

ATTITUDES OF REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSIONERS
AND PLANNERS TOWARD REGIONAL PLANNING

by

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B.A., OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY, 1973

A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF REGIONAL AND COMMUNITY PLANNING

Department of Regional and Community Planning

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1981

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, "planning" has been criticized as being unresponsive to community needs and as showing too few tangible results compared to the effort spent in developing plans. Much of the blame is aimed at the planners--contending that:

"the plans they prepare are tedious, mediocre, and unimaginative; that with too few exceptions they fail to inspire the social commitment required for their implementation."¹

On the other hand, planners complain that their plans end up on shelves and are not implemented. Why does this happen?

Although the planner has some flexibility over the role he plays, he does not have complete control. Other factors found to be highly important include the planner's personal limitations, the expectations of leading actors in the governmental arena, and the attitudes of community groups toward community problems. Some reflections of these variables can be gained by comparing different perceptions of the role of the planner.²

Planners need to be aware not only of the needs of the community, but what is acceptable to the community. To make planning more acceptable, the planner should be aware of how planning is perceived by the community and those with control or power to implement the plans. Plans are usually drawn up based on goals assumed to be in the "public interest" and to have widespread commitment.³ This requires an awareness of community attitudes, as acceptance by the community is necessary for commitment. Acceptance or support for planning tends to increase to the degree that planning activity is considered "useful" by those in policy

making.⁴ However, a Pennsylvania study found a lack of legitimacy for the planner as indexed by the limited support for his work on the part of established community leaders and organizations.⁵ One reason for this lack of support could be caused by the planner misjudging the community's attitudes and commitment to the plan. The planner may also overestimate community leaders' capacity to influence community decisions and alter community behavior.⁶

The planner must be accepted as a significant part of the governmental machine if planning goals are to be achieved. The planner must locate allies and enemies and must understand forces that shape policies in his community.⁷ If a plan is to have an impact on a system, either for purposes of adaptation or change, it must deal with the mechanism which holds the system together.⁸ To achieve desired goals, the planner must deal with the contributing elements involved in the planning process and learn how to improve his relationship (and thus confidence in planning) with those elements in order to develop support and implementation of his plans. Several elements having input or influence on the planning process besides the planner include local elected officials, planning commissioners, citizens and State and Federal government. The planner's relationship with these individuals can act as either resources or barriers to the achievement of planning goals.⁹ Further support for this contention was voiced by Joiner:

"Institutionalization of interactions and expectations of members with other structures in the subsystem greatly influences relationships."¹⁰

Another study found that major "obstacles" to successful problem-solving and planning were observable in the relationship of the planner

(or expert) with the Board. By understanding existing relationships, some analysis is possible of how to formalize good aspects of this relationship.¹¹ Understanding these factors can facilitate the ability of the planner to obtain community goals and objectives. Thus, it is crucial for the planner to be aware of how his or her role and that of planning is perceived. The way in which planning is perceived affects the planner's relationship to others involved in the planning process and hence, acceptance and implementation of his plans.

While other factors can affect the planning process (such as citizen input and governmental legislation), the two major elements were felt to be the planners and the planning commissioners and/or local elected officials. (While citizens can affect planning decisions, their involvement tends to be limited to controversial issues or issues which affect them personally.) However, a Wisconsin study on regional planning found little communication occurring between planners and local officials. The study also discovered discrepancies between planners and commissioners as to what they felt were the goals and services of the commission.¹² Do such discrepancies affect the planning process? Little research has been done in this area; the only study found was in Pennsylvania. It compared the attitudes of local public officials with the attitudes of city planners in the smaller cities in Pennsylvania. Differences in attitudes were not only found, but were felt to have an effect on the performance of planning.¹³ Planning performance may, to some extent, reflect the relationship between the planning commissioners' views of planning and those of the planners. This contention will be examined in this paper by comparing the perceptions of planning held by major persons

involved in the planning process (directors and commissioners) to planning outputs.

As stated above, little research has been done in this area. The limited research which has been done indicated the importance of perceptions and relationships in determining the role of planning. These studies have influenced the selection of this topic and will be reviewed in Chapter II.

Regional planning commissions in Kansas will be used to examine the relationship between attitudes and outputs. Chapter III will compare the attitudes of selected regional planning commissioners in Kansas toward regional planning to the attitudes of their directors. Their perceptions will then be compared to the actual outputs of their agency. All twelve regional planning commissions in Kansas will be analyzed individually in Chapter III.

The Commissioners' views toward planning were obtained from data gathered by the Kansas State University's (KSU's) Department of Regional and Community Planning for their research, "A Study to Implement Knowledge Transfer of Experienced Regional Planning Commissioners in Kansas." (See Appendix A for the Research Proposal and Methodology utilized in this study.) In this study, three to five commissioners from each regional planning commission in Kansas were interviewed, including each planning commission chairperson. A total of fifty commissioners were interviewed. Those interviewed were selected through the recommendations of:

- 1) each regional planning director
- 2) each regional planning commission chairperson
- 3) staff of the Division of State Planning and Research
- 4) others, such as the Kansas Department of Economic Development

The study focused on three general topics:

- 1) activities identified by the commissioners as significant
- 2) projects and activities the commissioners thought their commission should or could undertake
- 3) the benefits of regional planning to their regions and communities--as perceived by these commissioners.

An open-ended approach was used in the interviews--allowing the commissioners to respond to any other issues they felt were significant. Although they were not asked specifically their views of regional planning, most commissioners responded to this subject, at least indirectly. Through his or her comments, each commissioner's attitude toward regional planning was extracted. (Appendix B contains the survey instrument utilized in the interviews with the commissioners.)

The directors of each regional planning commission were also interviewed by KSU's Department of Regional and Community Planning. However, these interviews were conducted independent of the previously mentioned research "A Study to Implement Knowledge Transfer of Experienced Regional Planning Commissioners in Kansas." The data gathered in these interviews is the basis for comparing the director's views to his commissioners and determining agency outputs.

A more formal approach was utilized in the directors' interviews. The directors were asked specific questions on the functioning of his agency. (See Appendix C for survey form used in these interviews.) Most of the data obtained was descriptive rather than value-oriented. The exception was the question soliciting the director's concept of planning. These responses were utilized in the comparison of attitudes. Each director is compared to his own planning commissioners to determine the similarity of views.

The outputs of each regional planning commission are viewed in terms of:

- 1) the kinds of activities the agency is involved in
- 2) the amount of staff time spent on various activities
- 3) the level of funding

This information was derived primarily from the directors' interviews.

It was checked against the Work Program of each agency for accuracy.

Any significant similarities and differences found among the regions will be noted in Chapter IV. Regional planning commissions with convergent views between commissioners and directors will be compared to those with divergent views. Differences in outputs/activities between the two will be examined to determine if any correlation could exist. A comparison of metropolitan to nonmetropolitan regions will also be made for the following reasons:

- 1) to determine if perceptions regarding the role of regional planning vary from rural to urban regions
- 2) to determine if differences in views between commissioners and directors are greater in metropolitan or nonmetropolitan regions
- 3) to isolate any differences in perceptions which might exist because of an urban or rural orientation.

A greater divergence of views between commissioners and directors is expected in the nonmetropolitan regional planning commissions.

As this research is exploratory in nature, final conclusions cannot be made. However, implications can be drawn as well as indicate the need for further research. Chapter V summarizes the findings and recommends areas needing further study.

NOTES

¹Donald A. Barr, "The Professional Urban Planner," Journal of the American Institute of Planners 38 (May 1972): 156.

²Robert T. Daland and John A. Parker, "Roles of the Planner in Urban Development," in Urban Growth Dynamics, eds. F. Stuart Chapin, Jr. and Shirley F. Weiss (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1962), p. 219.

³Robert R. Mayer, "Social System Models for Planners," Journal of the American Institute of Planners 38 (May 1972): 134.

⁴Daland and Parker, p. 221.

⁵Roy C. Buck and Robert A. Rath, "Planning As Institutional Innovation in the Smaller City," Journal of the American Institute of Planners 36 (January 1970): 63.

⁶Richard S. Bolan, "The Social Relations of the Planner," Journal of the American Institute of Planners 37 (November 1971): 388.

⁷Daland and Parker, p. 194.

⁸Mayer, p. 138.

⁹Charles A. Joiner, Organizational Analysis (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1964), p. 52.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 36.

¹¹Ibid., p. 45.

¹²Michael Hoffman, "Who Shall Do the Planning? That's the Issue in Wisconsin," Planning 43 (March 1977): 23.

¹³Buck and Rath, p. 59.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Most of the literature on regional planning has been written from the professional planners point of view--on what they feel regional planning is or should be. While it is not the purpose of this paper to address this topic, a few definitions are in order. Regional planning involves two or more units of government performing planning and development activities on problems which extend across jurisdictional boundaries. There are several types of regional organizations which have been established to perform regional planning activities: Regional Planning Commissions, Councils of Governments, and Development Districts.

The most common in Kansas are regional planning commissions.

A regional planning commission has been defined as:

"a coming together of local governments on a voluntary basis. It is an intergovernmental agency, created and controlled by local government officials to serve a number of sponsoring organizations."¹

According to the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (ACIR), the Board consists of citizens appointed by the State or localities involved. However, in Kansas, the Board consists of both citizens and local elected officials. The ACIR states the primary functions of these organizations as comprehensive planning, with an emphasis on land use planning and the coordination of local plans.

Another type of regional organization-Council of Governments-is defined as "multi-functional voluntary regional association of elected local officials or of local governments represented by their elected local officials."³ A Council of Governments (COGs) provides the mechanism to bring local governments

within a region together to discuss common problems, exchange information, and develop consensus on issues of a regional nature.⁴ These organizations are strictly voluntary and have no enforcement powers.

Development Districts are another type of regional planning agency which developed out of the Appalachian Regional Development and the Public Works and Economic Development Acts of 1964. They have assumed many of the characteristics of regional planning commissions and COGs. These terms are often used interchangeable.⁵

Although voluntary in nature, these organizations are quasi-compulsory in terms of State and Federal areawide planning and clearinghouse requirements. Participation is required for some Federal grants. Negative clearinghouse review could result in denial of local project applications.⁶ These agencies also provide grantsmanship ability otherwise not available to these communities.

According to a study conducted by the ACIR and the International City Managers' Association of Regional Council Directors, the greatest portion of their time was devoted to program coordination and administration, seeking Federal and State financial assistance, and developing regional plans.⁷ The director felt the most important role of the Board was leadership and policy making.⁸ A strong tendency of board members to avoid controversy was also noted.⁹

Little research is available comparing attitudes of board members and their directors and examining its effect on the performance of the planning agency. However, the studies which have been done indicate the importance attitudes have on the relationship between planners and local elected officials, and hence, the planning process. One study in the smaller cities of

Pennsylvania compared the attitudes of local public officials, as exemplified by mayors and planning commission chairmen, with the attitudes of city planners. This study focused on the extent to which planners and planning were viewed as innovative and an intrusion into community life. According to the authors,

"Planning is innovative to the extent that it is defined as a departure from traditional modes of dealing with development issues and problems. It is an intrusion when it is seen as a challenge, and possibly a threat, to these established modes."¹⁰

The mayors and chairmen saw planning as a "method of containment of community problems rather than as a means toward developmental ends."¹¹ Goals that were expressed emphasized improving the inadequacies of existing municipal utilities and services, maintaining streets and sidewalks, and upgrading police protection.¹² Although planning and development were discussed, the programs implemented were usually traditional and short-range in scope--treating "brush-fire" type problems. Planning was not viewed as new ways to organize to work toward long-range goals.¹³

Officials supported traditional attitudes of preserving local autonomy in working out community problems or goals.¹⁴ Local officials were reluctant to commit themselves on any issue until there was an emerging consensus. As a consequence, communities seemed to "drift toward policies by default" and plans were developed to rationalize the final consensus.¹⁵

Planning was further deemed by the authors as an intrusion into these communities since it was not initiated at the local level, but by the State and Federal government--as a prerequisite for their aid. Thus, the planning which was underway in these communities appeared to be a reaction to Federal assistance programs and attempts to capitalize on available State and Federal funds.¹⁶

Planners were faced with the problem of combining professional objectives with local values. The innovative proposals of the planners, such as land use controls, transportation plans, pollution controls, capital improvements, and budgeting programs, were met with resistance by officials, who had the power to veto such proposals. The limited support for his work on the part of the local officials and the community was one of the major obstacles confronting the professional planner. As a result, in addition to technical planning, a large portion of the planners' time was allocated to education and public relations.¹⁷

Reasons for the lack of support for professional planners is examined by Pierre Clavel, who views planning as expert advice to nonpartisan citizen boards. He observed major obstacles to successful problem-solving and planning in the relationship of experts (or planners) with citizen boards in a semi-rural setting. Clavel contends that areas with scarce economic and administrative resources (as in most rural areas) also lack experience in dealing with experts or specialists. This results in a state of inequality which limits the acceptance of the professional planner and his advice or proposals.¹⁸

Problems can arise from conflicts of interest within the board, which may result in pressure on the planner to "take sides" on an issue. Social differences between experts and boards, and even among board members can also create obstacles to expert-board cooperation. Experts, who usually have an "urban" orientation, may have difficulty communicating with board members with rural backgrounds. However, according to Clavel, the major factor limiting the extent to which experts are utilized appears to be status inequalities. Board members begin equal

or superior in status to the planner, but the planners soon surpass the board in technical expertise to solve problems. This can be damaging to the board members' self-esteem and they often react by rejecting the planner's advice and reaffirming the traditional rural institutions.¹⁹

