsel that on future land disposition it will be necessary to get fair market value for the land regardless of the buyer.<sup>121</sup>

The draft document was produced in 1975-1976 and subsequently reviewed by the CPO's, various advisory boards and city agencies, officials of other cities in the county, the Park Board staff and commissioners, the MAPC Advance Plans Committee and the Sedgwick County Commission. An addendum was prepared in the Summer, 1977 that reflected alterations based on technical questions raised by Park Department officials, the MAPD recommendation that the Park Department more-systematically study citizen wants and needs, concern for long range conservation interests, and updated land use patterns and population statistics.<sup>122</sup>

This review process culminated in public hearings conducted by the MAPC on December 15, 1977. Four individuals--representing CPO area councils, ERAB, and the Board of



Park Commissioners--spoke in support of the plan. This small showing of public interest was attributed by planning commissioners to the long duration of the review process and the possible greater concern for the issues of planning goals and proposed new zoning ordinance.<sup>123</sup> MAPC voted unanimously to adopt the plan following a discussion centering largely on the possibilities and ramifications of requiring dedication of land by developers.<sup>124</sup> Parkland dedication is not required of developers in Wichita although Kansas statutes allow communities to require 10 percent dedication (K.S.A. 12-705).

Public concern for the plan was never very strong. Based on personal observations, area CPO meetings at which the plan was reviewed by MAPD staff tended to attract only the elected CPO council members who would have been there anyway. The wealth of data in an inch-thick draft report and the limited time allowed for review prevented significant citizen analysis or input. It was viewed as just another in the continuous series of such presentations and reports. Some questions were asked about the recreational services being planned, but these were questions that this plan was not designed to answer.

The plan was written so as not to be objectionable to any agency involved in review or implementation. It is a document that is in theory "do-able" but in fact only "urges" and "encourages" officials to implement. In addition planners are quick to point out that the plan is a

guide and not a blueprint for action. Nevertheless the 1965 Plan was treated as a park and recreation mandate by the Park Department. Director of Parks, Tom Allen, responded to a request in 1976 by Park Board members to make a presentation pertaining to future land to be acquired for park purposes by comparing current and projected activities to the 1965 Plan.<sup>125</sup> According to Allen, land acquisition recommendations were being closely followed.

Interagency concern for the plan was much keener, as evidenced by the Addendum--an additional 1/2-inch of paper. There was the usual jockeying for position as departments and department heads were protecting and/or staking out their decision-making territory. In January 1977, news releases were reporting Park Department complaints of lack of cooperation on the part of the Planning Department.<sup>126</sup> Allen expressed the opinion that the Park Board staff had had insufficient opportunity to review the document prior to the distribution of the final draft copy by the MAPC.<sup>127</sup> Park personnel didn't like the priorities indicated, the laundry list of implementation possibilities and the quoted acreage prices.<sup>128</sup> Subsequently the Director of Planning sent a memo to the Board of Park Commissioners which said in part:

For the record, I would like the Board and Mr. Allen to know that I as Director and members of my Department are more than willing to work with you and your staff to update the drafted Park/Open Space Plan. You recognize I'm sure that the MAPC under current law has the obligation to formulate and hopefully adopt such plans.<sup>129</sup>

This, coupled with the controversy over City Policy Number 8 which would become public in July led the Park Board to take official exception to MAPC's role in park planning.<sup>130</sup> The minutes of January 24, 1977, reflect that the Board queried its legal counsel as to the Board's legal role in park planning and the extent of authority vested in the MAPC as it relates to the park system.<sup>131</sup> The minutes do not reflect any official response to those questions.

Whether generally accepted or not, the park and open-space plan assigns responsibility for planning the land-use design--individual land parcels required for parks, total acreage and long-range open-space plans--to the MAPC. The Park Board on the other hand is responsible for planning and implementing recreational programs. These are not in all cases, complementary efforts. Planners' recommendations for tot lots and adventure parks are not endorsed by park officials. While planners see tot lots as an urban-park innovation, park officials see them as experiments to be pursued only as long as the federal funds hold out. The Director of Parks envisions the adventure playground to consist of "ramshackle huts and tunnels where children could escape observation from supervisors."<sup>132</sup>

Planners feel that future land acquisition decisions should be prescribed by the open-space system, a configuration shaped by the network of waterways in the city and county. This is a recommendation underscored by the individuals promoting the environmental resources office. The

Park Department on the other hand, wanting to serve the greatest possible number of Wichitans, hesitates to commit purchase and maintenance funds to areas that will serve the smaller cities and the county more than Wichita.

The Addendum recommendation for a survey of citizen wants and needs, a project that had been discussed by the Planning Department as it was preparing the plan, was attempted by the Park Department through a series of meetings held in 1975. During one of those meetings it was stated that no input was being made to the planning document being formulated at that time.<sup>133</sup> Based on personal observation of a number of those meetings, the Park Commissioners were on the whole somewhat defensive and quick to explain either why a suggestion wouldn't work or that it was already being implemented. Park officials considered those meetings unsuccessful, but at the urging of some park board commissioners they initiated a new effort in 1978.

Finally, the "concern for long-range conservation interests" underscores the one firm recommendation made in the park/open-space plan. It was the first evidence of, and at that time probably a token concession to, the current effort to promote and focus attention on areal environmental resources preservation. The document read:

. . . it is recommended that an open space action auxiliary group be formed with its function being to work with existing public and private groups concerned with open space and beautification issues. The committee should more fully inform the public on park and open space matters as well as be active in seeking new legislation beneficial to parks and recreation. The

committee should also develop a program to actively solicit park land through donations, gifts, and trusts. The acquisition of land need not include the full rights but could be instead, the acquisition of easements to private lakes, river access points, etc., with the landowners retaining certain use and mineral rights.<sup>134</sup>

#### Sedgwick County Department of Environmental

Resources. In subsequent appeals to the public sector, beginning March 1978, presentations advocating the establishment of a Department of Environmental Resources were made to the city and county commissions. Opportunities for funding from the federal Environmental Protection Agency were explored. Privately, prominent citizens are being approached about donating land still in its natural state to a Nature Conservancy. Complimenting that effort, an in-depth editorial by the Development Coordinator of the Nature Conservancy's Midwest Regional Office was published in the Eagle-Beacon, June 1978.<sup>135</sup>

The County Commission formally endorsed the proposed department, but the City deferred action as the Health Department and ERAB charged "unnecessary duplication" in a show of concern for splitting budgets, staff and assignments with an office that would be directly responsible to the city and county commissions.<sup>136</sup> One city commissioner voiced opposition to any new municipal agencies or staffs. He wanted evidence that "we're in bad trouble, environmentally", and that it will save money to establish the unit.<sup>137</sup> Jointly the commissions did authorize a maximum of

