THE INFLUENCE ON RURAL COMMUNITIES OF INTERURBAN TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

VOLUME II
TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: A MANUAL FOR SMALL COMMUNITIES
CHAPTER V: Development of Alternatives and Preliminary Assessment

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**Abstract:**
This research project, "The Influence on Rural Communities of Interurban Transportation Systems," was one of five conducted under the general title, "Transportation to Fulfill Human Needs in the Rural/Urban Environment." The research is documented in two volumes: Volume I: The Influence on Rural Communities of Interurban Transportation Systems, and Volume II: Transportation and Community Development: A Manual for Small Communities. The first volume is the description of the study process and the findings of the various research phases during the project. This document would be of interest to professional planners in regional governments having small, rural communities within their jurisdiction. The report may aid in facilitating their interactions with representatives of smaller cities and enhance their appreciation of the uniqueness of those areas as reflected in their needs and issues.

The set of planning guides contained in Volume II would be of interest to the community representatives. The guides are designed for the layperson and are written in non-technical language. The purpose of the manual is to promote a more informed participation in the national, state, and regional decision-making process as it relates to transportation, and to provide the basis for initiating and continuing comprehensive local planning for small urban places (cities and towns with a population of 25,000 or less).

**Key Words:** Transportation Planning, Small Communities, Rural Transportation, Transportation Impacts, Rural Planning, Planning Manual, Comprehensive Planning, Citizen Participation

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PREFACE

BACKGROUND

This document is one in a series developed as an outgrowth of research sponsored by the U. S. Department of Transportation, Office of University Research, through the Council for Advanced Transportation Studies, The University of Texas at Austin. The topic of this research project, "The Influence on Rural Communities of Interurban Transportation Systems," was one of five conducted under the general title, "Transportation to Fulfill Human Needs in a Rural/Urban Environment."

The overall objective of this project was to investigate the nature of interurban transportation influence on small "rural" communities (below 25,000 in population) and to assess the relationship between changes in the interurban system and the potential for growth and development of small communities.

The project consisted of four basic stages:

1. a review and analysis of transportation impact studies leading to the identification and investigation of areas deemed important to rural communities and intercity transportation systems,

2. an investigation of high probability areas of impact to ascertain data availability and appropriateness of various methodological concepts in studying transportation impacts on rural communities,

3. a detailed case study of selected rural communities in terms of their response, real and perceived, to changes in their intercity transportation systems and accessibility, and

4. the development and field testing of a set of transportation planning guides designed for use by the layperson in the rural community and the regional planner.

The research is documented in two volumes:

Volume I: The Influence on Rural Communities of Interurban Transportation Systems, and

Volume II: Transportation and Community Development: A Manual for Small Communities.
The first volume is the description of the study process and the findings of the various research phases during the project. This document would be of interest to professional planners in regional governments having small, rural communities within their jurisdiction. The report may aid in facilitating their interactions with representatives of smaller cities and enhance their appreciation of the uniqueness of those areas as reflected in their needs and issues.

The set of planning guides contained in Volume II would be of interest to the community representatives. The guides are designed for the layperson and are written in non-technical language. The purpose of the manual is twofold:

1. to promote a more informed participation in the national state, and regional decision-making process as it relates to transportation and

2. to provide the basis for initiating and continuing comprehensive local planning for small urban places (cities and towns with a population of 25,000 or less).

The MANUAL is divided into an executive summary and seven chapters, each individually bound and designed for use separately or in conjunction with others. The seven chapters are:

Chapter I. The Transportation Planning Process,
Chapter II. Transportation Impact,
Chapter III. Goals and Objectives,
Chapter IV. Community Inventory,
Chapter V. Development of Alternatives and Preliminary Assessment,
Chapter VI. Evaluation, and
Chapter VII. Glossary and Bibliography.
This document contains the fifth chapter of Volume II. It describes a process for developing and assessing alternatives. The purpose of the process is to provide the community with a procedure for the development of alternatives that can be related to defined objectives and evaluated against the community goals.

Because of the complexity of the process, the steps taken by one case study community are used as examples. The case study community may or may not have characteristics similar to those of your community. However, the categories of community problems and the procedural steps illustrated are generalizable to most communities.