The degree of inequality seems to vary according to a number of factors. Board members with a specialist background tend to be less unequal to their experts than are generalists. This is particularly true for board members with the same specialty as the expert. Another factor is the technical difficulty of the issue. The more difficult the problems is, the more obvious the inequalities become. Also, the less time invested on an issue by the board members and experts, the easier it is to admit inadequacy. Finally, the more important the issue to the community, the greater the exposure of the board members to the community. Thus, any inequalities which do exist will be more apparent, possibly affecting the board's status in the community.²⁰

The effect of status differentials on the relationship of board and planners is further supported by Richard Bolan. He views board members as the client group of planners, who must be motivated to "appropriately respond to demands in the environment."²¹ Then, as a team, they must motivate the larger community decision network. Therefore, the planner's primary relationship is with the client group. In performing his role, the planner must recognize the client group's capability to influence community decisions and behavior. However, too often planners propose plans which extend beyond the client's abilities.²²

The relationship between the planner and client group involves some degree of instability. One cause for this is the limited commitment of

individual members of the client group, who have conflicting interests or roles.²³ The planner should be aware of the client's commitment to an issue. Issues of the client's own making will receive more support and commitment than those imposed on the client group externally. Also, the nature of the planner's role is in itself ambiguous. Different members of the client group may have different perceptions or expectations of the planner's role, and these may change over time.²⁴

Another key factor affecting the client-planner relationship is the perceived status differential between the two. The higher the status of the client group, the less they will defer to the planner. Client groups' with lower status may place more dependence on the planner's skills and advice.²⁵ Differences in social and political backgrounds may also create problems. A planner with a strongly liberal background may experience conflict with an extremely conservative client group.²⁶

Another study examined the attitudes of planning commissioners and voters toward regional planning. The Southside Planning District Commission (SPDC) in Virginia was selected for this research; the Executive Secretary was also asked his perceptions on regional planning and the functions of his agency. Although the SPDC was viewed as an appropriate instrument for dealing with community problems and rendering solutions, the attitudes of the planning commissioners basically supported maintaining the status quo. Overall, a lack of interest and participation characterized the planning commission. The author attributed this to the following attitudes:

"1) regional planning ought to be pursued only to the point where it will not undermine the existing administrative-political economic-social arrangements; 2) regional planning is tolerable as long as funds are coming in from outside,

primarily from the Federal government; and 3) problems will somehow solve themselves, as they always have in the past, within the traditional arrangements."²⁷

The planning commissioners were strongly opposed to the SPDC becoming either another level of government or one that would replace the existing ones in counties and cities. Any plan which appeared to favor one jurisdiction over another, regardless of whether it conformed to the overall comprehensive plan of the region, was also resisted.²⁸ The need to give the SPDC enforcement powers to implement its plans was similarly rejected.²⁹ (This position was reinforced by both the voters and the Executive Secretary.) High priority was given by the commissioners to projects providing employment opportunities, health services and facilities, housing, and improvement of life style of the community in general. Low priority was given to projects dealing with land use planning and farming activities.³⁰

The Executive Secretary was aware of the anti-regional and pro-local orientation of his commissioners. His rejection of the need to give the SPDC implementation powers was perhaps actually a result of his understanding of "realities."³¹ Consequently, a considerable amount of the Commission's time went into providing a direct planning assistance to local planning commissions on local rather than regional matters.³²

In the author's opinion, the relationship of the Executive Secretary and the planning commissioners is of the utmost importance. The Executive Secretary must establish a very close working relationship with the commissioners if the planning commission is to achieve any degree of success.³³ Raymond states:

"In the final analysis, it is the executive secretary who brings together the independent minds of the commissioners to act on issues many of which would not be acted upon otherwise."³⁴

However, this requires continually educating the commissioners as to the needs and methods of regional planning, while at the same time remaining non-partisan.³⁵ The day-to-day contacts the Executive Secretary has with the commissioners in rendering technical assistance is an important aspect in the education process.

This study also found the overall knowledge of the SPDC among voters to be very low. The percentage of voters with knowledge of the SPDC tended to increase with income level. Regardless of the level of understanding, most expressed strong objections to granting it any enforcement powers.³⁶

The success of regional planning (in both rural and urban areas) was believed to be dependent on broad grass roots support. Until the level of awareness regarding regional planning increases, this support will remain lacking. The Commission's reluctance to bring their activities into public view and their avoidance of controversial issues was viewed as one cause of this.³⁷

This study noted some additional problems facing regional planning in rural areas:

- 1) lack of trained professional planning personnel and a lack of planning skills on the part of the planning commissioners;
- 2) need for a greater amount of planning services to local governments as opposed to regional planning and intergovernmental cooperation;
- 3) greater need for surveying, mapping, and zoning, since

this is relatively new to rural areas;

4) more time consumed in educating local officials and citizens where the planning staff is most often trained on the job;

5) less pertinent data available in rural areas which would aid in the planning process;

6) lack ties with educational institutions, which offer planning programs or provide planning assistance; and

7) lack capital and local governmental ability to carry out plans.³⁸

Many of these problems have been previously mentioned in some form in the other studies reviewed. Their applicability to regional planning in Kansas will be examined in the following chapters. The research available stressed the importance of the commissioner-director relationship in performing planning activities.

NOTES

¹League of Kansas Municipalities, A Manual for Kansas Regional Planning Commissioners (Topeka, KS: League of Kansas Municipalities, 1977), p. B-1.

²Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, Substate Regionalism and the Federal System, Vol. 1: Regional Decision Making: New Strategies for Substate Districts (Washington, D.C.: Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 1973), p. 50.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid., p. 51.

⁷Ibid., p. 91.

⁸Ibid., p. 93.

⁹Ibid., p. 96.

¹⁰Buck and Rath, pp. 59-60.

¹¹Ibid., p. 61.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid., pp. 61-64.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 61.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 64.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 60-61

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 62-63.

¹⁸Pierre Clavel, "Planners and Citizen Boards: Some Application of Social Theory to the Problem of Plan Implementation," Journal of the American Institute of Planners 34 (May 1968): 130-31.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 132.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 133-35.

²¹Bolan, p. 387

²²Ibid., pp. 387-88.

²³Ibid., p. 389.

²⁴Ibid., p. 390.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid., p. 389.

²⁷Walter J. Raymond, The Attitudes of Voters and Planning Commissioners Toward Regional Planning, Exchange Bibliography, no. 1088 (Monticello, IL: Council of Planning Librarians, July 1976), p. 46.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 37-38.

²⁹Ibid., p. 51.

³⁰Ibid., p. 31.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid., p. 41.

³³Ibid., p. 44.

³⁴Ibid., p. 37.

³⁵Ibid., p. 44.

³⁶Ibid., pp. 27-28.

³⁷Ibid., pp. 51-52.

³⁸Ibid., pp. 49-50.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS OF INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW FINDINGS

Regional planning in Kansas began during the late 1960s with a study delineating homogeneous regions for use in planning and development. Then, in 1968, the Intergovernmental Act of 1968 was passed enabling State governors to designate substate regions within their State to encourage coordination of Federal, State and local plans and projects. In 1971, Governor Docking issued an executive order officially designating the substate regions in Kansas.¹ However, these substate regions are not legally binding and some agencies do not adhere to these boundaries.²

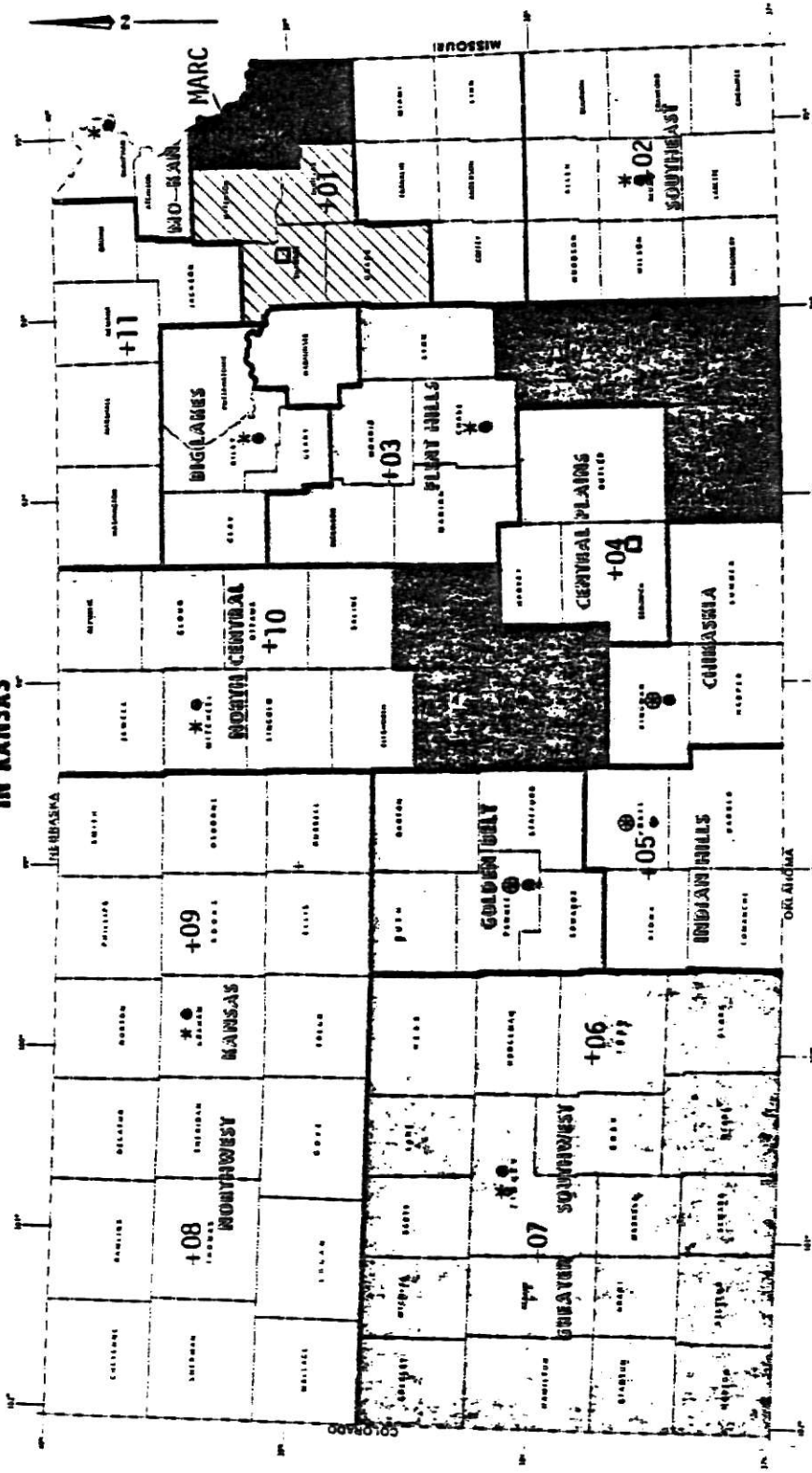
The purpose of regional planning commissions as stated in Kansas Statutes Annotated 12-717 is:

"to make those studies and plans for the development of the metropolitan area or region that will guide the unified development of the area, that will eliminate planning duplication and promote economy and efficiency in the coordinated development of the area and the general welfare and prosperity of its people."³

While a regional planning commission can make plans, the option of adopting the plans is up to the local units of government. The legislation does not give any implementation powers to the regional planning commissions. In fact, the legislation specifically states that it is not its intent to remove or limit any local power or authority.⁴

At the time of this study in 1976, there were thirteen regional planning commissions in Kansas, which covered 90 counties. Map I on the following page shows the location and boundaries of the 13 regional planning commissions in Kansas. These regions vary in size from three counties to 19 counties with populations ranging from 81,597 to 481,765 (1976 figures). Only one of the

ORGANIZED MULTI-COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSIONS IN KANSAS



+Region Identification Numbers

LEGEND
 [Symbol] ORGANIZED MULTI-COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSIONS
 [Symbol] IN THE PROCESS OF ORGANIZATION
 [Symbol] STAFFED REGIONAL AGENCIES
 [Symbol] REGIONAL A-95 REVIEW CLEARINGHOUSE AUTHORITY
 [Symbol] JOINT STAFF LOCATED AT PRATT
 [Symbol] SMSA A-95 Clearinghouse Authority



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
 SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE
 PLANNING DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
 1400 MARKET STREET, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

SCALE 1:100,000
 1 INCH = 16 MILES
 1:100,000

NOVEMBER 1974
 S.C. 32.921

13 commissions (Blue Stem) was without any staff and no longer functioning. Of the 12 regional planning commissions in operation, four were metropolitan (or urban) in nature and eight were considered nonmetropolitan (or rural). A metropolitan commission is one which includes a Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA); the four in Kansas and the SMSA of which they were a part:

- 1) Central Plains Tri-County Regional Planning Committee--Wichita, KS
- 2) Mid-America Regional Council (MARC)--Kansas City, MO
- 3) Mo-Kan Regional Council--St. Joseph, MO
- 4) Topeka-Shawnee County Metropolitan Planning Commission--Topeka, KS

In addition, both MARC and Mo-Kan were bistate commissions involving Kansas and Missouri.

The eight nonmetropolitan regional planning commissions were:

- 1) Chikaskia, Golden Belt & Indian Hills Associations of Local Governments
- 2) Flint Hills Regional Council
- 3) Greater Southwest Regional Planning Commission
- 4) Mid-State Regional Planning Commission
- 5) North Central Regional Planning Commission
- 6) Northwest Kansas Planning & Development Commission
- 7) Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Commission
- 8) Big Lakes Regional Council of Local Governments

Table I shows the number of counties served by each regional planning commission, the 1976 population, 1977 budget and the number of professional staff employed by each regional planning commission.

