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DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS OF NAPA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

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Many developments during the past fifty years have brought about vast changes in land use in the area north of San Francisco.

I took a trip with my parents in 1911 from San Francisco to Lake County in northern California, a distance of approximately seventy-five miles, which involved first a horse-drawn surrey, two water passages on walking beam ferry boats, three changes of trains, the last of which was a wooden coach heated by a pot-bellied stove in the corner, and finally, a forty-mile trip over dusty mountain roads in a Conestoga stagecoach powered by eight horses, to reach our final destination. This trip took two full days.

Contrast this trip with a trip my wife and I took in 1965 from Europe: leaving about noon, London time, we landed in San Francisco, were met by friends who returned us to Napa, drove leisurely up the Napa Valley, did our food shopping, and arrived at our ranch at the upper end of the valley in time to prepare and eat our dinner—all this in one day.

Is it any wonder that the changes in transportation alone, to say nothing of the other marvels of technology, have caused changes in the use of our land resources?

Prior to World War II, transportation facilities and other urban type services pushed urban expansion mostly to the South Bay counties. With the advent of World War II, expansion began to extend into the North Bay area. This area, which is the center of a world-famed premium table wine industry, is besieged with growing pressures as an industrial and bedroom community.

During the late fifties, many discussion meetings were held in an attempt to find satisfactory answers to the problems these changes were bringing. These included problems of zoning and land use, taxation, efficiency in agricultural production, changes in crop and livestock patterns, and many more. Many organizations and county departments participated.

I have been asked by a number of my colleagues, both at the state and federal level, how we were able to solicit the understanding and support of county decision makers, both in and out of government, for

the program which eventually developed. We all know that mutual understanding is a vital and necessary ingredient of any public affairs program. However, I find it most difficult to try to explain to others how this understanding is achieved.

I suppose it is analogous to teaching a person to swim. Techniques may be explained but eventually the student either swims or does not and hopefully, if he does not, there is a lifeguard around to fish him out. *I do know that competence in subject matter, attention to the needs of those responsible for decision making, and utmost patience are required.* The steps related in this paper did not occur overnight and were the result of many months of effort, many small meetings, and hundreds of informal individual conferences.

It was, of course, necessary for us to convince decision makers that we did have something to offer which would be helpful to them. We had to be sympathetic to many people who had vastly different points of view and even different goals. We had to search for points of common interest, and for this reason from the outset, we talked about what they thought the area should look like thirty or forty years from now and thus avoided disagreements over immediate goals.

This last point proved to be the key to bringing together around a table people who would not even speak to each other on the street. Once this was achieved, we were ready to get down to a long-range look at planning.

In 1962, a seminar dealing with these problems was held on the Berkeley campus of the University of California. Two of us from Napa County attended this meeting.

Further discussions in Napa County indicated that the time was right for a meeting there of city, county, and other government leaders to examine, together with outside resource people, what other areas were doing in meeting these problems, to help us in deciding what alternatives were available.

Our first county-wide economic conference was held in May 1963. About 250 civic, agricultural, and governmental leaders attended. The proceedings were published and made available to leaders throughout the county and state, and an informal steering committee was established to continue examining future possible steps. This steering committee met from time to time and received assistance from resource economists at the University of California.

Additional data dealing specifically with Napa County were developed, and a second county-wide economic conference was planned and held

in November 1965. The conference was attended by more than 300 civic, rural, and government leaders, who examined the data and studied the implications for the area. The published proceedings of this conference continue to be used by planners and civic organizations.

An evaluation of the data developed for this conference indicated that while the information was useful and told us where we were at the time, it gave us no information concerning what might happen if conditions changed. What we really needed was a picture that not only showed relationships between sectors of our economy but also would provide us with a planning tool so that we could examine with some degree of accuracy what might happen to the total economy under assumed conditions of change. For example, what might happen if: The industry sector doubled? Agriculture were cut in half? Property taxes were doubled? Or any other condition we would like to assume?

It was at this point that our university research and extension economists gave us hope for a better planning tool. The tool was an inter-industry, input-output study. It gave us a matrix showing the interrelationships between all the segments of our economy which we chose to include. With this the effects of a change, such as a large increase in industry, on all other sectors of the economy could be examined. Funds were obtained under Title I of the Higher Education Act of 1965 to partially finance the project.