The procedure consists of the four basic steps outlined below.

1. Refine the understanding of the problem
2. Develop alternative solutions
3. Make preliminary assessment of alternatives
4. Select viable alternatives

The procedure described in this chapter should be useful in developing objectives as described in Chapter III, Section 3.11. The development of alternatives to the development of "specific goals" necessary in the final production of objectives. However, alternatives do not become programs until they have been subjected to a more rigorous evaluation, as outlined in Chapter VI.
CHAPTER V. DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATIVES AND PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

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CHAPTER V
DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATIVES
AND PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

5.1 In the course of setting its goals and objectives and conducting an inventory, the community will have identified a fairly discrete set of problems. This chapter will continue the description of the planning process by suggesting a procedure for developing feasible solutions to the problems earlier identified. This procedure involves a series of steps moving from an understanding of the problem through the identification of alternative solutions to the selection of feasible solutions. The steps in the procedure are as follows.

I. Refine the understanding of the problem
II. Develop particular alternative solutions
III. Make preliminary assessment of alternative solutions
IV. Select most viable alternatives for evaluation

Each of the above steps will be amplified in succeeding sections of the chapter. Because of the variety of problems which may be encountered in a given community, the discussion will proceed by example, using one hypothetical community to illustrate the approach to the various tasks outlined above.

5.2 Once the residents of a community have identified problem areas and translated these into issues and goals, it is then necessary to refine the original understanding of the problems which the goals are intended to overcome. Often we think we
understand the scope and causes of problems, but a careful analysis may show that the scope is not what was imagined, that the causes are not what they were thought to be, or that the problem is actually one in a group of associated problems. Below are listed a series of steps and a set of questions which constitute guidelines for refining the understanding of a given problem.

1. Refine the understanding of the problem.
   A. Define the magnitude of the problem
      1. What kind of data is needed to define the magnitude of the problem?
      2. Is the data readily available or will special studies be needed?
   B. Determine the possible causes of the problem
      1. Are the causes primarily external, i.e., conditions outside immediate local control?
      2. Are the causes primarily internal, i.e., conditions which are controllable through local action?
   C. Identify associated problems
      1. What other problems would be solved if the one being considered were solved?
      2. What other problems must be solved first if the one being considered is to be solved?

Let us suppose, for the purpose of discussion, that a problem in a particular community is unemployment. The first step toward understanding this problem is to ascertain the magnitude and scope of unemployment and to identify appropriate sources of information. How many people are unemployed? What are their ages, sex, skills, etc? Is this information available? If so, where from? If not, how will you obtain it?
Let us suppose that in our hypothetical community it is clear from the number of welfare recipients and from the complaints received in public meetings that unemployment is a major problem. In order to determine the magnitude and scope of the problem, the city clerk begins examining available data. The best source turns out to be the state Employment Commission. However, the Commission's figures are broken down only by SMSA's and by counties. In addition, the figures are simply expressions of the percentage unemployed of the total work force. These two limitations 1) make it impossible to estimate the magnitude of the problem except on a county-wide basis, and 2) prevent any detailed analysis of the real scope of the problem since the composition of the unemployed labor force remains unknown.

Since "increasing the city's employment" was listed high on the list of community goals, the city fathers decide that a more detailed study is needed. The local Jaycee's express their willingness to help in conducting a survey of the town's residents. A form is mailed out which asks four questions:

1) Are you currently unemployed and seeking employment"
2) What is your age?
3) What is your education?
4) If jobs were available outside the community, would you be willing to move?

From the results, it is determined that those unemployed are primarily between the ages of 17 and 25 or between the ages of 50 and 65. The majority of the younger group have at least a high school education, while many in the older group do not. Most of the people in both age groups would prefer to remain in the community, though a substantial number of the younger age group would consider moving.

Once the scope and magnitude of the problem have been defined, one needs to determine the causes of the problem. Understanding the causes will provide clues for possible courses of action. For the
needs of community planning, causes can be divided into two basic categories - external and internal. External causes are those outside the community's control; internal causes are those which are subject to some form of local control.

If the causes of the problem are primarily external, the alternatives developed to address the problem will be primarily reactive. That is, the community must decide how it will cope with a condition imposed from outside. There are two courses of action that the community might take.