The remainder of this chapter summarizes the comments made by individual planning commissioners during their interviews with the KSU researchers. Themes or inferences are drawn from their comments and compared to their executive director's concept of regional planning and the activities of the staff (both of which were obtained during the directors' interview). Each regional planning commission is examined on an individual basis--beginning with the nonmetropolitan regions.

TABLE I
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION PROFILES

<u>Nonmetropolitan</u>	<u>Counties Served</u>	<u>1976 Population</u>	<u>1977 Budget</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Big Lakes	4	106,544	\$ 82,841	3.5
CGI	12	124,730	307,496	16
Flint Hills	5	80,728	90,800	2
Greater SW	19	125,934	289,712	9
Mid-State	3	104,829	62,100	2
No. Central	8	102,505	127,735	4
Northwest	18	123,689	201,100	9
Southeast	9	195,726	207,746	13.5
<u>Metropolitan</u>				
Central Plains (Wichita)	3	412,466 (302,234)	8,000	-- (33-MAPD)
MARC	3-KS 5-MO	470,651-KS	1,069,305	90
Mo-Kan	2-KS 4-MO	33,089-KS	139,800	5
Topeka-Shawnee (Topeka)	1	173,848 (132,108)	386,020	13.5

Source: Directors and Work Program of Each Agency

NONMETROPOLITAN REGIONS

Big Lakes Regional Council of Local Governments

Three commissioners were interviewed from the Big Lakes Regional Council--all three were county commissioners. The three persons interviewed agreed technical assistance to smaller towns and intergovernmental cooperation and communication should be the major functions of regional planning. Two commissioners further specified assistance in Federal grant applications as part of technical assistance. As one commissioner put it, "small towns do not have the advantage of being large enough to have a planning staff available to them."⁵

One county commissioner stressed the importance of involving local elected officials (especially county commissioners) in regional planning, because cities are in counties rather than the reverse. The attitude was that the regional planning commission would have broader coverage through county commissioners since there cannot be representation from each city. Moreover, Big Lakes is unique in that local funding is provided solely by county governments. Another activity praised by this commission was the Association of Small Cities, which further provided the four counties an opportunity to get together to discuss problems and exchange information.

The same commissioner favored local government moving toward self-sufficiency. The fear was expressed of losing local control through dependency on the commission and Federal funds to do "things" localities used to do for themselves. The comment was also made that along with Federal and State funds came Federal and State control. The need for more local input at the Federal and State level was voiced by another commissioner. Regional planning was seen as an instrument through which this could possibly be accomplished.

A small region and staff was favored by the commissioners. The feeling was that as an organization grows, local input is minimized and it loses sight of what the people need and want. Two commissioners specifically stated that the regional planning commission should not become another level of government; the third felt it should not become an operating or implementing agency. One comment was: "if we get too far out with regionalization of counties or whatever, I think you're going to lose the concept of what people really need and want."⁶ These remarks implied support for keeping the decision-making process at the local level. Regional planning is seen as a possible way to accomplish this.

The following areas were mentioned as appropriate for regional planning: health, economic development, transportation, energy, and training of new members. According to the director, studies were underway in all but transportation and the training of new members. One program unique to the Big Lakes Regional Council was the weatherization of older homes in the region. While an unusual activity for regional planning commissions at the time, the commissioners considered it appropriate and successful.

The director's comment regarding his concept of regional planning was that it should be reactive planning rather than projective with an economic orientation stressed. This indicates an emphasis on technical assistance and "brush-fire" type activities as opposed to actual planning. The director's view was consistent with the commissioners' emphasis on technical assistance.

According to the director, 40 percent of the agency's time was spent on technical assistance to local government. This represents a greater percentage of time on this function than any others. Of this 40 percent, grantsmanship

utilized 40 percent and implementation another 40 percent. This generally concurs with both the commissioners' and the director's support of technical assistance as a major role of the regional planning commission.

Information and public relations comprise 30 percent of the agency's time. These activities include press releases and newsletters as well as education programs on such subjects as housing, solid waste, and government. The emphasis was on keeping communities informed of governmental programs.

Local planning and development utilized 20 percent of staff time, whereas regional planning occurred only 10 percent of the time. The emphasis appeared to be on informing and aiding local units of government rather than on regional planning. Again, this agreed with both the views of the commissioners interviewed and those expressed by the director.

Covering only four counties, the Big Lakes region was one of the smallest in size. It also had one of the smallest staffs and budgets. This was perhaps reflective of the commissioners' desire to remain small to keep in touch with local needs and to maintain local control by not going for federal funds.

Chikaskia, Golden Belt and Indian Hills Associations of Local Governments

The Chikaskia, Golden Belt and Indian Hills (CGI) Associations of Local Governments was unique in that it was a consortia of three regions serving a total of 12 counties. One planning commissioner from each region was interviewed plus the chairman of CGI. Of the four regional planning commissioners interviewed, two were city councilmen, one was a county commissioner, and the fourth was a city manager.

All four commissioners stressed the importance of CGI providing technical assistance to small towns. Assistance in securing Federal funds was specifically mentioned by three commissioners as a key role of CGI.

Although not stated directly, the commissioners comments implied the attitude that regional planning was a way to keep the decision-making process at the local level. Two commissioners (both local elected officials) stated explicitly that regional planning should not become another level of government--taking away local control. On the contrary, CGI was seen as a way to have a greater voice at the State and Federal level. The opinion expressed by three commissioners was that priorities set at the Federal and State level were not always appropriate at the local level. Two criticized the Federal and State government for not seeking local input enough and as being too bureaucratic. One county commissioner voiced the fear of becoming too dependent on regional planning and the Federal government for funds to provide services local governments used to provide. Contrary to this, the same commissioners and another one stated that CGI usually attempted to obtain available federal funds (this was also implied by a third). The final decision on the activities of CGI was made by the regional planning commissioners themselves, according to two commissioners.

Two commissioners favored a small staff of generalists and utilizing consultants as necessary. The feeling was that regional planning commissions would lose sight of what the people need and want if it becomes too big. The need to complete one activity before going on to another was also mentioned.

Greater implementation was favored by the city manager, who felt plans were not utilized enough. He further found:

"the lack of uniform planning for all city-counties at the same time is confusing. All are at different stages of different things and working on different programs."

In addition, plans were developed in a piecemeal manner due to lack of funding or changes in funding. Long-range planning was supported, however, since it was a prerequisite for many Federal grants. Too many overlapping boundaries and agencies with no coordination between them was still another criticism of two commissioners.

Comments by three commissioners indicated that the regional planning commissioners were more concerned with problems at home and hence, did not have much time to work on a regional basis. The high turnover of planning commissioners was also cited as a problem.

The following areas were mentioned as appropriate for regional planning to be involved in: transportation, economic development, housing, manpower, and the roving city manager program. CGI was already in the area of housing and had a roving city manager at the time of the interviews.

The director stressed basically the same aspects as the commissioners interviewed. He stated that:

"regional planning can help local people express themselves. The role of regional planning in local government should be to maintain a grassroots policy in the face of State intervention."⁸

In his opinion, State intervention was necessary in most cases due to obvious neglect at the local level. However, he went on to say,

"regional planning has a role to aid the local governments in coming up with new arrays of systems so that they can anticipate State action and perhaps dictate some terms in the systems themselves."

The director believed there was a distinct difference between urban planning and what he termed "development planning." In urban planning, the planner must serve as a catalyst mechanism. Development planning, on the other hand, was to chart your own destiny. The regional planner must recognize that he is not a change agent; but he must communicate that change is all around. He also felt planners should be comprehensive and objective.

According to the director, 46 percent of staff time was allotted to technical assistance to local governments--of which 30 percent was spent in grantsmanship. This was consistent with the support technical assistance received by the commissioners interviewed. Technical assistance was provided to communities in: public management, local traffic safety problems, housing, base mapping, and intergovernmental coordination, criminal justice, and community development.

Regional planning and local planning took up 24 percent and 11 percent of staff time, respectively. The local planning program assisted local units of government in developing local comprehensive plans to aid in local decision making.

Only four percent of staff time was spent on information and public relations. Of this time, only a fraction went into public speaking or in answering day-to-day inquiries from local citizens and private groups. One commissioner voiced concern over the lack of communication (or effective communication) going into the communities on regional planning. This could be a result of the lack of time devoted to this activity by the staff.

Overall, the activities of CGI were geared toward strengthening local governments. CGI's role was to develop alternatives for local

governments, which would eliminate the need for State or Federal intervention into local affairs. The activities of CGI reflect the attitudes of both the commissioners interviewed and the director.

Flint Hills Regional Council

The Flint Hills Regional Council (FHRC) covers five counties and has the smallest population of all regions in Kansas. The three commissioners interviewed were *nonelected members of the Council*. The backgrounds of these individuals included: county sanitarian, banker, and an insurance person.

Technical assistance to smaller towns was viewed as a major role of regional planning by all three commissioners. Assistance in securing Federal grants was cited as both an appropriate function and a benefit of regional planning. According to one commissioner, priorities were usually established by the availability of Federal funds. Another felt that the "wheel that squeaks the loudest" was the one that received the greatest attention. Concern was expressed by a third commissioner over becoming too dependent on Federal funds and what would happen when funds were taken away. He, therefore, preferred a small staff. However, another commissioner favored a larger staff with more specialists. His rationale was to expand staff "so we can realize goodies."¹⁰ This commissioner and another noted lack of tangible results as a problem. As a result of this many local elected officials and citizens were not aware of planning or understood it; consequently they did not support it. Both also advocated more implementation of plans, which perhaps could be achieved through a larger staff. The FHRC had one of the smallest staffs and budgets of the regional planning councils in Kansas. However, an aggressive stance was taken toward staff by the commissioners in that, they were considered

"hired hands." The commissioners developed policies, which the staff carried out.

Bureaucratic red tape was mentioned by one commissioner as a hinderance to Council activities. Lack of coordination between agencies was also considered a problem by two commissioners. Some agencies provided overlapping services and functions.

All three voiced strong opposition to regional planning becoming another level of government or taking away local control. One viewed the FHRC as a means of providing for intergovernmental cooperation and communication. Providing a service to small communities was considered the first priority.

Areas the commissioners thought the Regional Council should or ought to be involved in were: health, environment, education, fire, civil defense, roving city manager program, and training for new members. According to the director, education was the only area mentioned by the commissioners that FHRC was already involved in.

The director was also an advocate of implementation planning emphasizing services and facilities with the capital improvement plan establishing priorities of need. Although both the commissioners and the director emphasized technical assistance and implementation, only 20 percent of the agency's time was spent on such activities, according to the director. Of this 20 percent, 70 percent dealt with implementation. Technical assistance was provided in the following areas: zoning, subdivision regulations, management, grantsmanship, community development, and inter-city/county coordination.¹¹

Another 20 percent of staff time was involved in information and public relations with over half of this time spent in public speaking

to communities and organizations in the region. This perhaps reflects the concern over the local elected officials and the public's lack of awareness and understanding of the FHRC.

Sixty percent of staff time occurred in planning--30 percent in local planning and 30 percent in regional planning. While this might appear contradictory to the views of the commissioners, it could reflect a fear of becoming dependent on Federal funds or of losing local control. However, planning is a prerequisite to receiving many Federal funds. As this agency was one of the smallest, they could still be in the planning stages, with implementation coming later.

Greater Southwest Regional Planning Commission

The Greater Southwest Regional Planning Commission (GSRPC) was the largest region in terms of counties served--19--and has a population of 125,934. Four regional planning commissioners from this region were interviewed. Three were present or past elected officials and the fourth was a city manager.

The major role of regional planning as seen by all four commissioners interviewed was technical assistance to communities--particularly smaller towns lacking expertise and resources. The importance of providing communities with knowledge regarding the availability of federal funds and aiding them in the application process was emphasized. According to one individual, the priorities of GSRPC were established by the availability of funding. While this reflects the influence of State and Federal government on regional planning, the GSRPC was also viewed by three commissioners as an organization through which local government could present a unified voice at the Federal and State level and influence legislation affecting them.

Governmental regulations were often considered inappropriate for western Kansas. They also disliked "being told what to do"--wanting to keep the decision process at the local level. Two commissioners expressed opposition to regional planning becoming a fourth level of government. The final decision on agency activities was made by the regional planning commissioners, according to all four individuals interviewed. The GSRPC was considered "an area whereby we can get together to exchange ideas and formulate plans for the betterment of the entire area."¹²

The overall attitude was that the GSRPC should offer services to communities. The city manager went on to add the need for coordination to avoid duplication; planning should not be an additional service on top of what other cities and counties have provided.

Health, transportation, recreation, aging, and economic development were mentioned most frequently as areas the GSRPC should be into. (According to the director, regional planning was underway in all of these areas.) Other areas mentioned were: postal service, uniform building codes, government facilities planning, and training for new members.

The director's concept of regional planning generally concurred with his commissioners:

"the regional planning commission should be the clearinghouse to get coordination (not absolute control) of all functions to best serve citizens and local communities. While long-range sets the framework, short-range provides us results for credibility."¹³

In line with the views of the commissioners and the director, technical assistance received more staff time than any other activity. Grantsmanship utilized the greatest amount of this time and had been

provided in such areas as: law enforcement, ambulances, water and sewer projects, recreation, economic development, and community development block grants.