\$60,000 from approved 1979 city-county budgets as local matching funds for a possible federal grant "to support environmental conservation."<sup>138</sup>

At the City Commission meeting of September 5, 1978, it was recommended by the City Manager and the Board of Health that a staff person be assigned full time to the ERAB for a six-month study of "organizational and policy alternatives on behalf of environmental conservation."<sup>139</sup> Overt and covert activities culminated in the October 3, 1978 meeting. At that meeting support for a separate department was presented by citizens and environmental groups. The Chairman of ERAB reported that that Board had reconsidered its endorsement of the City Manager's proposal and now supported establishing a separate department. Opposition came from department heads within the Health Department, who sensed from whose budget the \$60,000 would probably come, the Board of Health and the Chamber of Commerce. City commissioners expressed opinions that if it took six months to study the problem the department was probably needed, "environmental needs were past due," and "establishing such a department right now may not be the answer," before adopting by a vote of 4-1 a resolution establishing a Department of Environmental Resources.<sup>140</sup> The City Manager was instructed to work "enthusiastically" to make it a functioning entity.<sup>141</sup> In February 1979, however the City withdrew its support and instead asked the County to establish and fund the agency as a countywide department. The

Environmental Resources Advisory Board was abolished in November and environmental concerns became the responsibility of the City of Wichita Board of Health of the Sedgwick County Department of Environmental Resources.<sup>142</sup>

Washington Square Addition. A final example of urban development in which open space was more of a tool than an issue was the review of a proposed subdivision, Washington Square Addition (S/D 76-39), in the south-central part of the city. In September 1977 the City Commission denied the S/D 76-39 plat. While the MAPC recommended that it be approved, homeowners adjacent to the 22-acre parcel opposed the special assessments that the proposed housing development would create. Both homeowners and the City Commission turned to the Park Board to rescue them from a seemingly unwise development by purchasing the parcel for park use.

A Planning Department memo asked the Park Board to consider the land for park purposes. In addition there was a general query as to the Park Board's desire "to use other odd shaped pieces of property left as a result of highway construction and drainage systems for parks."<sup>143</sup> Park Board minutes reflect that the Director of Parks advised that land acquired for park purposes had always been acquired "on the basis of meeting the needs of the people" and only after "careful study and consideration."<sup>144</sup> The Park Board concurred that "parkland should not be acquired on the basis of



availability, but rather on need and service; and further that the odd shaped parcels should not be acquired."<sup>145</sup>

Application for a rehearing was subsequently filed by the applicants and twelve area residents spoke in opposition at a December meeting. The City attorney indicated that it was permissible to refuse platting if the proposed plat were found to be incompatible with the area, or if it were determined that there is a use in the City for that land, and, within a reasonable period of time, action is taken to acquire that land for a public purpose.

The City Commission responded by declaring the plat incompatible with the neighborhood and directed the City Manager to "move with hast to acquire the property for park and open space,"<sup>146</sup> and the matter was referred to the Board of Park Commissioners. The issue was now a public one with increased pressure on the Park Board by both the City Commission and area homeowners. The Director of Parks was quoted in the newspaper as questioning why the City Commission did not purchase the land for "open space" rather than ask the Park Board to use its funds.<sup>147</sup> This seemed to equate open space with idle or vacant land and thus would be either outside the Park Department's sphere of responsibility, or would be acreage that the Department would not maintain in the usual golf-course condition of most parks.

A decision was deferred 30 days in order that a meeting could be held for residents, the developer, South Riverside Homeowners Association and the CPO neighborhood

and central councils. Director of Parks Allen felt himself to be in a precarious position but stood firm and the Park Board voted February 13, 1978, again, not to purchase the Washington Square Addition.

At the City Commission meeting of February 21, 1978 the attorney for the developer stated that "this matter had been held long enough and asked the Commission to take action."<sup>148</sup> The Commission deferred one week at the request of the South Riverside Homeowners Association, but the Park Board position was accepted and the plat approved by a 3-2 vote of the Commission.<sup>149</sup>

Summary. Advisory boards and commissions maintain relatively autonomous positions in relation to the general public in dealing with questions of open space. Inter- and intra-agency confrontations are potentially more threatening and it is there that the real open-space trade-offs are being made. Thus the quality of open-space decisions would seem to hinge as much on its management aspects as its issue aspects. The Policy-8 controversy was more the expression of the City Commission's frustration over its general lack of control over the Park Director and Commissioners it appoints than a concern for greater efficiency. The diversity of open-space concerns and decentralization of responsibilities is at least one underlying cause of the posturing of the MAPD, Park Board, Health Department and ERAB as recorded here. Real battles preceded the replacement of

ERAB with a county Department of Environmental Resources. The new department does not simplify the organization of public open-space responsibilities. It may or may not simplify the public open-space issues.

#### Resultant/Future Patterns of Open Space

Despite the record sketched above, open space is not typical dinner conversation in Wichita, Kansas. The auto-oriented environment puts everyone within 15 minutes of open country, or the City Limits, given the City's annexation history. Open space is perceived as abundant and thus taken for granted. In this non-crisis setting, the bureaucracy is making the decisions and establishing policy.

Inter-departmental give-and-take is vital to the total open-space picture, given the number of agencies involved. The sum of the agencies operational and bureaucratic objectives produce a conflict of interests that is generally debated at the highest governmental level--city and county commission meetings.

The primary objective of each staff-generated plan is its adoption. Thus, each is as unthreatening as possible with no mandated action. Nevertheless the attitudes or approaches behind those plans are the same attitudes and approaches used in subsequent decision making, i.e. park service areas. Plans once adopted and perceptions once established tend to perpetuate themselves in revised plans. The 1976 plan is an extension of the 1965 plan. There is

every reason to expect that the adopted park-purchase and development recommendations will be followed in the coming years. Land acquisitions will thus focus on perimeter areas of the city, with emphasis on sites to the east and north-east. Plans not adopted seem to be periodically brought up for reconsideration such as in the case of the Inner Loop and North East Circumferential.

Technical aspects of multi-faceted plans and problems force city decision makers to rely on staff opinions which are often compromises made by department heads who seem not to make unnecessary waves for one another. Members of one crucial decision-making level, MAPC, traditionally do make waves for one another. Appointees have consistently been very uncompromising representatives of the various perspectives on land development.

Open space is generally equated with parks. The Park Department, in fact the Park Director, has worked vigorously within conservative bounds. Land preservation in its natural state is not a Park Department interest nor perceived responsibility. If they can't maintain it, they don't want it; if no one is to play on it or it is to remain idle, they don't want it. It can't usually be documented, but one fears opportunities are being lost. The result is a reasonably even distribution of safe, manicured recreation spaces. The department has been successful at keeping pace with public demand via judicious land purchases and prompt development of those acquisitions. Rising costs will slow

this, forcing tighter trade-offs, within and between municipal agencies.