1) The community could do nothing and be content to accept the problem and its consequences.

2) The community can begin an investigation into the cause of the problem.

If the community selects the second course of action, the community will then have two choices open to it.

1) It may attempt to solicit outside aid and initiate an external course of action to alleviate the problem, or

2) It may decide that the problem itself cannot be solved, but that the community can at least mitigate the internal consequences.

If the problems are internally caused, the community has a wider range of options in formulating solutions to the problem. It has often been the experience, however, that these options are not fully explored because of a lack of sufficient investigation of community resources. The latter includes, in addition to physical and financial resources, legal controls and the human resources of concerted action to achieve a common end.
Of course, in most cases, there will be not a single external or internal cause, but rather a combination of the two. In our hypothetical community there are a number of causes for the unemployment problem. Some of them are externally caused and some are internally caused.

In the recent past, several industries, each of which had considered locating in the area, were quizzed as to why they chose to locate elsewhere. Among the most frequently mentioned reasons were the inadequacy of the town's rail service, the more suitable climate of other locations, and the fact that the local school system was not considered adequate for the children of transferred employees. The constitution of the labor force was also mentioned by some businesses as a problem. While potential employees exist in sufficient numbers, the split labor force was considered a liability in management terms. The cost of training would not be justified given the expected duration of the older residents' employment and given the fact that the community had not instituted vocational training as part of its education program. Finally, some complaints were received concerning the town's poor quality of public services.

As a result of the survey and other available information, the community was able to categorize the apparent causes of the unemployment problem as follows.

**External Causes**

1) Investment capital is not readily available for business expansion; i.e., the investment market is "soft."

2) Rail service to the community is inadequate due to (a) the poor state of repair of the roadbed, and (b) three transfers are required to move a rail car from the town to the nearest port (and major city) resulting in a 3-4 day trip to cover 100 miles.

3) Poor climate.
Internal Causes

1) The quality of the local school system is inadequate.

2) The unemployed labor force is predominantly young or old. Both groups are considered high risk in management terms because the cost of training will not be recaptured in the projected duration of employment.

3) Street and utility systems are poorly maintained.

4) Sewage treatment facilities are inadequate to handle new growth.

5) The bonded indebtedness of the community is near the current legal limits.

Clearly some of the above sources of the problem (the climate, the composition of the labor force) are outside the community's immediate control. Some might be brought within community control; improving the rail beds, for example, is a possibility, though the long-haul transfers would remain outside the community's immediate control. Remedying any of the internal causes of the problem will have to be considered in the context of the likely "pay off" -- would changes in these areas sufficiently improve the community's chances of attracting other prospective employers to justify the probable costs?

Associated Problems

By this point, you may have discovered several problems that are associated with the initial problem. The causes of the initial problem turned out to be problems themselves. What now needs to be determined is whether addressing the initial problem directly is the proper course of action or whether it is more appropriate to address associated problems. We must also decide which problems have the highest priority.

In our example community, we began with the problem of unemployment. We discovered that instead of addressing one problem, we were actually facing several associated problems: inadequate educational facilities,
inadequate service facilities, and limitations on financial resources. Since, at least at this point, the only apparent solution to unemployment is attracting external industry, our only choice seems to be to make the town's services more attractive to external industry. This means that we must find some way to expand the school system, to upgrade the streets and utility systems, to correct sewage treatment facility problems, and to address the problems of external transportation. Most of the problems are internal ones, but solving them depends upon the central problem of the community's financial resources, and hence upon its bonded indebtedness, which is near the limit. The problem which takes the highest priority, then, is clearly that of increasing the city's financial resources.

5.3 Once the problem, or set of problems, has been defined, the next step is to seek alternative solutions. At this point, you may have discovered that, in merely describing the problem, you are identifying potential solutions or, at least, alternatives to be considered. In some cases, however, having defined the problem will not suggest a possible solution by itself. In either case, the development of alternative solutions should begin with two related tasks.

1) Identify precedents for solving the current problem.

2) Reinvestigate the community's resources in light of the refined understanding of the problem obtained in Step 1.

The following questions may serve as guidelines for this step.