Local planning and development occurred 30 percent of the time and regional planning, 20 percent. Planning assistance had been provided in: emergency medical services, law enforcement, demonstration traffic safety program, and aging.

Only five percent of staff time dealt with information and public relations. This included a monthly newsletter, press releases, and public speaking. Again, this appeared to agree with the commissioners' views, as they did not express concern over the public's lack of understanding of GSRPC.

Overall, the activities of the GSRPC seem to reflect the views of both the commissioners interviewed and the director. The major emphasis was on the provision of technical assistance and services to local units of government.

Mid-State Regional Planning Commission

The Mid-State Regional Planning Commission (MSRPC) was the smallest in terms of the number of counties served (three) and had a population of 104,829. Three regional planning commissioners were interviewed from this region. Two were local elected officials and the third was director of the Rice County Economic Development Corporation (RICEDCO).

All three commissioners agreed technical assistance to small towns was a major function MSRPC should be performing. Dissemination of information regarding availability of new programs and assistance in securing Federal funds were considered an important aspect of the MSRPC by both elected officials. The director of RICEDCO depended on MSRPC primarily

as a data bank. This, however, could reflect the needs of his agency.

Both elected officials viewed intergovernmental communication as a benefit of regional planning. Although a good relationship existed between MSRPC and local governments, some animosity was noted between MSRPC and other regional agencies (especially the Southeast Kansas Economic Development District) due to overlapping functions and boundaries.

While some Federal and State agencies were considered helpful, problems were also cited. One commissioner criticized Federal and State agencies as bureaucratic--requiring too much paperwork and slowing projects down. Another felt local input was not sought enough. A third mentioned lack of funding or changes in funding as causing piecemeal development of plans and projects. The lack of visible results was also considered very frustrating.

The remarks made by the commissioners indicated a desire to keep the decision-making process at the local level. All three concurred that the final decision regarding MSRPC's activities was made by the Board members. One local official voiced opposition to regional planning becoming another level of government with control over local units of government.

The following areas were mentioned as ones the commissioners would like MSRPC to be involved in: health, housing, economic development, and a roving city manager program. Housing was the only area mentioned in which regional planning was underway at that time.

The director's concept of regional planning was consistent with the views of his commissioners interviewed. Technical assistance and intergovernmental coordination were considered the major functions of

MSRPC. The goal being to provide local governments with worthwhile products and services. According to the director, the MSRPC served as an information center to State and Federal agencies and local governments. Regional planning was also considered more complex than local planning in terms of lines of authority.

In spite of the emphasis placed on technical assistance, only 20 percent of the MSRPC's staff time was spent in this area; whereas 60 percent of the staff's time was involved with regional planning. Local planning and development only took up five percent of agency time, while information and public relations took 15 percent.

The commissioners' complaint of lack of visible results could be related to the amount of time devoted to regional planning. However, according to the director, these plans were structured in such a way that the information could be utilized in the preparation of local plans and in applications for federal assistance. Although regional planning consumed over half the staff time, planning was underway in only two areas--housing and land use. One reason for this could be lack of staff and funds, as the MSRPC had a professional staff of only two and a budget of \$62,100. With such a small staff, the activities of the agency were limited.

North Central Regional Planning Commission

The North Central Regional Planning Commission (NCRPC) was comprised of eight counties with a population of 102,505. Three regional planning commissioners from this region were interviewed--one elected official and two nonelected representatives. Their backgrounds varied from banking and law enforcement to a city manager.

All three commissioners stressed the primary purpose of NCRPC was to provide technical assistance to smaller towns, lacking the expertise and resources to plan and apply for federal grants themselves. One attitude (expressed by the city manager) was that although smaller communities received greater direct benefits, larger communities within the region benefited indirectly.

Regional planning was also seen as a way to bring cities and counties together to exchange ideas and experiences and to work on mutual problems. As one commissioner stated:

"Through the planning commission, I have had the opportunity to learn about the people, how they think, what they are reactive to, and to gain a general knowledge of what is good for all of us and it leaves you in a position to go ahead and make decisions."

Coordination was considered another important function of regional planning by two commissioners. The regional planning commission should oversee all the activities within the region in an attempt to eliminate duplication. The former sheriff felt, in such areas as law enforcement and health, NCRPC should have more control in terms of operating these services. He also strongly supported consolidation of services.

A variety of comments were made implying support for decision making remaining at the local level. Two commissioners emphasized the opinion that regional planning should not become another level of government. The attitude was expressed that larger units of government were not necessary, if technical assistance and support were provided to local government to improve their capabilities. Regional planning should involve local governments--particularly county commissioners, according to one commissioner interviewed.

In addition, regional planning was seen by two commissioners as a means by which the region could be represented at the Federal and State level. A communication gap was felt between the local, State, and Federal governments. Federal and State agencies were also criticized as too bureaucratic.

Several areas were considered appropriate for regional planning: housing, law enforcement, health, and education. At the time of this study, regional planning was underway in the following areas: law enforcement, housing, and land use. Recreation, central business district, and economic development studies had been completed (or were underway) for individual communities. One unique idea proposed by the banker was regional revenue sharing.

The director's concept of regional planning was very similar to the commissioners interviewed. He emphasized technical assistance as the first priority of NCRPC and secondly, comprehensive planning. The need for greater intergovernmental cooperation in developing solutions to common problems was stated as the major impetus for the establishment of NCRPC.¹⁵

According to the director, only 20 percent of the staff's time provided technical assistance, an area both he and the commissioners emphasized. The majority of this time went into grantsmanship with none on implementation. Grantsmanship activities concentrated on applications for Community Development Block Grants and to the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration.

In addition to technical assistance, half the agency's time was devoted to regional planning and 25 percent to local planning and development. Again, primarily in the areas of housing and criminal

justice planning. Only five percent of staff time went into information and public relations, although two commissioners cited lack of awareness of regional planning on the part of the public as a problem. Lack of staff time in this area could be due in part to limited staff and resources. NCRPC had only four professional staff persons and a budget of \$127,735.

Northwest Kansas Planning and Development Commission

The Northwest Kansas Planning and Development Commission (NKPDC) covered 18 counties with a population of 123,689. This Commission was unique in that it was organized in conjunction with the Greater Northwest Kansas, Inc., a private, nonprofit corporation, to promote economic development in northwest Kansas. The advantage in having this type of arrangement was that the NKPDC was eligible for planning grants from State and Federal agencies that the Greater Northwest Kansas, Inc., was not. On the other hand, the Greater Northwest Kansas, Inc., could provide monies for costs and expenses which a public agency could not.¹⁶

Three regional planning commissioners from this region were interviewed--two elected officials and one nonelected representative. These commissioners placed the greatest emphasis on the promotion of economic and industrial development as the main purpose of regional planning. This was very much in line with the initial reason for establishing the Commission. A particular need was seen for involvement in programs designed to keep the young people in the region. This region's commissioners also placed greater emphasis on implementation as opposed to the preparation of plans. Again, this could be related to the emphasis on economic development. Only one commissioner specifically mentioned technical assistance

to small towns and intergovernmental cooperation as primary roles of regional planning.

All three individuals agreed that the Board members made the final decision on staff work activities. One commissioner commented that they tried to distribute time and effort over the region, according to a priority list. One commissioner stated that priorities and size of staff depended on the availability of Federal funding. However, two commissioners preferred a small staff, due to concern over becoming too dependent on Federal funds.

Several problems facing the NKPDC were mentioned. According to one commissioner, many local elected officials were afraid regional planning would take away local power and autonomy--becoming another level of government. Two commissioners felt that most local officials wanted only to maintain the status quo, and thus, were reluctant to try new ideas.

Two individuals remarked that a few larger cities felt they could perform their own planning and did not need the NKPDC. On the other hand, some small towns feared they were so small they would be overlooked. However, the overall attitude was that what benefits one part of the region will benefit the whole region.

The director felt regional planning should emphasize functionally related areas, such as transportation, land use, housing, economic development, and criminal justice. He also felt citizen involvement was necessary for planning to be effective. The emphasis of the commissioners interviewed also seemed to focus on functional activities. Although they listed health and county zoning as activities they would like to be involved in, the major thrust was on bringing

economic and industrial development into the region. The director further stressed coordination and cooperation among local governments on common problems as a role for regional planning.¹⁷

According to the director, regional planning took up 50 percent of the staff's time. The following types of planning were listed as underway at that time: criminal justice, recreation, economic development, housing, land use, transportation, solid waste, emergency medical services, and historic preservation.

Thirty percent of staff time was concerned with information and public relations, 70 percent of which went into public service speaking. The agency regularly compiled news items on economic development for public information and planning related activities. The NKPDC spent more time in this area than any other regional planning commission.

Local planning and technical assistance required ten percent of the agency's time, each. More time occurred in grantsmanship than on implementation. Assistance had been provided in applying to various Department of Housing and Urban Development programs and the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration in particular. Local planning activities included mini-plans, land use plans, and assistance in local zoning matters. Overall, the activities of the NKPDC appear to be consistent with the views of both the commissioners and their director and to be geared toward economic development of the region.

Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Commission

The Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Commission (SKRPC) covered nine counties with a population of 195,726. Four regional planning commissioners were interviewed--two elected officials and two nonelected

representatives. The individuals had a variety of backgrounds including farming, city planning, and public administration.

Technical assistance to small towns was cited by all four commissioners as a major purpose of regional planning. Grantsmanship was specified as an important element of this by three commissioners. Providing a means for intergovernmental cooperation and communication was considered another important role of the regional planning commission by all four individuals.

The overall sentiment was to keep decision making at the local level. The commissioners were opposed to regional planning becoming another level of government. While the commission should coordinate services within the region, it should not become an operating or implementing agency. A small staff was favored by all four persons interviewed. The opinion was expressed that as staff increased, so did the tendency to become more operational rather than planning and service oriented. Fear was also voiced of the commission becoming too big and losing sight of the needs of the people.

Problems were also mentioned regarding the State and Federal government. One commissioner felt too much was being forced on local government by State and Federal agencies--both in terms of paperwork and regulations, which were unrealistic at the local level. The SKRPC was considered one way in which the region could be represented in Topeka and Washington. The State was further criticized for setting up different agencies with overlapping boundaries with no coordination in regard to regions at all. One commissioner felt regions should be based on population area rather than geographical area. The

dispersal of funds across state lines was considered difficult even though that may be the logical region.

When asked what areas were appropriate for SKRPC activities, the following were mentioned: health, economic development, law enforcement, transportation, and programs to keep young people in the area. One county commissioner thought the SKRPC had all the programs it could handle at the present time. According to the director, regional planning was underway in all those areas except health.

The director's concept of regional planning was similar to the commissioners interviewed. He stated that the commission was established to provide local elected officials with:

"a vehicle through which they could pool their resources to obtain professional technical assistance, conduct needed regional studies, and gain improved access to state and Federal funding assistance."

The director felt the planner's role was to present options and professional advice within the political constraints. This would concur with at least two of the commissioners, who stated that final decisions on planning activities were made by the Board members and considered staff as "hired hands."

According to the director, technical assistance to local government took up 35 percent of staff time--of which 70 percent was involved in grantsmanship. The SKRPC was actively involved in seeking funds from the Community Development Block Grants and the Local Public Works programs as well as securing Section 8 units. Technical assistance had also been provided in the areas of law enforcement and economic development.

Local planning and development involved only ten percent of staff time, whereas regional planning occurred 35 percent of the time. Perhaps

this reflected one statement made that the SKRPC tried to focus on activities that affect the whole region and not just one jurisdiction. According to the director, regional planning was underway in the following areas: criminal justice, housing, land use, transportation, solid waste, economic development, recreation and historic preservation. With the exception of land use, these areas were supported by the commissioners.

Twenty percent of agency time involved information and public relations. The following types of data were regularly compiled for public information and planning activities: land use, library manual, historic preservation, population, crime, and economic development data.

The SKRPC had a professional staff of 13.5 with a budget of \$207,746. It was one of the larger nonmetropolitan agencies in Kansas. Overall, there appeared to be agreement between the commissioners, director and staff activities.

METROPOLITAN REGIONS

Central Plains Tri-County Regional Planning Committee

The Central Plains Tri-County Regional Planning Committee (CPTCPC) was comprised of three counties with a population of 412,466. This region consisted of one urban county, including the Wichita SMSA, and two nonmetropolitan counties. Two of the commissioners interviewed resided in the rural counties; the other two lived in Wichita. The two urban commissioners were also on the Metropolitan Area Planning Department (MAPD) Board, which served only the Wichita SMSA.

According to three commissioners, the primary role of the CPTCPC was to provide a place for cities and counties to get together to exchange ideas and discuss common problems. This was the only benefit of regional planning mentioned.

Support for grass roots decision making was implied by the two nonmetropolitan commissioners. One explicitly stated regional planning should not become another level of government. Both stated a fear existed among other elected officials in the region that the CPTCPC would take away local control. One commissioner was opposed to regionalism and viewed the CPTCPC as a way to keep in touch with adjoining counties. He further stated:

"we don't want to become involved in the decision making of other counties and we don't want them helping us make our decisions."¹⁹

Local input was considered essential to successful planning. The State and Federal agencies were criticized for not soliciting and utilizing local input and data. Many governmental regulations were regarded as inappropriate at the local level as well as involving too much red tape.

Frustration was also voiced over preparing numerous plans without seeing any visible results. The general attitude of the individuals interviewed was that CPTCPC was not accomplishing anything. One opinion was that the planning commissioners just wanted to maintain the status quo. He favored legislation requiring regions to do more than in the past.