One element definitely not considered in a public land-use decision is whether or not it will pay its way. The City doesn't calculate those costs, not wanting that kind of black or white alternative. They would rather not lose the option of a political decision.

The private sector on the other hand must know what its land-use options cost before choosing. Development in Wichita doesn't reflect the pressures and accompanying restrictions and payoffs. Neither is it given to the land development experiments or innovations (depending on one's viewpoint) being tried elsewhere.

Enter a man with the largest single land development proposal (approximately 3400 acres) that Wichita had ever seen--Comotara. Public officials were initially impressed. The developer had done more than the usual amount of homework on site plans and, with outside backing from the Chase Manhattan Bank and the Ford Foundation, "What could go wrong?"

A good many things went wrong and a series of ownership changes led to reallocation of land uses based on a tightening need for monetary return. Comotara continues to back off from its environmentally-oriented image. Since original proposals were well beyond Wichita's requirements, modifications were not seriously questioned. Nor was the City anxious to thwart a long-term project producing jobs

and housing for the area.

Mainsgate Village, the first parcel platted, was a compromise of the developer's plans, City standards and guidelines, builders' interpretations and implementation and residents' expectations. The open-space component was a loser in this and subsequent land use trade-offs.

Based on a series of interviews, one can argue that Comotara decision makers perceive bureaucratic red tape as comparatively light, public policy as encouraging development, and planning department staff as tough but competent.<sup>150</sup> They also feel that the number of lots coming on the market parallels increases in the size of city staff. Every new man justifies his position by scrutinizing incoming proposals.<sup>151</sup> There is, then, increasing review and more criticism leveled at development plans. While Comotara has stimulated platting in the City generally, there has been no revision of platting standards. Changes in the review process were made in March 1980 to allow design of public improvements (water, streets, drainage, etc.) to be done concurrently with platting review and approval.<sup>152</sup> Comotara's use of linear open space is being copied in other Wichita developments.

A multitude of public and private sector decisions are producing Wichita's open-space patchwork. At this point it is the general public that rubber stamps those decisions. Support for the frontier ethic of land rights is strong. Complaints about park locations, waterway access, or the

cityscape generally are infrequent, disorganized and neighborhood- rather than regionally-oriented. Comotara has yet to have many surrounding residents that could oppose development. Surrounding landowners are watching the value of their land rise and the opportunity for developing their holdings accelerate.

Only recently has any serious questioning of this lack of comprehensive planning and decision making arisen. Technically sound but fragmented approaches have created problems, especially along watercourses. Wichita, setting on a floodplain, has yet to systematically assess its impact on local creeks and rivers. Such a study is a primary objective of the Sedgwick County Department of Environmental Resources, established in July 1979. Its proponents rocked the bureaucratic boat; the toughest issues were not environmental. Whether the department succeeds in restructuring the decision-making processes, making environmental considerations central rather than peripheral to land-use discussions will be watched with interest. Of even greater importance will be whether or not this revised approach significantly alters the open space/development pattern on the Wichita-Sedgwick County landscape.

#### National Urban Open-Space Factors

A number of private and public sector events occurring during the short span of 1970-1979 have proven to be rather revealing of Wichita's open-space condition.



Nevertheless, not all relevant elements of Wichita's environmental condition are as yet examined. It is quite common, even comforting, to expect internal components of the urban political system to explain metropolitan-based phenomena. This supposition buttresses American values of local control widely accepted from Jefferson to the revenue sharers of the present day. Preoccupation with internal factors--actors and events within the city's corporate limits--overlooks some less evident but fundamental sources of urban political behavior. Brown argues that two external conditions--the city's position within a decentralized metropolitan political economy and the city's place within the American federal system--explain more about urban politics than do any truly endogenous variables.<sup>153</sup> From his perspective each incorporated place competes with its immediate and more distant neighbors for valued resources--jobs, economic activity, tax revenue, cultural distinction--and thus for the types of residents and institutions (especially businesses) that provide them. When Wichita faces high or rising taxes, high or growing unemployment, housing shortages, rapid inflation in the costs of government services or slow economic growth, such problems force their way to the top of the local political agenda and ahead of open-space concerns in both the public and private sectors.

The second external constraint on city politics is the American federal system itself, for the state and national governments influence the workings of cities in

many ways. A shortage of studies of the actual workings of state and federal influence makes this argument more speculative.

States restrict a city's fiscal options by limiting types of taxes that may be imposed, amounts of tax revenue that may be raised and the city's ability to borrow money. States affect local land-use patterns in a variety of ways. Its courts are involved in settling land-development disputes within and between localities and its statutes set the limits on methods of acquiring and maintaining open space. Finally states spell out local government structure in detail. In Wichita the Board of Park Commissioners operates under enabling legislation set forth in state statutes.

Whereas the effects of state government are persistent and structural, federal influence appears to be ad hoc. Nevertheless the charge that "the feds" attempt to administer cities from Washington has become commonplace among commentators on urban affairs. The current tax revolt at the local level coupled with the growth of federal taxes due to inflation will probably increase the centralization of power in Washington and further erode community control.<sup>154</sup>

It is the intent in the remainder of the case study to examine briefly aspects of the total environment of which the urban open space-use change process is a definable but integral part. Specifically reviewed are the federal park and open-space programs--inputs to each city's total open-space system (as perceived by Easton, Chapter 2). Finally

other extra-system factors are considered in terms of a number of cities having park and open-space levels comparable to Wichita's.

### Federal Programs

Local governments have, until recently, been on their own with respect to open space. Until the 1960's the provision of open space within metropolitan areas was neither a federal nor a state matter. To a considerable extent the metropolitan open-space resources of today are the products of the last half of the nineteenth century. According to Clawson, Held and Stoddard, of 103 cities having a population of more than 100,000 in 1950, sixty-six had already gained at least one park by 1880.<sup>155</sup>

The quantitative peak for metropolitan outdoor recreation was about 1940. In that year city and county parks reached an average of 8.5 acres per thousand urban residents with 25 percent of cities exceeding the NRPA standard of 10 acres per thousand persons.<sup>156</sup> World War II curtailed both the usage of existing parks and the creation of new ones. Central cities, facing little further growth and lacking additional capital, faced other social demands; new suburbs looked to the central city, the hinterland and to private country clubs to satisfy their recreational needs. Beginning in 1950 the automobile dominated recreation habits. Rising demand for outdoor recreation was met through public policies encouraging greater use of

nonmetropolitan state and national parks in preference to intrametropolitan facilities.