II. Develop Alternative Solutions

A. Have you seen this problem before?

1. In a similar community?

2. In a different community?
B. What solutions have other communities developed to solve similar problems?

C. Is there anything about their solutions that might be applicable in the formulation of your solutions?
   1. Approach to the problem?
   2. Actual solution to the problem?

D. Can their solutions be altered to fit your situation?

E. Have all external and internal resources been investigated?
   1. Sources of funding
   2. Sources of technical assistance

SIMILAR PROBLEMS

It may be useful to first determine whether or not your problem is unique and to what degree it might be unique. Have similar communities experienced the same problem, or have different communities experienced the same problem? The problem of defining similarity should take into account:

1) Size
2) Population characteristics
3) Employment characteristics
4) Geographic location
5) Image

SIMILAR SOLUTIONS

At the same time you are looking for manifestations of your problem in other areas, you are also looking for solutions. Is there anything about solutions tried in other cities that might be applicable to solving your problem?
A survey of others' problems and solutions may be conducted by examining a variety of professional journals, reports, and newsletters. It may be necessary to contact agencies likely to have access to such material with a request for information on problems similar to your own. A partial listing of agencies which should be used as a beginning include: (see Chapter VII—"Alphabet Soup")

1. University Departments such as:
   a) Dept. of Geography
   b) Dept. of Community and Regional Planning
   c) Dept. of Economics

2. National Professional Organizations such as:
   a) National Association of City Managers
   b) Public Administration Service
   c) National Institute of Planners
   d) National Association of Planning Officials

3. State Agencies such as the general offices mentioned below:
   a) Dept. of Community Affairs
   b) Dept. of Human Resources
   c) Dept. of Transportation

4. Regional Councils of Government

5. Federal Agencies (Regional or Washington offices) such as:
   a) U. S. Department of Transportation
   b) U. S. Department of Commerce
   c) U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
   d) Community Services Administration (formerly the Office of Economic Opportunity)
In our example community, the unemployment problem has been defined in terms of a series of related problems, the highest on the list of priorities being the limited financial resources of the community to initiate an upgrading of various public services. The leaders of the community appoint a task force to investigate solutions to various problems. From such sources as those listed above, the members of the task force begin building a library of community literature. At the same time, through the regional Council of Governments, the task force learns that a program is being developed which provides the services of a circuit city manager on a part-time basis to communities within the region. From the literature and with the help of the circuit city manager, the task force identifies several solutions to similar immediate and long-range problems in other communities.

It is discovered that one community with similar characteristics addressed the problem of unemployment by initiating a bus service to a larger city some 50 miles away. This bus service was arranged through a local bus company on a charter basis and paid for by user charges, complemented by a municipal subsidy. In a second community the problem was addressed by a combination of programs that involved substantial investment in public services (fire, police, health care, schools, and utilities) to create an environment conducive to attracting new industry.

If other communities have developed solutions that seem to have a reasonable chance of success in your community, as in the case above, more extensive analysis of their problems and the compatibility with your problem should be conducted. It may become evident under further investigation, that their solutions are only partially applicable to the problem in your community. In some cases the approach to solving the problem (e.g., through survey of community
residents, floating a bond issue) may be applicable, whereas in other cases the solution itself, not the means to achieving the solution, is what is applicable.

In our example community, the second of the two solutions (i.e., the expansion of services) would be the more desirable, given the town's negative image in previous attempts to attract new industry. However, the limitation of an already high bonded indebtedness prevents initiating a new improvement program, even though the approach would be a good one. As it turns out, upon an investigation of the similarity between communities, the other solution is a promising one.

An analysis of regional employment opportunities shows that some jobs are available, even though primarily for the younger unemployed. These jobs are located in communities not more than thirty miles away, and all lie in one general direction, making it feasible to reach them by bus within a reasonable amount of time.

Thus, one alternative solution to the unemployment problem becomes the development of a commuter bus service which will serve at least the younger residents of the community.