One urban commissioner favored more involvement with planning than zoning or "brush-fire" type problems. According to this individual, MAPD only thinks of planning in terms of day-to-day problems, with no long-range planning or goals. She further supported coordination of government and nongovernment services by the CPTCPC. Overlapping boundaries and agencies were considered a problem by another commissioner.

One commissioner, who favored a strong county government, thought regional planning should become more involved in functional areas. This was seen as a way to strengthen county government and to become more of a planning process. The following were mentioned as areas the commissioners would like CPTCPC to be involved in: health, economic development, water conservation, agricultural economic development and development of resources, transportation, social services planning, and training of new members.

One rural commissioner strongly opposed CPTCPC "branching out into a full blown thing with planners and administrators."²⁰ He felt the direct results would not offset the capital outlay. The region was considered too small to be effective or financially viable by two commissioners. A third stated lack of staff as a definite problem; CPTCPC was the only regional planning commission with no staff of its own. MAPD staff was utilized to some extent, but only slightly. Although MAPD has the largest budget of the agencies interviewed, CPTCPC has the smallest, \$8,000.

Since CPTCPC had no director, the director of MAPD was interviewed (he was also the secretary of CPTCPC). His concept of planning was more in line with the urban planning commissioners interviewed. He favored a very dynamic approach to planning, ranging from change agents to problem solving and consensus. He felt that the planner's job was to provide officials with various alternatives and courses of action. This comment concurred with the rural commissioners' support for local decision making. The director stated the reason for establishing the CPTCPC was:

"the recognition at the local level that many problems are of a regional nature and do not conform to political boundaries of local governments."²¹

Guidance and coordination within the three-county area were viewed as the primary roles of the CPTCPC. The major activities of CPTCPC have focused on the preparation of data books with information on population, housing, and facilities within the region. Studies have also been conducted on the region's airport system, alternative organizational structures for the CPTCPC, and water and sewer needs within the three counties.

According to the director, only ten percent of MAPD's time dealt with regional planning for the three counties. Local planning and development for the Wichita SMSA received the most attention from MAPD staff. This included small city planning for urbanizing areas, comprehensive plans, economic feasibility studies, annexation studies, zoning, subdivision regulations, and construction codes. Only five percent of MAPD's work was designated to technical assistance and another five percent to information and public relations.

Much of the frustration of the regional planning commissioners could be caused by lack of staff. Greater results could perhaps be experienced if staff were available to provide technical assistance. There appears to be some discrepancies in the attitudes of the rural commissioners. On the one hand, they favored a small staff; yet, they voiced frustrations over lack of visible results. The urban commissioners were more planning-oriented than the rural commissioners, who viewed regional planning as only a place for local officials to get together to discuss problems and experiences. The director of MAPD's views appears to be more in line with the urban commissioners.

Mid-America Regional Council

The Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) was a bistate association of governments covering eight counties (three-Kansas, five-Missouri) and 111 cities with a total population over 1.3 million. All four regional planning commissioners interviewed for this study resided in the Kansas portion of the region. Three of the commissioners were elected officials and the fourth was an appointed member.

The primary role of regional planning, as seen by all four commissioners interviewed, was that of interjurisdictional and interstate cooperation and coordination. Problems facing the jurisdictions within the MARC region were not felt to be isolated, but shared and thus, could be dealt with more effectively by working together on them. The commissioners felt quite strongly though that the local governments controlled MARC and the activities in which it became involved. In no way was regional planning to become a fourth level of government or an operating or implementing agency. MARC should only become involved or take action at the request of the local governments and only in areas where two or more jurisdictions were involved. The final decisions should also be made by the jurisdictions involved. The appointed member did suggest a possible role of MARC could be that of arbitrator between two jurisdictions when conflicts arise in which an agreement could not be reached between the two, but they should be allowed to resolve the problem themselves first. This appeared to be the prevalent attitude among the commissioners interviewed. As one city councilman put it, he was "obligated to his jurisdiction first and to regional concepts second."²² One county commissioner advocated local jurisdictions playing a greater role in the regional

planning process and having a closer relationship, so better solutions to problems could be reached and hopefully his own jurisdiction would benefit.

Two commissioners also mentioned technical assistance as a function of regional planning. One county commissioner's participation in MARC appeared partially defensive, in that, through representation in MARC he could protect his county from domination of larger cities and to make sure his county got their "fair share" of Federal grants. Participation in regional planning was seen as necessary to obtain Federal funds. However, this commissioner expressed one benefit of regional planning as the opportunity to communicate and exchange ideas and experiences with other local elected officials.

The program areas receiving the greatest support by the commissioners were: transportation, water, 911, aging, health, port study, and manpower. The following areas were mentioned as ones the commissioners would like MARC to get involved in at some time: economic development, law enforcement, and social services planning.

According to the director, the objective of MARC was to obtain consensus among the various levels of government, groups, and organizations. MARC provided the local units of government a way to work together and coordinate resources on mutual problems. The director commented,

"Through MARC, local elected officials have been able to work together and still maintain their autonomy."²³

More than half the staff's time went into providing technical assistance to local governments. Although only two commissioners specifically mentioned the technical assistance function, perhaps

this was representative of the strong provincial outlook of the commissioners interviewed. Assistance had been provided in the following areas: 911-emergency care systems, housing, land use, services to the aging, and disaster assistance.

Local planning received ten percent of MARC's time, whereas regional planning took 26 percent. Regional planning was underway in the following areas: aging, health, manpower, recreation, welfare, housing, land use, public facilities, transportation, solid waste, sewer and water, and energy.

Only six percent of staff time was involved in information and public relations. MARC had a Communication section within the agency as well as a Public Information Officer. The type of data compiled for public information and planning included: current population, traffic counts, employment data, land use file, generalized land factor atlas, aerial photos, dime file, and base maps.

While MARC was involved in a greater number of areas than the other regions in Kansas, it also had the largest staff (90) and a budget of \$1,069,305. Overall, the activities of MARC were consistent with those the commissioners and the director supported. Strengthening local governments was brought out the most in the interviews and technical assistance to local governments received the most staff time.

Mo-Kan Regional Council

The Mo-Kan Regional Council was another bistate region comprised of two Kansas counties and four Missouri counties, including the St. Joseph, Missouri SMSA. Three of the commissioners interviewed were Kansas residents, while the fourth, the chairman, was from Missouri.

All four individuals were local elected officials from the rural communities and counties of the region.

All four commissioners viewed the primary role of regional planning as technical assistance to the smaller towns in the region. This included such services as: attending planning and zoning meetings to provide on the spot expertise, applying for federal grants, assisting on zoning ordinances, preparing ownership and growth maps for counties, and providing printing services.

All four commissioners agreed intergovernmental cooperation, especially across State lines, had improved since the establishment of Mo-Kan; the Council had provided the means of communication. One commissioner commented that the greatest benefit of the Council had been the mutual understanding of problems that exist across state lines.

Regional planning was seen as a means to solve problems or at least control them--particularly growth. One attitude was that planning was needed now in light of population growth to avoid problems in land use and to protect resources which otherwise might be destroyed or exhausted.

The Mo-Kan Regional Council was viewed as:

"a vehicle for more than one community to get together and have a voice in government, or have a voice in the programs that are of concern for all of us."²⁴

This last viewpoint was expressed by three commissioners--to have a greater voice in Federal and State government through the Regional Council. Two stated that some State agencies did not even know they existed. Regional planning could provide local input at the Federal and State level. Home-rule was supported even within the region.

If an issue only affects one jurisdiction, the decision should be up to those elected officials. There was strong opposition expressed to the Mo-Kan Regional Council becoming a regional government or getting involved in local politics. As one commissioner stated:

"Everybody is a local elected official and they want to keep everything on the local level. They want to do everything regionally in planning, but they want to keep that local government. This is the reason everything starts and stems from the local governments, because they figure that if it comes from the regional, the first thing you know, they'll have a regional government instead of a local government."²⁵

When asked what activities the commissioners would like the Council to be involved in at some time, the following areas were mentioned: economic and industrial development, county zoning, training of new members, and even more law enforcement. In law enforcement, greater coordination between various law enforcement agencies across state lines and more police training across state lines were favored.

The director of the Mo-Kan Regional Council viewed coordination and cooperation among local units of government as the primary purpose of the Council.²⁶ In the director's opinion, the Council had already completed its long-range planning and consensus phase and, therefore, the emphasis was on advisory and technical services and implementation. Forty percent of the agency's work involved technical assistance to local governments, with 19 percent in implementation. According to the director, those services in the greatest demand were: various types of base data, including mapping, population and economic data, printing services, assistance with grant applications, and interpretation and implementation of Federal rules and regulations.²⁷

Half the staff's time went into regional planning activities,

whereas only four percent was involved with local planning and development. Long-range plans had been developed in the following areas: land use, housing, transportation, manpower, criminal justice, capital improvements, open space and recreation, water, sewer and solid waste.

Only six percent of staff time dealt with information and public relations. These activities included preparation of the newsletter, compiling data on current census, unemployment, land use, zoning, and base maps.

Overall, the activities of the staff appeared to be consistent with the views of the commissioners and the director. The two functions receiving the greatest support were technical assistance and inter-governmental coordination and cooperation. The activities of the staff were fairly well distributed between technical assistance and regional planning.

Topeka-Shawnee County Metropolitan Planning Commission

The Topeka-Shawnee County Metropolitan Planning Commission (TSCMPC) was comprised of only one county--Shawnee--which includes the SMSA of Topeka. While the county had a population of 173,848, the City of Topeka represented 132,108 of this population. Of the five planning commissioners interviewed, only one was an elected official; the remaining four were citizen representatives.

Although the planning commission primarily dealt with physical planning, such as zoning and subdivision regulations, the planning commissioners felt the TSCMPC should be into other areas as well. Two commissioners thought the TSCMPC should provide coordination with other agencies involved in planning, such as the school board, fire, police, etc. Their opinion was that the TSCMPC could provide the

liaison between these various agencies.

Three commissioners asserted that the TSCMPC should have more authority than it currently had. The planning commission's major function was reviewing and recommending plans, but the actual application was up to the governing bodies. Often there was no consistency or continuity on the part of the city or county commission in terms of policy decisions. One commissioner favored a more aggressive stance on the part of the planning commissioners, instead of just maintaining the plan, they should also advocate changes. Another commissioner wanted greater involvement in developing and implementing plans rather than just hearing zoning changes.

The overall attitude seemed to be that planning should be comprehensive in outlook and adhere to a long-range plan, although one person commented that planning was a continuing process. Planning was seen by one commissioner as a means of protection for the people. While another commissioner suggested the need for balance in making planning decisions--between the overall good of the project and the rights of the individuals directly affected by the decision.

There was agreement that State and Federal regulations involved too much red tape. While one commissioner recognized the need for advice from the State, he wanted final decisions made at the local level. He felt local decision making would best reflect the needs of the community.

The director felt long-range planning was an accepted function of the municipal government. However, the attitude conveyed by the commissioners interviewed was that little was being done in this area in terms of local government decision. In other words, plans were

not implemented by the local government.

According to the director, 60 percent of the staff's time dealt with local planning and development, while implementation took up 39 percent. The following types of planning were underway by the TSCMPC: recreation, housing, land use, public facilities, transportation, solid waste, water and sewer, fire protection, and flood plans. These areas were not stressed by the planning commissioners. The types of activities the planning commissioners wanted the TSCMPC to be involved in were: consolidation of services, economic development, job development, social services, preservation of open space, and mobile home zoning.

There was not any staff time allotted to regional planning. The TSCMPC was not considered a regional planning agency by either the director or the commissioners. Plans were prepared only for the City of Topeka and the Shawnee County government--no other towns in the county were included in the planning commission.

Only five percent of agency time dealt with information and public relations. This function was primarily performed by the director. The types of activities provided in this area included: press releases, public speaking engagements, and an agency newsletter.

Overall, there appeared to some dissatisfaction among the planning commissioners interviewed with the accomplishments of the TSCMPC. This was related to the amount of time accorded to hearing zoning changes, leaving little time for other activities. Frustration was also voiced over lack of authority to implement plans.

The purpose of this chapter was to present the findings of both the commissioners and the directors on a region by region basis.

Many similarities and some differences became apparent among the twelve regions. These findings will be addressed in the following chapter.

NOTES

¹Blaine Gehring, Regionalism and Regional Planning in Kansas, Kansas Planning for Development Report, no. 60 (Topeka, KS: Kansas Department of Economic Development, August 1974), p. i.

²Ibid., p. ii.

³League of Kansas Municipalities, Kansas Planning Laws and Procedural Guide Outline (Topeka, KS: League of Kansas Municipalities, 1973), p. 53.

⁴Gehring, pp. 53-55.

⁵Extracted from transcription of confidential interview with a regional planning commissioner from the Big Lakes Regional Council of Local Governments, Kansas State University, Department of Regional and Community Planning, "A Study to Implement Knowledge Transfer of Experienced Regional Planning Commissioners in Kansas," 1976.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Extracted from transcription of confidential interview with a regional planning commissioner from the Chikaskia, Golden Belt, and Indian Hills Associations of Local Governments, Kansas State University's Knowledge Transfer Study, 1976.

⁸Interview with the executive director of the Chikaskia, Golden Belt, and Indian Hills Associations of Local Governments by John W. Keller, Pratt, KS, 12 October 1976.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Extracted from transcription of confidential interview with a regional planning commissioner from the Flint Hills Regional Council, Kansas State University's Knowledge Transfer Study, 1976.

¹¹Michael R. Elson, "Focus on Flint Hills Regional Council," Kansas Government Journal, December 1977, p. 432.