The decision to embark on a counterpolicy--namely that the federal government should deliberately seek to promote the preservation of open space in metropolitan areas --was a response to a widespread perception of urban sprawl, itself a direct result of federal programs in housing, taxation and highways. Instead of modifying these programs, Congress launched open-space programs to counteract them. The Open Space Land Program of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (1961-1974) and the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation Land and Water Conservation Program (1965-) have had a precarious existence. Both began hesitantly, underwent review and expansion after three years, peaked in 1971-1972, and then suffered precipitous cutbacks in 1973. In 1974 the HUD program was among those consolidated into the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG).

Historically Rural Bias. Determining just how much federal money finds its way to city parks and recreation programs isn't easy. Currently the major source is the Land and Water Conservation Fund (L&WCF) one part of which is used as grants to the states, the rest spent by the federal government to acquire national parks and wilderness areas. Based on past practice, most of the L&WCF money currently appropriated will be spent outside urban areas, and all will be used for acquisition or development of land and

construction of outdoor facilities rather than for operation and maintenance. Interior Department figures show that from fiscal 1965 through July 30, 1977, the fund spent a total of \$1.47 billion--\$238.8 million in urban areas, \$639.3 million in suburban areas and \$592.7 million in rural areas.<sup>157</sup>

Between 1965 and 1976, the fund spent \$10 per capita in rural areas, \$7.36 per capita in suburban areas and \$3.88 per capita in central cities.<sup>158</sup>

Other sources of federal money have helped small-city park programs most. In 1976, cities spent \$214.1 million in general revenue sharing funds on parks. Cities with populations exceeding one million spent only \$15.7 million of that amount, cities between 100,000 and 999,999 spent \$111.5 million, and cities with populations less than 100,000 spent \$86.9 million.<sup>159</sup> Eight percent (\$132.1 million) of CDBG funds for fiscal 1976 were spent on land acquisition, facilities, and program development.<sup>160</sup> Hall estimates that total park and recreation expenditures by cities and counties in FY 1976 totaled just under \$3.4 billion.<sup>161</sup> Approximately 35 percent of those dollars were federal funds.<sup>162</sup>

Current Focus. Debate over urban recreation versus wilderness and conservation funding has quickened with the release in 1978 of the National Urban Recreation Study conducted by the Department of the Interior. The report found "urban recreation systems in a virtual crisis state in every

city surveyed."<sup>163</sup> The study covered 17 urban areas--home of 35 percent of the total population and 48 percent of the urban population. Fifty percent of the jurisdictions studied reported cutting back operations and maintenance in the past five years. There are no standards, but a 1974 HUD study estimated that an annual per capita expenditure of \$20 in 1970 dollars (\$30 in 1977 dollars) would be needed to provide adequate programs and maintenance.<sup>164</sup> In 1975-1976, three of the largest cities spent more--Denver, San Francisco and Seattle--and three came close--Milwaukee, Cincinnati and Kansas City.

Local government is still the largest single source of dollars for park and recreation but account for a decreasing share. Generally over the past two years local funding has fallen from 80 to 45 percent as funds were shifted to higher priority services such as police and fire.<sup>165</sup> Cities with populations between 200,000 and 300,000 have kept park and recreation spending steady in the last decade, while cities of less than 200,000 population are still increasing spending and expanding facilities.<sup>166</sup>

The National Urban Recreation Study revealed that people want a wide range of park and recreational opportunities with plenty of well-maintained facilities and open spaces. They want programs that meet the broad needs of the general public and the narrower needs of the handicapped, elderly and the young. Finally, they want these things to be readily accessible. What they get is often quite

different. They get parks and playgrounds that are scattered randomly throughout the metropolitan area and difficult to reach. And they get run-down and vandalized facilities they are unwilling to use because of the fear of crime.<sup>167</sup>

The Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Grant Program, Title X of P. L. 95-625 (November, 1978-) to be administered by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service (formerly the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation) is the proposed federal solution. The program is rehabilitative in design and is not a new-parks program. There is no money for buying land, expanding existing parks, or developing new ones.

Communities over 40,000 population, counties over 250,000 and central cities of SMSA's are eligible for aid under the Program but they must compete for grant money. Eligibility factors assumed to indicate high concentrations of need for public recreation facilities include population density, net change in per capita income (1969-1975), the unemployment rate (1977), percentage of households without automobiles (1970), youth and elderly populations levels, and the percentage of population below the poverty level.<sup>168</sup> A number of midwestern cities including Wichita fail to demonstrate sufficient need under these criteria.<sup>169</sup>



Wichita's Peer Cities

After comparing 54 cities for the period 1955 to 1965, one analyst concluded that the ability of a city to maintain a level at or above a minimum standard for park space may be related to regional characteristics and attitudes as well as urban morphology.<sup>170</sup> Although eastern cities have the highest percentage of municipal land in recreation use, park-land acquisition has not kept pace with population growth. Cities in the Great Lakes and Midwest have attained a more acceptable balance. These cities have a distinct advantage over the East in that their recent growth occurred at the same time the playground movement and concept of regional parks attained popularity during the 1920-1930's. Parks were an accepted element in city expansion and the greenbelt a desired amenity.<sup>171</sup> Furthermore, during the Depression declining land values encouraged acquisition and public-works programs supplied manpower for construction of facilities.<sup>172</sup>

In the Southwest and West population growth has occurred even more recently. An abundance of land for expansion as well as the desire for an attractive landscape in a generally arid environment encouraged park and open-space development. The Great Plains and Southern cities have average park sizes of 36-38 acres and low expenditures per capita. Van Doren suggests that a general conservatism about the role of public action in providing services probably limits the acreage of recreation land locally

available.<sup>173</sup>

Thirty-two cities in the North Central Region (ranging in population from 50,000 to more than 3.3 million) were surveyed as to availability and adequacy of open space in 1970.<sup>174</sup> The quantity of recreation land averaged 12 percent of total acreage (7 o/o if Duluth, Minnesota is omitted from the calculation). Per capita recreation acreage was 11 acres per 1000 population. These relationships tend to be inversely related to city size and population density. As city size increases, percentage of total land in recreation use decreases; as population density increases, recreation acreage per capita declines. Of the cities reporting changes in land area, 10 increased in 1960-1970, 4 continued to increase 1971-1974, and 7 made no change, 1960-1974. In addition many of the cities, regardless of population size, had undeveloped nonagricultural open space and vacant land area accounting for 8.9 to 18.7 percent (mean percentages) of total acreage.<sup>175</sup>

Reporting cities of 100,001-500,000 population had a mean population density of 0.197 acres/person (0.16 acres/person omitting Duluth), with a range from 0.142 to 0.438.<sup>176</sup> Recreational acreage per person averaged 0.024 with a range from 0.009 to 0.099.<sup>177</sup> A majority of those responding commented on the inadequacy of recreation facilities, indicating that poor accessibility to parks and open space due to their location within the city was a more serious problem than the small total acreage devoted to

those uses.<sup>178</sup>

Smith, studying data on 108 cities for 1960 (including eleven of the North Central Region cities) and again for 1970, found six components in addition to some regional characteristics to be the most important and stable recreation characteristics of a city--designated open space, recreation expenditures by the city, and the labor force in the park and recreation system. When supplemented by indices measuring the more general urban characteristics of city size, personal income and population growth, relatively homogenous groups of cities were identified.<sup>179</sup> Using discriminant analysis Smith assigned the cities to 15 groups on the basis of twenty-one urban recreation components. Based on 1960 data, Wichita was included in Group 14, relatively small, isolated cities (populations of less than one million with no other large cities within 50 miles) in the northern half of the country. They had relatively young populations and low expenditures for recreation compared to other public services (Table 6). Smith lacked 1970 data for all cities, but examination of selected recreation and park planning documents for Topeka, Omaha, Tulsa, Worcester and Tacoma provides some updated information (Table 7).