The objective at this stage of the analysis is to develop as many alternative solutions as is possible. You may find that you are developing solutions to associated problems as well as the initial problem stated, or that developing alternatives to associated problems will help expand the alternatives for solving the original problem. It is important not to eliminate any alternative prematurely and to investigate fully the resources available to the community.
The commuter bus service as a solution to the town's unemployment problem is relatively limited. It solves a portion of the problem for one particular group, but it does not address the total unemployment problem, nor does it address any of the related problems. Thus, the problems of increasing the city's financial resources and expanding city services remain, and only one limited alternative has been developed for the unemployment problem.

At this point, developing alternatives for solving the remainder of the unemployment problem, the problem of poor city services, and of increasing financial resources has become one task.

An investigation of external and internal resources reveals that alternative solutions to several associated problems may be developed. Local businessmen and merchants express interest in the possibility of creating an industrial development corporation. Federal funding is available for regional sewage treatment plants, and the regional Council of Governments informs the community that several other towns in the area are interested in forming a special purpose district for sewage and wastewater treatment. The town's state representative informs the school district that pending legislation will provide to small districts a greater pro rata share of the state's general fund for education, although there will be at least a year's delay before the formula is changed. At the same time, the community's planning task force learns that the state is interested in promoting the area for recreational use and that a scenic highway is included in the highway department's list of proposed projects. Thus, the possibility exists for meeting many of the town's problems by shifting some of its objectives away from industrial development towards recreational development, while still pursuing the original goal.

The development of alternatives is a speculative process, though it can be guided by 1) past experience and 2) a careful investigation of resources.
By the end of Step 2, you should have an array of possible alternative solutions to the problem originally stated by the community and embodied in its goal statement. (It should be pointed out that the problem as defined at the end of Step 2 may not be the same as that with which you began.) At the same time, you should have identified related problems, posed a set of alternatives for addressing these, and developed or redefined priorities. Once an array of alternatives has been developed, the next step will be to make a preliminary assessment of the solutions prior to the development of a specific plan.

Unemployment was the original problem which the residents of our example community identified as critical. As they have gone through the process outlined, they have defined associated problems and developed a list of alternatives which either address the original problem directly or address a problem which is perceived as related, e.g., transportation. The list includes the following alternatives:

1) Provide transportation to nearby towns for some of the unemployed.

2) Upgrade the railroad right of way.

3) Set up a development company to provide development capital to lease facilities to new business.

4) Work with the other communities in the region to establish a special purpose district for sewage and wastewater treatment.

5) Develop the recreational potential of nearby lakes and streams.

6) Promote the surrounding area as a development for second homes.

7) Develop the town itself to promote a character that would attract investment for recreational use.

8) Conduct a needs assessment in cooperation with the local school district to make the case for increased state funding of the local school system.
Note that in the set of alternatives only one directly addresses the original problem of unemployment. The others are directed at associated problems or problems which must be solved before the original problem can be solved. Finally, note that the problem which has now been identified as the highest priority, the need for increasing the limits on the present indebtedness, is not directly addressed at all. It can be solved only through an increase in revenue brought about by successful solutions to other problems.

Before the community can translate these alternative actions to specific objectives, following the process outlined in Chapter III, it must first conduct a preliminary assessment and select the most viable set of alternatives.

Preliminary 5.4 The preliminary assessment of alternatives involves testing each alternative against a number of questions to determine its feasibility. The purpose is to distill from a wide range of possible alternatives a few, particular, plausible alternatives. The set of questions involved in this step is outlined below.

III. Preliminary Assessment of Alternatives

A. Is the alternative politically feasible given:
   1. Local political views?
   2. Regional, state, and federal policies?

B. Is the alternative financially feasible?
   1. With community resources?
   2. With outside funding?
      a. State
      b. Federal
      c. Private
C. Are there any legal constraints that bear on the implementation of the alternative?

D. Are there any community controls that bear on the implementation of the alternative?

E. Is the success or failure of the alternative monitorable and measurable? (i.e., can the performance of the alternative be tracked?)

F. Are there any negative impacts, direct or indirect, which would result from the implementation of the alternative?

The community should have at least some of the information needed for a preliminary assessment from the community inventory discussed in Chapter IV. However, more information may be required to assess all of the alternatives fully. Hence, special studies may be needed in some areas to supplement the knowledge gained in the general inventory.