¹²Extracted from transcription of confidential interview with a regional planning commissioner from the Greater Southwest Regional Planning Commission, Kansas State University's Knowledge Transfer Study, 1976.

¹³Interview with the executive director of the Greater Southwest Regional Planning Commission by Vernon P. Deines, Garden City, KS, 21 October 1976.

¹⁴Extracted from transcription of confidential interview with a regional planning commissioner from the North Central Regional Planning Commission, Kansas State University's Knowledge Transfer Study, 1976.

¹⁵David K. Peterson, "Focus on North Central Regional Planning Commission," Kansas Government Journal, August 1977, p. 290.

¹⁶Franze Gourley, "Focus on Northwest Kansas Planning and Development Commission," Kansas Government Journal, November 1977, p. 390.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Michael W. Bailey, "Focus on Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Commission," Kansas Government Journal, October 1977, p. 360.

¹⁹Extracted from transcription of confidential interview with a regional planning commissioner from the Central Plains Tri-County Regional Planning Committee, Kansas State University's Knowledge Transfer Study, 1976.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Robert A. Lakin, "Focus on Central Plains Tri-County Regional Planning Committee," Kansas Government Journal, April 1978, p. 137.

²²Extracted from transcription of confidential interview with a regional planning commissioner from the Mid-America Regional Council, Kansas State University's Knowledge Transfer Study, 1976.

²³Peter S. Levi, "Focus on Mid-America Regional Council," Kansas Government Journal, March 1978, p. 103.

²⁴Extracted from transcription of confidential interview with a regional planning commissioner from the Mo-Kan Regional Council, Kansas State University's Knowledge Transfer Study, 1976.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Jean C. Waltemath, "Focus on Mo-Kan Regional Council," Kansas Government Journal, February 1978, p. 58.

²⁷Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

SIGNIFICANT SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES AMONG REGIONS

A comparison of the twelve regional planning commissions found many similarities regarding the role of regional planning in Kansas. Differences that were noted appeared to be unique to individual regions. It was difficult to distinguish differences between the urban and rural regions because of the varied nature of the urban regional planning commissions. Differences between the two appeared to be more in emphasis or due to individual characteristics of that particular Commission. The Mo-Kan Regional Council, in particular, showed greater resemblance to the nonmetropolitan regions. Statements made about the rural regions generally hold true for the Mo-Kan region as well. The significant similarities or themes and differences found in this study are discussed in this chapter as well as any relationship to findings in other studies.

Support for grassroots decision making was strongly emphasized throughout the interviews. The regional planning commission was viewed as a tool by which local government could make better decisions. The commission provided the vehicle for intergovernmental communication and cooperation, whereby local officials could learn how other communities solved similar problems and how to approach mutual problems. Local autonomy was considered highly important. Regionalism was supported only to the point where it began to infringe upon local autonomy. As Bolan asserted, Board members may have competing loyalties or wear "two hats," one of which may conflict with regional planning interests.¹

Kansas commissioners were reluctant to make decisions affecting other jurisdictions and did not want other commissioners making their decisions for them. In fact, some commissioners' involvement with the regional planning commissions appeared in part to ensure local autonomy or "home-rule" remained intact.

There were not any commissioners who supported regional planning commissions becoming another level of government. Most commissioners were very adamant that this did not happen. This was similar to other studies, in which regional planning was viewed as an appropriate instrument for dealing with community problems and capable of rendering solutions, but it should not be given enforcement powers.² Only a few individual commissioners advocated greater involvement with implementation. The commissioners interviewed for the Northwest Kansas Planning and Development Commission particularly supported implementation activities. This could be related to the Commission's focus on economic development. Three commissioners from the Topeka-Shawnee County Metropolitan Planning Commission also favored greater authority to implement plans.

Frustration over lack of tangible results was expressed by a number of commissioners. This feeling was very apparent in both the Topeka-Shawnee County region and the Central Plains Tri-County region. The Topeka commissioners felt too much time was devoted to hearing zoning requests than in actual planning. The Topeka-Shawnee County Metropolitan Planning Commission was unique in this respect. As the planning commission for the City of Topeka and Shawnee County, one of its major tasks was hearing zoning and subdivision requests. This was not a function the other regional planning commissions

performed, although staff might make recommendations on such matters to individual planning commissions within the region.

Commissioners from the Central Plains region were frustrated because they felt their organization was not accomplishing anything worthwhile. This commission was the only one without staff; the Wichita's MAPD staff was utilized only to a small extent. In addition, the commission met on a quarterly basis instead of monthly as the other regional planning commissions. The commissioners from this region also had the greatest dichotomy of views regarding the role of regional planning. The urban commissioners from Wichita supported a more active role in long-range planning and coordination, whereas the rural commissioners saw regional planning as a means of strengthening local governments. Involvement by the rural commissioners stemmed in part from fear of Wichita gaining control over the rural areas. The effect of conflicting views on output was perhaps more apparent in this region than any other. Without staff, the outputs of the agency were minimal. The nonmetropolitan commissioners were against staffing the commission; they felt the CPTCRPC should only be a place for local officials to get together to exchange ideas and discuss common problems. One rural commissioner specifically stated opposition to the commission "branching out into a full blown thing with planners and administrators."³ This statement implied support for Clavel's contention regarding the effect of status inequalities on relationships. Clavel asserted that areas with scarce economic and administrative resources (as most rural areas) also lack experience in dealing with experts or specialists. This results in a state of inequality, which limits the acceptance of the professional

planner and his proposals.⁴ The urban commissioners with more technical (or specialist) backgrounds perhaps felt more equipped to deal with professional staff than did the rural commissioners with generalist backgrounds. The rural commissioners' remarks inferred maintaining the status quo.

The nonmetropolitan commissions overwhelmingly supported the provision of technical assistance as a role of regional planning. Assistance in securing Federal grants and funds was considered a major aspect of technical assistance. This concurred with the findings of other studies that rural areas lack the professional staff and resources to provide these services for themselves. As a service to local governments, this was also a means of maintaining local autonomy and improving the overall community. This role was supported to a lesser degree by the urban commissions. In line with its rural nature, all four Mo-Kan commissioners emphasized this role. Only two MARC commissioners mentioned this role, while none of the persons from either the Central Plains or Topeka regions mentioned this function at all. It could be that in urban areas these services are available through other sources.

The nonmetropolitan commissioners (and Mo-Kan) also felt regional planning provided a means of being represented at the Federal and State level. The feeling was that rural areas were overlooked at the Federal and State level because of their lack of numbers or population. Hope was expressed that through regional planning, rural areas could have a greater voice in Washington and Topeka. Both the rural and urban regions complained of the unappropriateness of Federal regulations at the local level. Federal and some State agencies were considered

too bureaucratic, resulting in delays on local projects. The commissioners advocated more input from the local governments regarding priorities and programs established at the Federal and State level. Although the regional planning commission's priorities or activities were often geared toward seeking available Federal funds, these activities might not be the first priority at the local level.

One role emphasized to a greater extent by the urban commissioners was that of coordination. Perhaps this was a more crucial aspect in metropolitan areas where there were a greater number of departments and agencies providing similar or duplicative services. In urban areas, actions by one jurisdiction could have a greater impact on adjacent jurisdictions than in rural areas. However, the lack of coordination in regard to agency boundaries was seen as a problem in four rural regions.

Overall, there did not appear to be much discrepancy between the commissioners' perception of regional planning and the directors'. The directors also considered the provision of technical assistance and alternative solutions to local problems the primary roles of regional planning. Comprehensive planning and long-range planning were mentioned second in priority. Perhaps the directors felt long-range planning had been completed and the agency was now in the implementation stage; this statement was made by Mo-Kan's director. In some instances, the director's concept of planning was more dynamic than that of the commissioners. One role of regional planning mentioned by two directors (CGI and MAPD) was that of change agent. Most commissioners saw regional planning as a way to improve community services to make the community a better place to live. Regional

planning was seen by several directors as more complex than local planning in terms of lines of authority.

The similarity of views between the commissioners and the directors was inconsistent with the findings of Buck and Rath's study in Pennsylvania. Their study found a greater dichotomy of views between the two groups. The similarity of views found in Kansas could be the result of several factors. The commissioners interviewed were selected in part from recommendations of the directors. It could be assumed the director would recommend those persons who were the most active and supportive of regional planning and with whom he had the best relationship. Unlike the Pennsylvania study, the persons interviewed were not all local elected officials, however, all were on the Board of Directors of a regional planning commission.

On the other hand, the commissioners would not hire a director or staff with conflicting viewpoints. This point was brought out by a number of commissioners who considered staff as "hired hands." The commission's control over the decision-making process was strongly emphasized. The planner's role was advisory only.

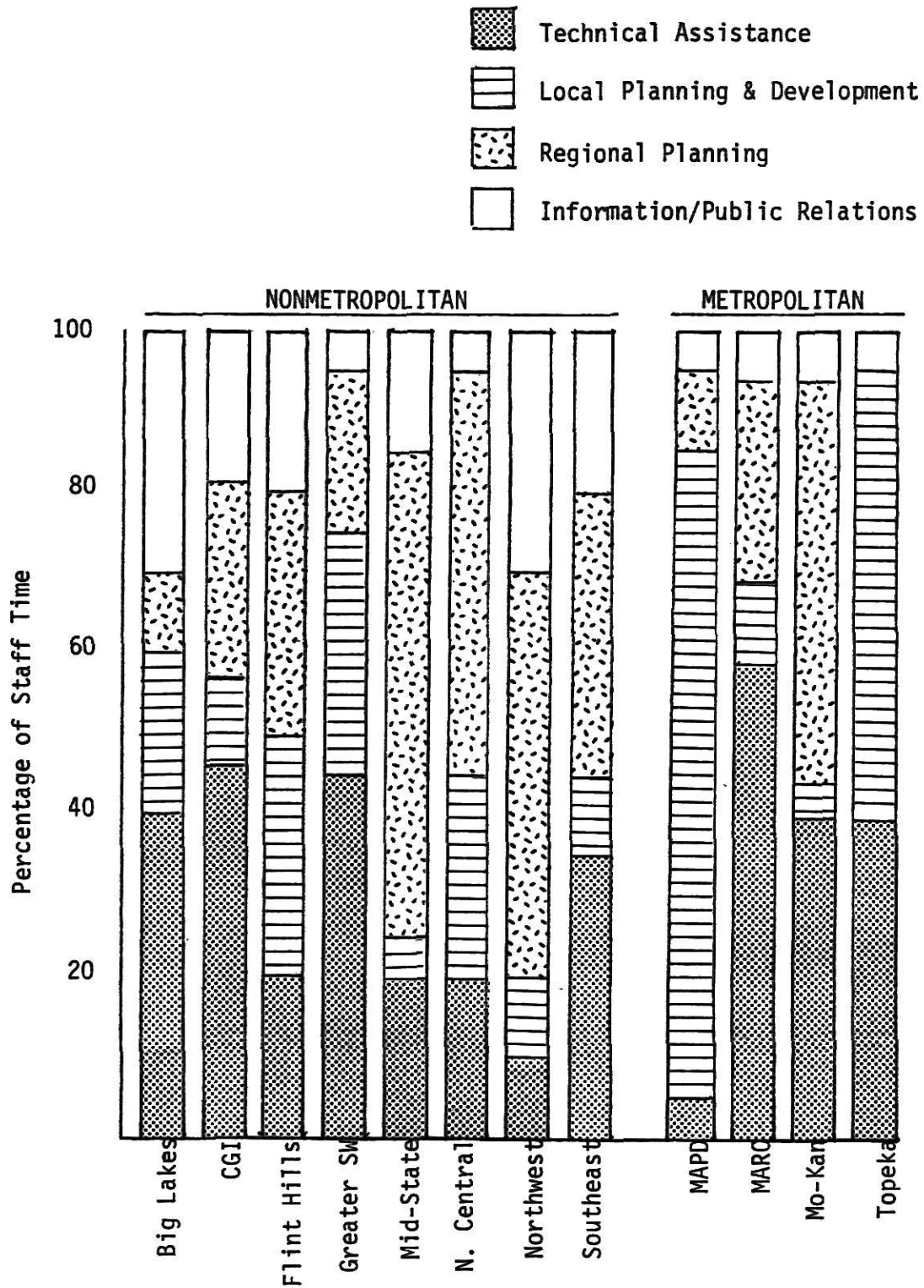
A third factor resulting in similarity of views could be what Raymond termed an "understanding of realities" on the part of the director.⁵ The director's comments could reflect a good understanding of what was acceptable to his commission. The following remark by the GSRPC's director implied this notion: "While long-range planning sets the framework, short-range (planning) provides us the results for credibility."⁶ The relationship between the director and commissioners appeared to be a good one. Generally, the commissioners spoke favorably of the director.

Most of the commissioners interviewed were ardent supporters of regional planning--perhaps more so than local officials in other studies. They felt regional planning had been beneficial to the region and dedicated their own time to be involved with the commission. In addition, many of the commissioners interviewed had been with the regional planning commission since its inception and were instrumental in establishing the commission. As Daland and Parker also pointed out, acceptance or support for planning tends to increase to the degree it is considered useful by the policy-makers. The commissioners perceived the greatest benefits of regional planning to be technical assistance, grantsmanship, intergovernmental communication and cooperation, and coordination. Activities considered important were those providing assistance and resources to local government that would otherwise be unavailable.

The types of activities considered important tended to be given the most staff time as well. On the average, staff time was distributed as follows: 32 percent in technical assistance; 30 percent in regional planning; 24 percent in local planning and development; and 14 percent in information and public relations. However, these are only averages and as Chart I on the following page illustrates, the amount of time spent in these areas varied from region to region and to some extent between the urban and rural regions.