### Summary

Wichita has responded in a fashion similar to other communities considered to be peers in terms of indicators believed relevant to recreation and open-space decisions.

Table 6  
Cities Having Similar Recreation Resources  
in 1960

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Worcester	Spokane
Grand Rapids	Tacoma
Albany	Wichita
Erie	Columbus
Providence	Omaha
Evansville	Lincoln
Topeka	St. Paul
Duluth	Tulsa

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Source:

Stephen Smith, "Similarities  
Between Urban Recreation Systems," Journal  
of Leisure Research, 7:4 (1975), 275.

Despite Wichita's declaration of civic pride (11 acres/1000 persons) the impact of nation-wide opportunities and compromises can be found in the evolution of the park density patterns commonly found in Great Plains cities. The city further reflects national trends in park funding as well as the park administration values (or fads) dealing with open-space functions and location. Federal funds have equipped tot lots, contributed to the purchase of a number of sites during the 1970's and funded development of open-space planning documents. Washington-dictates affect park and open-space data collection and analysis by defining the methodological measures of need and access.

Open space is not a high-priority issue in this fiscally-conservative state. What enabling legislation there is dealing with open-space land dedication has not

Table 7  
Selected Urban Recreation Statistics

	Total Recreation Acres	Rec. Acres/ 1000 Pop.	Rec. Acres as o/o of Total Acres
Omaha	3411.8	9.72 (1970) 9.20 (1975)	6.96 (1970) 6.58 (1975)
Tacoma	1516.5	9.81 (1970) 10.04 (1975)	4.97 (1970) 4.96 (1975)
Worcester	1251.4	7.11 (1970) 7.27 (1975)	NA (1970) 5.23 (1975)
Tulsa	4597.2	5.39 (1970) 5.36 (1975)	4.18 (1970) 4.05 (1975)
Topeka	1194.7	9.56 (1970) 10.04 (1975)	3.93 (1970) 3.16 (1975)

Sources:

Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area Planning Agency, Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area Open Space Plan and Program, Report no. 106 (Omaha: Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area Planning Agency, October, 1972).

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been applied to private development in Wichita and Sedgwick County. There are no special taxes or state financial grants to local governing bodies in Kansas for parks, recreation or open space.

One expects that to the extent that local financial resources become more scarce, the federal government will enhance its position in determining Wichita's open-space policies and programs. In spite of local distaste for federal regulation, the need and desire for federal funds will impact upon the outcome of who gets what, when, how and thus, where.

### NOTES FOR CHAPTER 3

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<sup>3</sup>Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Department, "Parks and Open Space 1976-2000 Sedgwick County, Kansas; Draft" (Wichita: Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Department, 1976), p. II-12.

<sup>4</sup>Belden Associates, Dallas, Texas, Wichita Newspaper Audience and Market Characteristics (Dallas: Belden Associates, 1976).

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<sup>6</sup>Belden Associates, Dallas, Texas, Wichita Newspaper Audience and Market Characteristics.

<sup>7</sup>L. W. Clapp, "Parkways," [Wichita: 1934] p. 4. (Mimeographed.)

<sup>8</sup>Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Department, "Parks and Open Space 1976-2000 Sedgwick County, Kansas; Draft," p. IV-04.

<sup>9</sup>Harland Bartholomew & Associates, Comprehensive City Plan for Wichita, Kansas (Wichita: City Plan Commission, 1923), p. 14.

<sup>10</sup>Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Department, "Parks and Open Space 1976-2000 Sedgwick County, Kansas; Draft," p. I-09.

<sup>11</sup>Jimmy M. Skaggs, Wichita, Kansas: Economic Origins of Metropolitan Development, 1870-1960 (Wichita: Wichita State University, Center for Business and Economic Research, 1972), p. 2.

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<sup>13</sup>Jon Roe, "History of Leadership Like a Roller Coaster," Wichita Eagle-Beacon, November 20, 1977, p. 1F.

<sup>14</sup>Bradley Robert Rice, Progressive Cities: the Commission Government Movement in America, 1901-1920 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1977), p. 116.

<sup>15</sup>Roe, p. 6F.

<sup>16</sup>Marjorie L. Taylor, "'Planning' for Community," Wichita Eagle-Beacon, October 1, 1977, p. 3C.

<sup>17</sup>"Providing for the Establishment and Maintenance of City Planning Commissions in Cities of the First Class of Over 20,000 Population" (Chapter 99, Session Laws, 1921, effective March 31, 1921), Harland Bartholomew & Associates, Comprehensive City Plan for Wichita, Kansas, p. 5.

<sup>18</sup>Wichita, Ordinances, Local Laws, etc. Code of the City of Wichita, Ordinance no. 7292 (April 6, 1921) "Providing for the Establishment and Maintenance of a City Planning Commission in the City of Wichita".

<sup>19</sup>Harland Bartholomew & Associates, p. 13.

<sup>20</sup>Harland Bartholomew & Associates, "Your City and Planning," Comprehensive Plan, City of Wichita, 1946 (Wichita: 1946), p. 5.

<sup>21</sup>Harland Bartholomew & Associates, Comprehensive City Plan for Wichita, Kansas, p. 65.

<sup>22</sup>Harland Bartholomew & Associates, Comprehensive City Plan for Wichita, Kansas, p. 59.

<sup>23</sup>Harland Bartholomew & Associates, Comprehensive City Plan for Wichita, Kansas, p. 67.

<sup>24</sup>Harland Bartholomew & Associates, Comprehensive City Plan for Wichita, Kansas, p. 59.

<sup>25</sup>Harland Bartholomew & Associates, Comprehensive City Plan for Wichita, Kansas, p. 71.

<sup>26</sup>Harland Bartholomew & Associates, Comprehensive City Plan for Wichita, Kansas, p. 121.

<sup>27</sup>Harland Bartholomew & Associates, Comprehensive City Plan for Wichita, Kansas, p. 121.