For each alternative, it will be necessary to determine whether implementing the alternative is compatible with local political views and with regional, state and federal policies.

Since efforts to encourage industrial re-location have not been successful, the leaders of our hypothetical community select as the first alternative to be tested the promotion of the local area as a recreational site. Nearby streams and lakes have always attracted some vacationers and even some weekend visitors.

Before fully addressing the question of political feasibility, the town's leadership has had to answer certain other questions.
- What is the community's official role in promoting recreation?
- Are all the necessary resources under community control?

As it turns out, most of the area which would be developed is adjacent to the community, but not under its control. Part of the land is under the control of the county or the State Parks Department,
but most is privately owned. The community's official role can only be a limited one, and hence the official support of elected state and county representatives will be needed. In addition, political support for promoting the area's recreational potential must come from a broader constituency than the town itself.

To determine the political feasibility of the alternative, the town council meets to discuss local attitudes. First, from recent experience with a proposed nuclear plant, the members of the council know that there would be fairly strong opposition to any changes which would greatly affect the environment. Thus, any proposed encouragement of development would have to be accompanied by measures which would ensure protection of the environment.

Second, the council knows that a large number of the private land owners in the areas where development would likely take place are farmers and have always resisted public access through their lands for fear of damage to crops. Thus, unless a change of attitude can be promoted, the majority of lands available for recreational development are publicly owned, i.e., under the jurisdiction of the county and the State Parks Department.

Prior to the meeting and as a standard procedure, the council must check on governmental policies and programs for the area which might serve as obstacles to or constraints on recreational development. A check with the regional Council of Governments reveals the fact that the area is included within the state's open space and recreation plan and that planning assistance will be available from the Council. From the same source, the town fathers learn that EPA and State Water Control guidelines will serve as constraints on the kind and quality of development allowable in the area.

The town council concludes that the alternative is politically feasible, but that there will be a variety of limitations on the kind of development possible.
Once the political feasibility of an alternative has been examined, the next task to explore its financial feasibility. The costs associated with the alternative must be estimated and likely sources of funding determined.

At this point, the town council meets with planning staff from the regional COG. Together, they decide that a more precise definition of "recreational development" is required.

The most suitable site for development is adjacent to a nearby lake which is large enough for water sports and fishing.

However, vehicular access to the water is marginal consisting of a few dirt roads and remnants from the days when a dam was constructed. New roads will need to be built and boat landing, docking, and servicing facilities will be required. Camping and picnicking areas should be provided. The question is, who pays? Will the county construct and maintain new roads and parking facilities? In not, what other funds are available for road construction?

The county officials decide that the county can construct the roads within its present budget. The COG planners determine that facilities such as boat ramps, toilet facilities, etc., can be funded in part with funds from the Federal Bureau of Outdoor Recreation. This money will cover 50% of the capital required. It is estimated that $2,000,000 will be required to construct the needed facilities. This will require $1,000,000 in matching funds from some other source. The State Parks Department has committed its funds for construction for the next five years and will be unable to provide any assistance. The county has indicated that it will reassess some private land adjacent to the lake and that the increased property value should yield an increase in county revenue that will more than offset the
amount required and will sell $1,000,000 in general obligation bonds
to cover the matching funds.

During determination of the financial feasibility of an alternative,
it will often be the case, as in our hypothetical example, that the
alternative will become more specifically defined. It then becomes
necessary to reexamine the political and legal constraints on imple-
menting the alternative.

The county's reassessment of the property along the lake shore is
predicated on the assumption that certain kinds of development will
take place in the area. The town father's are fairly confident that
the expected benefits of the development will be an inducement to
the property owners to accept the change in assessment.

They must, however, reexamine the question of legal constraints.
Meeting state and federal water quality standards prevents the use
of septic systems; this limits the kind of development possible
and may eventually require that public sewage and wastewater services
be provided. In addition, since the lake is a reservoir providing
drinking water for the town, the use of the lake and adjacent land
is under the control of the county water district. Consequently
some types of boats may not be permitted and the development of
adjacent land is limited to 5 acre tracts.