The Topeka-Shawnee County Commission and MAPD spent a greater amount of time (56% and 80% respectively) in local planning and development than the other regions, including MARC and Mo-Kan. In addition, they devoted very little or no time to regional planning. Again, this is reflective of the nature of these two agencies. The

CHART I. STAFF TIME DEVOTED TO VARIOUS ACTIVITIES



Topeka-Shawnee County Commission, in particular, did not consider itself a regional agency and spent most of its time on zoning and subdivision matters. MAPD was not the staff agency for CPTCRPC, but for the Wichita metropolitan area; therefore, devoting most of its time on local matters also.

The amount of time spent on the different activities varied among the other regions as well. There did not appear to be any strong relationship between staff size and budget and the amount of time that went into the different activities. In looking at the smaller regional planning commissions, two (Mid-State and North Central) devoted much more time in regional planning than the average, whereas a third (Big Lakes) spent much less time in this area. On the other hand, one of the larger commissions (Northwest) also spent much more time on regional planning and public relations than the average. They also spent very little time on technical assistance. Perhaps this is reflective of their emphasis on economic development. The Greater Northwest Kansas, Inc., was also available to provide some of these services.

Information and public relations received the least amount of staff time overall. Yet, the opinion expressed by many commissioners was that the public and local elected officials were not aware of regional planning nor understood it and thus, did not participate in the planning process. The urban commissioners, in particular, felt there was a lack of communication going out into the communities regarding the commission's activities. However, the metropolitan agencies spent the least amount of time on this function.

Presumably, plans are drawn up based on goals assumed to be

in the public interest and to have widespread commitment. But how could this be if there was not any participation in the planning process? Moreover, according to the directors, there was little involvement between the commissioners and staff on a day-to-day basis. This indicated concurrence with the findings in other studies that little communication occurred between planners and local elected officials. On the other hand, the commissioners could feel there was little need for such contact--viewing their role as policy-making and the director's role as carrying that policy out in agency activities.

According to the ACIR-ICMA's study, the greatest portion of the director's time was devoted to program coordination and administration, seeking Federal and State financial assistance, and developing regional plans.⁷ Although this study did not differentiate between the director's and staff's time, the majority of the agency's time went into the same types of activities.

Table II on the following page shows the types of planning that were underway in each region, according to the director. All twelve regions were involved in housing and land use planning. Other areas in which most regions were involved included: recreation, transportation, solid waste, water, and sewer. A majority of the rural commissions also participated in criminal justice and economic development planning. However, as the chart displays, the regional planning commissions in Kansas were active in a wide range of areas. The Big Lakes Commission was even involved in implementing a winter weatherization program. There was not a strong relationship found between staff size and budget and the number of areas in which the

TABLE II

TYPES OF PLANNING UNDERWAY IN THE REGIONS

	Big Lakes	CGI	Flint Hills	Mid- State	No. Central	North- west	South- east	South- west	MAPD	MARC	Mo-Kan	Topeka	Total
Aging								X	X				3
Crim. Justice		X	X		X	X	X	X			X		7
Education			X			X							2
Health	X				X			X		X			5
Manpower			X					X	X	X			5
Recreation	X	X	X			X		X	X	X		X	10
Welfare								X	X				1
Housing	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		12
Land Use	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		12
Public Facilities	X	X	X					X	X	X	X		7
Transportation		X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X		9
Solid Waste	X	X	X			X	X			X	X		8
Sewer/Water	X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X		8
Economic Development	X		X			X	X	X					5
Energy		X								X	X		3
Drug Abuse/Alcohol							X		X				2
Environment								X	X				22
Excess Properties					X								1
Hist. Preservation						X	X					X	2
Flood Plain												X	1
Fire Protection												X	1
Total	8	9	11	2	4	9	10	10	10	12	12	9	

Source: Directors

staff was involved. While two of the smaller agencies (Mid-State and North Central) were involved in the least number of areas, two other small staffs (Big Lakes and Flint Hills) participated in as many areas as the larger agencies.

When asked what types of activities the commissioners considered the most successful, law enforcement and housing received the greatest support by both the urban and rural commissioners. An additional area mentioned consistently by the urban commissioners was transportation. A great number of other areas were mentioned to a lesser extent, such as economic development, aging, health, land use, water, etc.

Next to technical assistance, intergovernmental cooperation and communication and coordination, functional areas tended to receive the greatest support. Planning per se was not mentioned to the same extent. Involvement in controversial issues was also actively avoided. These factors lend support to other studies which found planning activities to be short-range in scope, usually geared toward treating specific public problems. Planning was not seen as innovative ways to organize to reach desired goals, but as a means to upgrade existing public utilities and services and to improve the overall quality of life in their communities. The regional planning commissioners interviewed for this study were enthusiastic supporters of regional planning. They felt their communities had benefited from such activities and hence, devoted their own time to participate in the process.

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the attitudes held by the major participation in regional plan-

planning and agency activities. This chapter presented the significant findings discovered in this study. However, areas deserving further research also became apparent. The remaining chapter will note these areas as well as summarize the findings of this report.

NOTES

¹Bolan, p. 389.

²Raymond, p. 38.

³Extracted from transcription of confidential interview with a regional planning commissioner from the Central Plains Tri-County Regional Planning Committee, Kansas State University's Knowledge Transfer Study, 1976.

⁴Clavel, p. 130.

⁵Raymond, p. 31.

⁶Interview with the executive director of the Greater Southwest Regional Planning Commission by Vernon P. Deines, Garden City, KS, 21 October 1976.

⁷Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, p. 91.

CHAPTER V
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

While this study was exploratory in nature and definitive conclusions cannot be made, some significant findings were found both among the twelve regional planning commissioners in Kansas and with regional planning experiences in other states. The key findings of this study are listed:

- 1) The ardent support for regional planning by the commissioners stemmed from immediate benefits the regional planning commission activities provided; thus, short-range activities or projects were emphasized over long-range planning.
- 2) The roles of regional planning receiving the greatest support from both the commissioners and the directors were technical assistance, intergovernmental communication and cooperation and coordination.
- 3) Regional planning was viewed by the commissioners as a tool to maintain grass roots decision making and enhance local autonomy. Regionalism was supported only to the point at which local autonomy was threatened.
- 4) There was a tendency by the commissioners to avoid controversial issues and a reluctance to venture into areas in which local government had not been involved in the past.

- 5) No major differences were found between the regional planning commissioners' and the directors' views of the role of regional planning.
- 6) The types of activities in which the agency was involved were in line with the views of its commissioners and director.
- 7) No major distinctions in attitudes or activities could be found between the metropolitan and nonmetropolitan regions. Differences that were found among the regions appeared to be in emphasis or unique to individual commissions.
- 8) The commissioners' views toward appropriate roles for regional planning were consistent with findings in other studies in Pennsylvania and Virginia.
- 9) The similarity of views noted between the commissioners and directors in Kansas was not found in the similar study conducted in Pennsylvania.

The findings of this study could have been influenced to some degree by the methodology utilized by the KSU researchers in conducting their research. The selection process by which the participating commissioners were chosen was based on recommendations of the directors, regional planning commission chairmen and State

agency staff. Thus, there is a high probability that the commissioners recommended would be supporters of regional planning and have similar views to the director. Utilization of a random selection process might have found less support and less concurrence between the persons interviewed.

In the KSU research, two different interviewers were utilized-- one for the urban regions and another for the rural regions. The purpose for this was to match the background of the interviewer with the commissioners he interviewed (e.g., the interviewer with the rural background interviewed the nonmetropolitan commissioners). The differences in interview styles of the two interviewers were felt to be appropriate for the persons interviewed and thus, were not felt to have adversely affected the findings of the KSU research.

An approach similar to that utilized in interviews with the commissioners could have also been used in the directors' interviews. (See Appendices B and C for the survey instruments utilized in these interviews.) A more open-ended approach would have resulted in more in-depth information on the directors' concept of regional planning. This would have provided a better basis of comparison and perhaps revealed greater differences of opinions.

Several areas deserving future research have been brought out as a result of this study. A similar study in the future (e.g., five years) is suggested to explore the evolving role of regional planning, particularly in respect to the effectiveness of regional planning. Changes in perception by both regional planning commissioners and directors should be noted, as well as changes in staff activities. Many of the commissioners interviewed had been with

the regional planning commission since its inception and had in fact been instrumental in establishing the organization. New commissioners may not be as supportive of regional planning or may emphasize different roles. A random process of selecting the commissioners to participate in a future study is recommended to increase the possibility of reaching unbiased results.

It would also be interesting to look at the degree to which regional planning has become an accepted function by both local officials and the community. Has their level of awareness and support of regional planning increased? This would require surveying persons who are not involved with the regional planning commissions, such as local officials who are not on the Board of Directors and citizens. Opponents to regional planning should also be interviewed to understand the reasons for their opposition.

Observation of the interaction between the commissioners and the director might also provide useful insights into their relationship. Does the director initiate proposals and ideas or simply serve in an advisory capacity? Individual styles of directors in interacting with their Board of Directors could also be observed and compared to agency activities.

Another aspect of such a future study should include an evaluation of the effectiveness of regional planning. Measuring effectiveness is a difficult task which will require in-depth research. Several questions which could be asked are: Has regional planning assisted local governments in making better decisions in regard to the growth and development of their communities and the region? What activities have taken place in the region which would not have

occurred without regional planning?

As Federal and State funds become more and more scarce, the emphasis placed on regional planning by all levels of government may change. Greater targeting of funds may occur, placing greater emphasis on planning to determine where the funds are most needed and can be utilized to the greatest extent. Regional needs and solutions may play a greater role in the future. Indeed, regional planning may become a means of providing alternative and innovative solutions to regional and community problems.

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APPENDIX A

Research Proposal and Methodology for Kansas State University's Knowledge Transfer Study

Proposal:

A STUDY TO IMPLEMENT KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER OF EXPERIENCED REGIONAL
PLANNING COMMISSIONERS IN KANSAS.

Project to be conducted by:

The Center for Community and Regional Planning, Department of
Regional and Community Planning, Kansas State University, with
direction, review, and advice to be provided by the director
and staff of the Division of State Planning & Research.

Project Director and Staff:

Vernon P. Deines, Professor and Head
Ray B. Weisenburger, Associate Professor
F. Gene Ernst, Associate Professor
One Graduate Research Assistant
One Clerk/Typist

Brief Description of the Problem:

- a. Regional Planning in Kansas is in its infancy. State
Legislation describes the method for organizing a regional
planning commission and for appointing commissioners.

- b. Unfortunately the newly appointed planning commissioner has little else to guide him or her in regional planning leadership and decision making. A commissioner becomes effective by mixing on-the-job training with individual research and past experience.
- c. Currently there is a *limited transfer* of the knowledge accumulated by experienced planning commissioners to new commissioners or to experienced commissioners in other agencies in the State.

Project Focus and Relationship to the Needs of Regional Planning

Commissions in Kansas:

It is expected that this project will focus on finding out what selected regional planning commissioners are doing, what they think the commission could or should or should not do, and what they perceive to be the benefits of regional planning to their region and to their communities. Nothing will be done in the conduct of this project to attempt to shape values of regional planning commissioners or to direct regional planning commission activities. The publication which will result from conducting this project should provide local commissioners, officials, and citizen groups with information which will assist them in the process of regional planning and development in Kansas.

Brief Description of the Proposed Project:

- a. General Objectives
 - a. To document the significant activities, as identified

by selected regional planning commissioners, of regional planning commissions in Kansas, including representative examples of successes and failures.

2. To identify projects and activities which the same selected planning commissioners think their commissions could or should or should not undertake.
3. To determine what the selected planning commissioners perceive to be the benefits, as well as obstacles to successes, of regional planning to their regions and communities.
4. To prepare a handbook for regional planning commissioners based on 1 - 3.

b. Proposed Methodology

1. Briefly review existing state legislation concerning regional planning commission operation.
2. Contact regional planning directors to inform them of the study and to obtain their ideas.
3. Identify commissioners to be interviewed using an elite interview procedure.
 - a) It is expected that at least two commissioners, including the chairperson, from each commission will be interviewed and a maximum of fifty (50) commissioners statewide will be interviewed. Input will be requested from:
 - 1) Each regional planning director.

- 2) Each regional planning commission chairperson.
 - 3) Director and staff of the Division of State Planning and Research.
 - 4) Others.
4. Collect demographic data on persons to be interviewed.
5. Develop interview guide.
 - a. The guide will be one page in length and will contain a minimum of key questions.
 - b. The guide's purpose is to remind the interviewer of the focus of the interview and to note suggested areas for further questions.
 - c. It must be emphasized that the interviews will be of value only if the interviewer is able to go beyond the stated key questions with related pertinent questions.
6. Arrange interview schedule.
 - a. It is expected that the majority of the interviews will be conducted during June and July. Follow up interviews will be conducted during August, if needed.
 - b. Compilation of material from interviews will take place during August and September.
7. Conduct interviews in regions at locations and times suggested by the persons to be interviewed.

8. Transcribe tapes without editing.
 - a. Unedited material should provide a great deal of valuable information.
 - b. This material will not be reproduced in the published document.
 9. Extract material from unedited transcriptions for the final published document.
 10. Prepare handbook for publication.
 - a. The handbook should not exceed thirty (30) pages.
 - b. It should provide a concise summary of what regional planning commissions are doing, what they could do, what they should do, and what they should not do, and of the benefits of regional planning activities.
 - c. Basic regional planning reference material may be included in the handbook as a brief appendix.
- c. Concluding Comment
- It is expected that the focus of this proposed project will be on finding out what regional planning commissions are doing, what they could or should or should not do, and the benefits of regional planning. No attempt will be made to provide commissions with direction in any way.