<sup>28</sup>Harland Bartholomew & Associates, Comprehensive City Plan for Wichita, Kansas, p. 59.

<sup>29</sup>Harland Bartholomew & Associates, Comprehensive City Plan for Wichita, Kansas, p. 108.

<sup>30</sup>Harland Bartholomew & Associates, Comprehensive City Plan for Wichita, Kansas, p. 108.

<sup>31</sup>Harland Bartholomew & Associates, "Your City and Planning," p. 5.

<sup>32</sup>Harland Bartholomew & Associates, Comprehensive Plan, City of Wichita, Kansas, 1946, Pt. I, p. 15.

<sup>33</sup>Harland Bartholomew & Associates, Comprehensive Plan, City of Wichita, Kansas, 1946, Pt. II, p. 31.

<sup>34</sup>Harland Bartholomew & Associates, "Subdivision Regulations," Comprehensive Plan, City of Wichita, 1946, Item 10, p. 5.

<sup>35</sup>Harland Bartholomew & Associates, "Your City and Planning," p. 20.

<sup>36</sup>Harland Bartholomew & Associates, "Subdivision Regulations," Comprehensive Plan, City of Wichita, Kansas, 1946, Item 14, p. 5.

<sup>37</sup>Taylor, p. 30.

<sup>38</sup>Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Department, Open Space, Parks and Recreation Plan, 1965-1985 (Wichita, 1965), p. 23.

<sup>39</sup>Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Department, Open Space, Parks and Recreation Plan, 1965-1985, p. 22.

<sup>40</sup>Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Department, Open Space, Parks and Recreation Plan, 1965-1985, p. 165.

<sup>41</sup>Harland Bartholomew & Associates, Comprehensive Plan, City of Wichita, Kansas, 1946, Pt. VIII, p. 9.

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<sup>43</sup>Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Department, Open Space, Parks and Recreation Plan, 1965-1985, p. 277.

<sup>44</sup>Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Department, Open Space, Parks and Recreation Plan, 1965-1985, p. 151.

<sup>45</sup>Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Department, Open Space, Parks and Recreation Plan, 1965-1985, p. 177.

<sup>46</sup>Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Department, Open Space, Parks and Recreation Plan, 1965-1985, p. 230.

<sup>47</sup>Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Department, Open Space, Parks and Recreation Plan, 1965-1985, p. 5.

<sup>48</sup>Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Department, Open Space, Parks and Recreation Plan, 1965-1985, p. 5.

<sup>49</sup>Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Department, Open Space, Parks and Recreation Plan, 1965-1985, p. 58.

<sup>50</sup>Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Department, Toward A More Liveable City (n.p., n.d.), p. 3.

<sup>51</sup>Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Department, Toward A More Liveable City, pp. 42-58.

<sup>52</sup>Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Department, Toward A More Liveable City, p. 45.

<sup>53</sup>Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Department, Toward A More Liveable City, p. 45.

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<sup>57</sup>Richard E. Zody, "The Politics of Decision-Making: Impact on the Wichita Area," Metropolitan Wichita: Past, Present and Future, ed. by Glenn W. Miller and Jimmy M. Skaggs (Lawrence: Regents Press of Kansas, 1978), p. 160.

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<sup>65</sup>Zody, p. 171.

<sup>66</sup>"Punchy Commission," Time, 71:15 (April 14, 1958), 22.

<sup>67</sup>Getz, p. 1B.

<sup>68</sup>Zody, p. 172.

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<sup>70</sup>Statement by Mary Alice Horsch in a personal interview, Wichita, Kansas, June 6, 1978.

<sup>71</sup>Larry Fish, "Group Proposes Environment Office," Wichita Eagle, March 27, 1978, p. 3C.

<sup>72</sup>"Environmental Resources," [Wichita: 1978]. (Mimeographed.)

<sup>73</sup>Fish, p. 3C.

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<sup>76</sup>Williamson, p. 2B.

<sup>77</sup>Williamson, p. 2B.

<sup>78</sup>Williamson, p. 2B.

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<sup>82</sup>Jeff Williamson, "Zeroing in on City Government: Whom You Know, How You Live," p. 7A.

<sup>83</sup>Jeff Williamson, "Zeroing in on City Government: Whom You Know, How You Live," p. 7A.

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<sup>85</sup>Charlip, p. 2A.

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<sup>94</sup>Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Commission, Minutes, September 28, 1972, p. 29.

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<sup>96</sup>Statement by Phil Snodgrass.

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<sup>103</sup>Statement by Daryl Anderson in a personal interview, Wichita, Kansas, November 3, 1977.

<sup>104</sup>Statement by Annie Needham in a personal interview, Wichita, Kansas, November 2, 1977.

<sup>105</sup>Statement by Annie Needham.

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## CHAPTER 4

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

. . . said the Hatter with a sigh: "it's always tea-time . . . ." "Then you keep moving round, I suppose?" said Alice. "Exactly so," said the Hatter: "as the things get used up."

. . . "But what happens when you come to the beginning again?" Alice ventured to ask. "Suppose we change the subject," the March Hare interrupted, yawning.<sup>1</sup>

Both Alice and observers of the urban open-space scene are often neatly sidetracked in their attempts to pry into the logistics of seemingly endless recurrence. First, a clear perception of open space eludes them. Public and private land-use managers consciously acquire or regulate open space--land and/or water areas serving conservation, urban-shaping and recreational functions. Their arguments for and definitions of open space focus on the various land uses that provide open space and functions served by it. Part of the perplexity lies in dealing with a multi-functional concept in a landscape that is characterized by functional separation. The concentration of people in cities and technological advances have made possible and encouraged a division of labor and specialization of neighborhoods and land uses. Thus open space-problem solving does not automatically include the identification of potential combinations of functions that can be served by any one open-space site or the variety of sites that might

be suited to a particular open-space function.

The elusiveness is two-fold. Integrating open space into the total metropolitan, public goods package injects a value-laden element into an already conflict-ridden political arena. Often non-complementary expectations and demands concerning land and open space are pursued. Impact analyses can tell decision makers more than they want to know about the consequences of the alternatives before them, and are often rejected so as to keep the political options viable. Further, any given urban policy decision, if traceable at all, relies largely on oral tradition to record underlying conditions or actions of those involved.

Thus if existing urban open space appears to be ineffective it can be attributed in part to the fact that too little is known about it in terms of the cultural meanings of open space and the decision-making processes that bring it into existence. A number of researchers observe that examination of interactions between process and spatial form is potentially a productive avenue of research for this problem. They suggest that open-space patterns and the process of space-use change that alters them are interdependent, each acting to modify the other.