After the identification of legal controls which might have a
bearing on implementation, or require a re-examination of previous
considerations under the preliminary assessment, it is necessary
to examine areas of community control which might have an effect on
implementation. (For a review of Community Controls, see Chapter
IV, Sections 4.15 - 4.18.) A given project may, for example, con-
flict with existing plans, zoning ordinances, health and safety
codes, etc., or may require that consideration be given to altering these in order to prevent undesirable consequences.

As part of their planning activities, the council finds that a portion of the lake and adjacent land is within the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) of the town. This area will be subject to the town's sub-division controls, while other areas will not be. Since the town's sub-division controls are relatively stringent, requiring a curvilinear street system, sidewalks, and underground utilities, developers may seek to purchase land outside the town's ETJ, thus trading off the advantages of likely annexation for less cost. To prevent uncontrolled development, the city adopts a policy of not providing city services outside its ETJ unless the development conforms to the standards in its present controls.

An important question to be asked concerning any alternative is whether or not the proposed action can be monitored once it is implemented and whether it will acceptably advance the goal it is intended to serve. To answer this question, the community must determine the measure of change desired, the availability of information, and the acceptable level of performance over time. (See Chapter III, Section 3.11, for a discussion of performance measures.)

The goal behind promoting recreational development has been to reduce unemployment. The plans for development, as jointly worked out between the town, the regional COG, and the county, anticipate an increase in local employment which will reduce the unemployment level to 4%. Statistics are not readily available, but can be obtained from local employers or a periodic survey of households, a job which the local Jaycee's are willing to undertake.
The anticipated implementation time, however, is five years—based on county and highway department plans for construction and the COG's forecasts of recreational demand.

Thus, the alternative seems to have promise—it can be implemented, measured, and evaluated. However, the time delay still leaves the short-term problem of unemployment untouched. That is, for at least two years, recreational development will have a minimal impact on unemployment.

The assessment of an alternative in terms of its potential negative impacts is the final, but not by any means the least important step in the preliminary assessment of alternatives. The probable impacts should be assessed from the point of view of all the community's goals, not merely in terms of the immediate goal which the alternative is intended to serve. The assessment should include environmental, social, and economic impacts. The basic question is, would implementing this alternative create more problems than it would solve, or would it in fact be likely to serve the community's goals taken as a whole? (See Chapter II, Appendix A, for a discussion of a formal Environmental Impact Statement. This should help define the areas to be covered in an assessment of impact.)

With the aid of the regional COG and the State Department of Community Affairs, local officials have determined that the scope of the planned development would have the following negative impacts:

1. Increased highway traffic
2. Increased noise and pollution
3. Increased demand for county fire and police services
4. Increased demand on the town's services (road maintenance, utilities, etc.)
5. Damage to the ecology in areas adjacent to the lake
6. A loss of "community identity" because of second home residents.
Balanced against these negative impacts is the estimate of the following positive impacts:

1. Increased land value and tax base
2. Increased retail sales in local stores
3. Creation of approximately 100 local jobs during construction of the scenic highway and the boat dock facilities
4. Creation of 100 new jobs in service occupations following the implementation of the new development

In all, the community's unemployment problem and associated financial needs make this alternative a viable one in spite of the anticipated negative impact.

5.5 The preliminary assessment of alternatives is a process which should be followed, at least in part, for each of the major alternatives developed by the community to meet its priority problems. Many alternatives will be discarded before all of the questions outlined in the previous section have been addressed. Eventually, a set of viable alternatives will emerge as having "passed" most of the "tests" posed by a careful consideration of constraints, resources, and impacts.

It is important, however, to select for final evaluation more than one alternative. This means that the one or ones which seem most desirable along with two or three others which are at least feasible should be selected for final evaluation and development. This set of alternatives may then be subjected to the formal evaluation procedures discussed in Chapter VI.
5.6 This chapter has provided a process for the development and preliminary assessment of alternatives along with a lengthy scenario from a hypothetical community. This approach was taken in order to present, as understandably as possible, a complex process.

It should be emphasized that the procedure outlined in this chapter is complementary to the procedure for establishing goals and objectives (Chapter III, Section 3.11) and supplementary to the procedures for community inventory in Chapter IV. These procedures are in fact not sequential stages in the planning process, but aspects of a reiterative approach to systematically addressing community problems.
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