Project Activity Dates:

This research project will be completed between June 1, 1976, and October 31, 1976.

APPENDIX B

Interview Form for Kansas State University's Knowledge Transfer Study

INTERVIEW FORM

Arrangements (Interviewer should discuss this with persons to be interviewed)

1. Give each person to be interviewed a copy of this interview form.
2. Tell them that research procedures at Kansas State University require us to get a written statement from them agreeing to be interviewed.
3. Tell them that there are two options for assembling the information described in this form. They are:
 - a. They can take this and develop a written statement, or
 - b. We will interview them asking these questions and adding related ones.
4. Tell them that we prefer option b., because we think we can gain a better understanding of the material covered if we can talk about it.
5. May we record the interview on tape?
 - a. We will have the interview typed up from the tape.
 - b. It will then be sent to you so that you can cross out any comments or statements that do not appear to be correct.
 - c. Nothing will be released without your signed approval. The form you have signed says that you have agreed to be interviewed. You still have not agreed to have your interview released.
6. We do not have a time limit set for our talk. We want to get your opinions - we can go from 20 minutes to two hours - or more.
7. However, we expect that we will need about one or one and one-half hours of your time.

INTERVIEW FORM

Preamble

1. Professional Planners, including teachers, have assumed that they are knowledgeable and unbiased.
2. We have studied regional planning and think we know something about it and the benefits that can result. However, it is beginning to be apparent that many planners, (although, maybe not the ones you are working with), have paid little attention to the ideas and proposals of experienced planning commissioners.
3. Frankly, no one has spent very much time talking to planning commissioners except for a few newspaper reporters.
4. Now that we have finally recognized our shortsightedness, we are here to listen. We are not going to tell you what to do, but rather find out what you think about regional planning. We want to record this conversation so that your good ideas and your good and bad experiences can be shared with new commissioners and with other planning commissions across the state.
5. We want to find out:
 - a. What activities your planning commission is currently undertaking.
 - b. What things you have done in the past that worked or did not work.
 - c. What things you did in the past that should be tried again.
 - d. What things you think your commission ought to do in the future.
 - e. What things you think your commission has no business being involved in.
 - f. What benefits you have observed in your community or region because of planning commission activities.

INTERVIEW FORM

Question #1

1. We have had an opportunity to review several documents from your agency so we know of some of your current activities. For example, we know that you are involved in
 - a. A-95 review activities
 - b. Technical assistance activities
 - c. Land use studies
 - d. Housing studies
 - e. _____
 - f. _____
2. How have these programs been going?
3. What other programs has your commission been working on this year?
4. Do you have many citizens involved in planning commission activities?
5. Do they help you with the programs?
6. Do very many people attend your planning commission meetings?
7. How does your planning commission fit in with the city and county planning commissions in your region?
8. How do you get along with city commissioners; how do you get along with county commissioners?
9. Have you had a lot of arguments over these programs with
 - a. citizens
 - b. city commissioners
 - c. county commissioners
 - d. others
10. Did the people in Topeka help you develop your current work program?

INTERVIEW FORM

Question #1 ----- page 2

11. Are the people in Topeka helpful? Do they pay attention to your needs?
12. Have you been able to see any results from this years' efforts?
13. Some of your programs appear to be concerned with regulating the environment. Do you have trouble with farmers or ranchers or others over these programs?

INTERVIEW FORM

Question #2

1. We are not familiar with the things you have done in the past except in a general way.
2. Could you tell us about some of the programs and activities you have been involved with that have worked well.
 - a. Why was this program not continued?
 - b. Should it have been continued?
 - c. Why was it dropped?
 - d. Do you think it should be started again?
3. Could you tell us about some of your past programs that did not work well?
 - a. Do you think that this program could be successful if tried again now?
 - b. Do you think that this program would work elsewhere?
4. Could you tell us about some of your programs that seemed like good ideas but that you are now convinced are not workable?
 - a. Do you think that it would be worthwhile for someone else to try these?

INTERVIEW FORM

Question #3

1. What activities or programs would you like to see started by your regional planning commission?

Examples (Interviewer should not use these unless it seems appropriate):

- a. Social Services:
 - 1) Law Enforcement
 - 2) Health
 - 3) Programs for the elderly
 - 4) _____ etc.
- b. Economic Development Stimulation
 - 1) Industrial development
 - 2) Business district enhancement programs
 - 3) Local industry organization (like that in Decatur County)
 - 4) Use of natural resources
 - 5) _____ etc.
- c. Environmental Development (Physical Planning)
 - 1) Land Use Planning
 - 2) Flood Control programs
 - 3) Recreation programs
 - 4) Community conservation and preservation programs
 - 5) Pollution control programs
 - 6) _____ etc.
- d. Governmental Reorganization
 - 1) Taxation
 - 2) Administrative reform
 - 3) _____ etc.

2. Do you think these programs would conflict with those of city or county planning commissions? Do you think some of the programs you have recommended should, ideally, be undertaken by groups other than regional planning commissions?
3. Do you have any thoughts you would want to share with us on how you think the regional planning commission should work with city or county commissions?

Question #3 ----- page 2

4. Can you tell us about some of the things that, in your opinion, regional planning commissions should NOT
- a. be doing at this time?
 - b. be doing in the future?

INTERVIEW FORM

Question #4

1. What is the payoff? Do you see this commission as being helpful to the region and to the communities and counties in the region?

Examples (Interviewer should not use these unless it seems appropriate):

- a. Staff headquartered locally with technical expertise.
 - b. A-95 review.
 - c. Response to local problems.
 - d. _____ etc.
2. Can you be a little more specific? Can you think of some examples of ways in which the planning commission helped the communities and counties in the region?
3. Is there some value to a region in having a planning director who can represent the region to the people in Topeka and in the various Federal offices?
4. Kansas is filled with examples of communities that have helped themselves in one way or another with business district redevelopment programs, recreation programs, health programs, consolidated law enforcement, etc. Another self-help example is the Kansas Community PRIDE Program which encourages citizens to become involved in various aspects of community decision making. Do you think the regional planning commission will help or hinder these local activities?

INTERVIEW FORM

Question #5

1. Can you tell us how your planning commission makes decisions on
 - a. the annual budget and work program.
 - b. critical, (and sometimes political), issues
 - 1) flood control insurance
 - 2) fishkills
 - 3) location of potentially hazardous activities such as
 - a) electric generating plant
 - b) regional or county land fill
 - 4) _____ etc.
 - c. housekeeping issues
 - 1) A-95 review
 - 2) _____ etc.
2. Does the planning director and his or her staff study the issues, large or small, and make recommendations for you to consider?
3. Do you like this arrangement or would you rather study the issues on your own and make a decision based on your study?
4. Which state agencies do you find most helpful?
 - a. Could you tell us why?
 - b. How could the state agencies be more helpful? Or, should they be involved at all?
5. What Federal offices do you find most helpful?
6. Do you meet persons from Federal agencies very often?
7. Are there Federal guidelines or directives affecting your commission that bother you?
8. At the moment your planning staff is quite small. What size regional planning staff do you think you should have?
 - a. Small staff of generalists who identify projects, develop programs with related contracts, and select and retain consultants to produce studies and make recommendations.
 - b. Staff of specialists that attempt to do all but the most complex studies within the agency without employing consultants.

INTERVIEW FORM

Question #6

1. You have a lot of duties, jobs, offices, and other things you need to take care of. How do you find time to be a regional planning commissioner?
2. What other organizations are you active in?
3. How did you get involved with regional planning?
4. Do you spend a lot of time outside meeting time talking to people, reading reports, and generally getting prepared for the meetings and decisions?
5. How do you decide where to spend your time when you have to choose between conflicting activities?
6. Would you accept reappointment to the regional planning commission?

APPENDIX C

REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY INFORMATION

Agency _____

Director _____ Location _____

Date _____ Interviewer _____

1. COMMISSION MEMBER PARTICIPATION: (Request copy of commission by-laws)

- a) Describe orientation program for new commission members, if any.

- b) List current standing committees, if any. (function and composition) (meeting frequency)

- c) List current technical advisory boards, if any. (function and composition) (meeting frequency)

- d) What percentage or number/total of commissioners are on a standing committee and/or technical advisory board?

- e) Can any commissioner attend any executive committee/council meeting?

Any standing committee meeting? _____

Any technical advisory board meeting? _____

What percentage or number/total of commissioners take advantage of this meeting attendance? _____

- f) How often do commissioners become involved in the "day-to-day" operation of the agency?

- g) How do commissioners interact with other local planning and development agencies and boards in the region?

2. STAFF STRUCTURE/OPERATION: (Request copy of annual report &/or work program)

- a) Describe director's concept of planning.

- b) List type, background and size of professional staff.

- c) Describe how professional staff interacts and completes assignments, e.g. weekly staff meeting and individual assignments.

- d) State additional professional staff needs, if any, in relation to current work projects.

- e) How does professional staff interact with other local planning and development agencies and boards in the region?

3. OPERATIONS:

(Indicate
Below)

- a) How is the annual work program prepared and adopted?

- b) Annual Budget?

(1) Staff preparation, standing committee review and approval (R/A), full commission R/A.

(2) Staff preparation, standing committee R/A

(3) Staff preparation, full commission R/A

(4) Staff preparation and R/A.

(5) Other (describe) _____

(Indicate
Below)

- c) How is A-95 review process handled?

(1) Staff review and approval (R/A).

(2) Staff R/A, standing committee R/A.

(3) Standing committee R/A, full commission R/A.

(4) Full commission R/A.

(5) Other (describe) _____

- d) What A-95 criteria is used and who developed it?

4. ACTIVITIES/EMPHASIS:

a) Technical Assistance to Local Government _____ % of 4.

(1) Implementation (sub-division regulations, zoning ordinances, capital improvement plans, etc.)
_____ % of a.

(2) Administration (personnel, records, purchasing, etc.)
_____ % of a.

(3) Grantsmanship and Procurement _____ % of a.

(4) Other (describe) _____

_____ % of a.

b) Local Planning and Development _____ % of 4.

(1) Has your agency prepared any CBD plans, trade area studies, economic development guides or other special studies for use by communities/counties in the region?

(2) Has your agency prepared any model codes/ordinances, financial guides or other implementation "tools" for use by communities/counties in the region?

c) Regional Planning _____ % of 4.

(1) What types of planning are currently underway in the region? (Check all applicable)

Aging	_____	Housing	_____
Criminal Justice	_____	Land Use	_____
Education	_____	Public Facilities	_____
Health	_____	Transportation	_____
Manpower	_____	Solid Waste	_____
Recreation	_____	Sewer/Water	_____
Welfare	_____	Other	_____
Other	_____		_____
	_____		_____

- (2) Which is the most appropriate descriptor of your agency? (Check one)

Multijurisdictional Organization (MJO) _____

Umbrella Multijurisdictional Organization (UMJO) _____

- (3) Do all the agency programs conform to commission boundary? _____ If not, describe the scope and process of inter-region programs.

d) Information/Public Relations _____ % of 4.

- (1) Does the agency have a public information officer?

- (2) Describe how press releases, newsletters and other information are issued (to whom, how often).

- (3) Does local/regional media activity seek agency information? _____

- (4) Staff time for public service speaking engagements to communities and organizations in the region.
_____ % of d.

- (5) Staff time for answering "day-to-day" inquiries from local citizens and private groups.
_____ % of d.

- (6) Describe the types of data that are regularly compiled for public information and planning related activities.

ATTITUDES OF REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSIONERS
AND PLANNERS TOWARD REGIONAL PLANNING

by

CINDI K. MERTZ

B.A., OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY, 1973

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF REGIONAL AND COMMUNITY PLANNING

Department of Regional and Community Planning

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1981

ABSTRACT

The lament of planners is the underutilization of their plans, which often end up on shelves without being implemented. The reasons for this problem need to be examined if planning is to become a more effective tool in the future development of our communities. The planner needs to be aware of how planning is perceived by other persons involved in the planning process--local elected officials, planning commissioners, and citizens. Most literature on planning is written by the professional planners on their perceptions of the role of planning; very little research is available on the layman's view of planning.

Local officials and planning commissioners are major participants in the planning process. Local officials, in particular, have authority to implement plans. Their perceptions of the role of planning and their relationship with the planner is believed to have an effect on planning performance. Other studies have indicated that the relationship between local officials and planners is affected by the compatibility of their views.

This contention was investigated in this report by comparing the views of regional planning commissioners in Kansas to their directors. A select number of commissioners from each region and their director were interviewed to ascertain their views toward the role of regional planning in Kansas. In addition, information was obtained from the director on the types of activities in which the agency was involved as well as the amount of time devoted to different activities. This

information was compared to the types of activities the commissioners and the director felt were important. All twelve regional planning commissions were examined individually and collectively.

This research was exploratory in nature; however, some inferences could be made. Relationships between views of regional planning and agency activities were noted as well as differences between urban and rural regions. Major discrepancies between the commissioners' and the directors' concept of the regional planning role were not found.

Overall, regional planning was enthusiastically supported by the persons interviewed. The regional planning commissions provided resources to the regions that would otherwise be unavailable. Regional planning roles receiving the greatest support were technical assistance, grantsmanship, and intergovernmental communication and cooperation. These views were reflected in the activities of the regional planning commissions.