The model of urban space-use change is proposed as descriptive of the flow linking pattern and process. It is fashioned after Forbes' conceptualization and is designed to allow for the myriad of values and behaviors expressed in open space-decision making. The model accommodates

day-to-day decision making as well as landmark open-space events so that one can know how the rules are invented and accepted and how constraints are imposed on the managers and the managed. Within its framework one examines open-space demanders and suppliers exhibiting a wide range of open-space preferences conditioned by expectations dealing with community setting, social diversity, amenity and financial prosperity within the local land-space allocation system. Three categories of expectations are identified: social utility, spatial attributes and economic opportunity.

Social-utility expectations are expressions of support (or non-support) for various open-space functions as in the preservation of natural landscapes and ecological systems, public park development and the integration of city and country. The general support for these elements ebb and rise with prevailing values and compete with other social concerns for public attention. The public park is the most widely recognized and supported urban open space-land use.

Spatial attributes of landscape address expectations that can be derived on the basis on the physical arrangement of open-space sites. Fundamentally different social goals as well as space-use patterns result from decisions to allocate open-space goods equally in space rather than on the basis of need. Both are defensible decision rules; both produce some potentially undesirable social and land-use consequences for the city-at-large. For example, open space provided equally to all population groups creates a



cityscape with parks distributed uniformly across it. Some of these sites will be little used or empty, others overcrowded. Unique open spaces may be ignored by park administrators if they are unable to accommodate a standard package of services. Open space equitably distributed (on the basis of need) emphasizes inner-city open space over acreage at the urban fringe. The differences in the general price of land at these two locations give a city fewer acres for their land-acquisition dollars and limits the possibilities for preserving land in its natural state.

Economic-opportunity expectations deal with realizing the "highest and best use" of land. Traditionally that determination has been made and expressed by the private economic sector. Evidence is accumulating that suggests that the sum of the decisions serving the best interests of private landowners may not serve the best interests of society. Nevertheless, recommendations that government purchase and time the development of land are being rejected in favor of continued tinkering with the present land-ownership system.

The strengths or prominence of the decision-conditioning elements reflect changes in social, economic and political conditions although some conflict is inherent. Experience has shown that issues involving conflicts between what are generally accepted as hard economic and soft social values can be articulated if not resolved. Disputes involving competing soft values (inner-city parks versus

protection of fragile ecosystems) and how much of one value to secure over another (how many inner-city parks should the city forego to buy cheaper acreage at the urban fringe) pose tougher questions.

The interplay of the private market, special interest groups and political leaders takes place within three arenas making up the land-space allocation system. These arenas, identified as the land market, technical planning and the political process, are distinguished by the sets of interests at work as well as the role government plays in relation to those interests.

Land market, the policy arena dealing with physical growth and community development has historically been the natural domain of the city's business elements. In the sphere of land development policies, a key question becomes the price that government is able or willing to require of private interests in the form of good design and provision of amenities in return for the approval of development or subdivision plans. To the extent that the private sector dominates, public authorities require that little or no price be paid for the provision of crucial development services, and place the cost of these services on taxpayers generally. Time is one price that developers in Wichita may pay if they want to do something government opposes. As economic conditions grow worse, there are signs-- increased business representation on the City Commission and Metropolitan Area Planning Commission, greater flexibility

in the sidewalk policy in new subdivisions, requests for reexamination of the plat approval process--that the City of Wichita will give freer rein to the private sector.

Private developers as they operate in Wichita's land market has been effectively challenged by the increasingly autonomous urban bureaucracies. Commonly Americans tend to see their governments as hierarchically organized, fostered in part by observation of the national government. In fact local government is formally decentralized and bureaucratic-ally dominated. Formal fragmentation creates interstices which bureaucracies expand to fill.

In the technical planning arena the maintenance and enhancement needs of the city's line departments predominate. To the extent that the municipality dominates, policy is shaped more by internal operating procedures and professional norms of the bureaucracy than by the conscious choices of the public or elected officials. The sheer complexity of modern urban government makes it impossible for elected leadership, let alone powerful economic elites, to keep track of more than a fraction of relevant administrative decisions. Administrators control intricate internal procedures as well as state and federal programs which are used to maintain existing agency directions. Such factors as agency drives for self-preservation and growth, inter-agency competition and standard operating procedures are shaping local policy and the landscape.

Bureaucracies depend heavily on policy communities-- spokesmen in professional organizations, officials in operating agencies, academics and consultants employed by research and development firms, publishers and editors of professional journals, and elected officials and lobbyists with an interest in policy--which create and maintain a "policy paradigm."<sup>2</sup> They implicitly or explicitly define right and wrong answers to problems. The policy paradigms in park and recreation administration seem highly consensual while paradigms in other open space-related areas are less clearly articulated and more conflictual.

Bureaucratic dominance and durability is most likely in arenas involving substantial service delivery functions, relatively weak or dispersed client groups and extensive professionalism. Parks and planning are prime candidates for this kind of pattern, and this was found to be so in Wichita. The result has been strict design and financial guidelines for developers and planners. The Wichita landscape, including Comotara, was slow or has failed to reflect land-use innovations being tried elsewhere.

The political process arena experienced the rise of citizen activism in the 1960's. Planning and decision-making processes were forced into the open through such devices as advocacy planning and citizen participation. The federal government encouraged the trend by making mandatory provision for broader community participation in federal development programs. While this process hardly

dominates the current urban scene in Wichita, the Citizen Participation Organization (CPO) has made the various policy-setting bodies more aware of the social and environmental views of the neighborhoods.

One analyst points out that there is a high resistance to moving from one operational model to another.<sup>3</sup> The ineffectiveness of CPO beyond neighborhood-level issues is evidence of this, not only in Wichita but across the country. It is further demonstrated with the newly established and as yet untested Sedgwick County Department of Environmental Resources. In part, the battle was fought and won because enough decision makers were convinced that a real gap exists between formal supply and functional demand for open space in terms of its aesthetic, ecological and form-structuring functions. Inroads on the private sector are intended as well as a reordering of the city-county bureaucratic structure. Evidence of the difference it will make in land-use decisions and patterns will be slight and slow in coming as change can only be incremental, supplementing the existing system. One does not start with a clean slate. Historical forces constrain present and future choices. Nor will one be able to determine if the new policies solve problems--social or physical. A better assessment will be made by contrasting their problems at some future date with those they had before.

To shift open-space consideration to a level commensurate with at least its quantitative importance as a

space-consuming entity is one thing. To expect decision makers to systematically include, evaluate and choose among its qualitative components is an even more demanding aspect of essential efforts to manage urban areas. A first step towards that objective will be to at least increase the decision makers' awareness of the values being perpetuated. They must be urged to increase their efforts at articulating and applying community goals in open space land-use and service decisions. Public values--accountability, efficiency, equity--are elusive but policy and service-level decisions about these values are made every day. Although there is little concern for abstract notions of optimality, there is a great deal of awareness of differential impacts on various affected publics. All citizens tend to benefit equally from government activity in the city that concentrates on providing those services for which there are few private alternatives (streets, sewers). The financially disadvantaged receive greater advantage from government activity in the city that produces mostly those services for which there are readily available alternatives (green space, recreation facilities).

A second objective will be to shift the focus from establishing criteria for the distribution of open-space services (criteria and standards that have to date shown a consistent lack of imagination) to those dealing with opportunities to influence service delivery. The urban landscape reflects the ways people order social relationships and the

way culture shapes urban space. But crucial differences in communities may be between the organized and the unorganized with respect to their ability to secure open-space advantages and enhance the urban landscape.

Thus agents of change, whether in government, neighborhoods or professional groups, must understand the retardants of change--formal organizational rules, standards of professionalism, past experience, specialized functions and areas of responsibility (turf). Ever since the ancients killed the messenger bearing bad tidings, governing structures have used numerous strategies to avoid bad news. Approaches can be used that allow decision makers to deal constructively with negative analyses, by comparing findings to peer data rather than or in addition to professional norms and standards, for example.

Traditional training of planners tends not to provide skills in managing planning episodes nor do traditional management skills equip one for urban management. As Banfield explains: ". . . there is a tension between the nature of the political system, on the one hand, and the requirements of planning--of comprehensiveness and consistency to policy--on the other."<sup>4</sup> No open-space issue is settled on its merits alone. Successful planning episodes require coalitions of professionals, politicians and open-space activists who can organize and sustain a fragile and difficult process.



Upon examination of Wichita, Kansas and the Comotara development one can identify the brokers that bargain, negotiate and balance forces at work in an open space-use allocation process which encompasses fragmented political institutions, incessant citizen demands, a feudal urban bureaucracy as well as state and federal regulations. Among those who decide which and how much urban land shall function as open space in Wichita are local land developers, Metropolitan Area Planning Department staff, the Parks Department, the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission, and the City Commission.

A somewhat uniform set of social, technical and economic constraints (or opportunities) are at work although each decision-making component has its own unique ordering or weighting of those constraints. The open-space pattern is further the result of the compromises and trade-offs struck between those decision makers from the time a public or private project is conceived to the time it is implemented.

This leads one to ask what difference does it make who governs? Under these circumstances one can seldom argue that specific public policies or policy makers are responsible for a given urban condition. This study only briefly examines comparable cases but theorists do argue that systems are typically "overdetermined"--the concept of equifinality.<sup>5</sup> Many different and independent forces push them towards the same end, so that to eliminate any one or set of

these forces can not be expected to deflect them from the path in which they are evolving to any significant degree.

State and federal government are among the external forces that impinge upon the urban space-use change process. The effects of state government are persistent and structural--court decisions in land-development disputes and legislative limits on public finance and land-control mechanisms. Federal control is more ad hoc in terms of its park and open-space programs, but expected to increase as local taxation capabilities become more limited.

To conclude, it is clear that open space has been viewed largely as recreation/park space. As in other cities, Wichita has not explicitly wrestled with an acceptable definition of just what is open space. The city has not developed a rationale to guide open-space decisions that involves all of the roles such space would perform in the cityscape. Supporters of the new Sedgwick County Department of Environmental Resources have been asking the correct questions but no process is yet in place to devise solutions.

Functional-emphasis of Wichita's open spaces have proceeded serially through aesthetics, recreation and flood control. By contrast Comotara's open spaces are more multi-functional emphasizing opportunities for pedestrian traffic on a system of trails in conjunction with recreational opportunities, control of run-off and aesthetically-pleasing landscape. The open-space professional has made the

critical land-use decisions in both cases. Park administrators and city planners determine the open-space pattern on the cityscape and architects and engineers have been responsible for Comotara's open-space design. The general public has been reasonably satisfied in both cases with few serious objections having been raised.

Public and private open-space perceptions and goals in Wichita and Comotara are not widely divergent. Nevertheless each has left its imprint on the other. Comotara's proposals for drainage swales were opposed by the City and were not implemented. On the other hand, Comotara had won permission to use them thus the way is probably smoothed for their future consideration. Further Comotara's use of internal trails has been copied by other Wichita developers.

Finally for the managers of cities the spotlight has shifted to other concerns such as neighborhoods and energy with the emphasis being rehabilitation, revitalization and conservation. In general, the open-space community is now promoted as the energy-efficient community. While no one would deny that open space (including recreation space) has a role to play in these problem areas, its a secondary one--an outcome rather than an output.

#### NOTES FOR CHAPTER 4

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<sup>3</sup>Lester M. Salamon, "Urban Politics, Urban Policy, Case Studies and Political Theory," Public Administration Review, 37:4 (July/August, 1977), 422.

<sup>4</sup>Edward C. Banfield, Political Influence (New York: Free Press, 1961), p. 325.

<sup>5</sup>Ludwig von Bertalanffy, General Systems Theory (New York: Braziller, 1968).

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PROCESSES ALTERING PATTERNS OF URBAN OPEN SPACE  
WICHITA AND COMOTARA: A CASE STUDY

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

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## ABSTRACT

A clear perception of open space and its role in the urban milieu escapes both public and private land-use managers. Municipalities alternately defend open spaces as providing needed recreation space and preserving historic sites, and condemn them as wasting potential tax revenue and requiring costly maintenance. With the increasingly high cost of land, a nineteenth-century concept of clustering housing is appealing to twentieth-century developers. But mechanisms are largely lacking that combine shared uses of open space with shared ownership. Further, neighborhood groups are increasing pressure for parks readily accessible to populations of low income and mobility. Finally, environmentalists' efforts at preserving open space focus on protecting ecological systems and natural characteristics--land which tends to lie at the urban fringe or in rural areas.

Thus the term "open space" serves as a convenient shorthand for a variety of specific concerns about alternative uses of land and the process of space use change. The land-use pattern and process that alters it are interdependent. Each acts to modify the other. This realization suggests that probing behind the pattern to expose the process which has brought that pattern into existence would be a productive research focus. An urban space-use change model serves as a framework for first sampling the literature, and



second studying open-space events from 1970-1979 in Wichita, Kansas and Comotara, a real estate development on the periphery of that city. Values are expressed by open-space demanders and suppliers as expectations dealing with social utility, spatial attributes and economic opportunity. These expectations can be traced to dollars, parks, plats and power that serve as trade-off elements within the land market, the technical planning process and political process.

Using this urban managerialism mode one finds that spatial patterns are the outcomes of value-laden bargaining over scarce open-space resources. It becomes evident how the rules are invented and accepted and how constraints are imposed on the managers and the managed. Who gets what, when, how and where is identifiable, at least for one Great Plains city, fiscally conservative and moderate in size, population growth and density, and its concern for open space. Agents of change are advised to pay greater attention to the cultural meanings of open space and the decision-making processes that produce it.