An area consisting of five counties north of the San Francisco Bay and including the Vallejo-Mare Island Navy Yard complex for Napa County was chosen for analysis after consultation with County Agricultural Extension Service directors and appropriate county officials.

Farm advisors in the five-county area collected the necessary data from agriculture and other appropriate sectors. Secondary data were obtained at Berkeley from census and other sources. Local leaders familiar with their particular sectors provided much needed data pertaining to their areas of interest.

From these data, an input-output matrix was built for the five-county area containing some 24 sectors. In addition, similar matrices were prepared for each of the five counties. These matrices were presented and explained to county officials, professional planning staffs, and industry leaders in each of the five counties by state and county extension workers.

This was not an easy task. In the first place, it was necessary to get their attention. Four important factors enabled us to do this:

1. The county government was faced with the problem of suburban

expansion, which was threatening both the tax base of the county and the premium table wine industry.

2. The Agricultural Extension Service had been operating in Napa County since the passage of the Smith-Lever Act in 1914 with a history of long tenure on the part of university staff members.
3. The Agricultural Extension Service is recognized for its objectivity and freedom from bias in coping with county problems.
4. I was personally favorably known by county officials and other community leaders, having been raised in the county and having been in frequent contact with officials socially and professionally.

To gain acceptance and understanding of the input-output study, the need for a more realistic picture of the economy of an area for planning purposes was discussed at the beginning of any meeting or conference on the subject. Then, a very simple, three-sector, hypothetical economy was developed, starting with dollars, following successive steps, and finally showing a completed matrix. In these discussions we explained that numbers themselves were not important but that relationships were.

As county extension staff members worked on this project and gained new insight into economic relationships, many of them adjusted their extension programs in line with current economic forces and problem solving.

As a result of this work, the Board of Supervisors in Napa County requested planning staff and other agencies concerned with county resource planning to make use of this tool in their own planning processes. They are doing this. By making certain assumptions, they can now estimate more clearly the effect of a land policy change on all of the important sectors of the county economy. One question of major concern is what effect either the improvement or the eroding of the table wine vineyards would have on the economy of the area.

Partially as a result of this study the county has developed a new zoning plan. This plan, coupled with state legislation known as the "California Land Conservation Act," will ease tax burdens on legitimate agricultural enterprises where a firm agreement is reached to maintain this land in agriculture for a minimum of ten years beyond the automatically renewable date each year.

Many potential uses can be envisioned for this type of input-output study. One of the disadvantages has been the lack of adequate data for nonagricultural sectors at the local level. Many of the nonagricultural data used in this study were secondary and tertiary sources and while probably inaccurate, at least are reasonably in the ball park, trendwise.

While the development of this economic tool in resource planning and policy development has been most fascinating and potentially of great use, the prime cause for my concern is that our Agricultural Extension Service personnel, at neither the county or state level, seem to be adequately tooled up either technically or emotionally to handle this type of project.

Also, traditionally, we in extension have been in the habit of making recommendations. The Agricultural Extension Service in California has developed as a production-oriented, problem-solving organization, either doing applied research and making specific recommendations or passing on recommendations from research conducted by others.

In the field of public affairs the situation is quite different. Those decision makers charged with policy need the best background information and economic tools that can be supplied, either through basic or applied research. The land-grant college system can produce this information and extension workers can interpret it to make it useful to these people. Once these tools have been explained and the information interpreted, the extension worker must not be involved in specific recommendations. The decisions must be left to the decision makers who must live with the results of those decisions. This is where the traditional extension worker falls into difficulty. He has been trained to make recommendations which, in effect, become decisions.

In agricultural production this role has served well for many years, but extension is not charged with the responsibility for decision making at the public policy level. Our role has been and should continue to be that of research workers and educators. If the Agricultural Extension Service is going to become more involved (as I believe it should) in the area of land use and public affairs, we need to train a new breed of extension worker who will recognize the necessity of developing good, useful information in this area and extending this information to the people and then have the wisdom and the foresight to leave it to those concerned to make final decisions.

This, then, is the lesson we have learned from our initial venture into this field. It is a challenging field and a subject for earnest study by those responsible for the direction of our land-grant college system in these changing times.

(A very limited number of copies of the material on interindustry relationships for Napa County, California, and of the teaching aids used to explain input-output are available for those who wish to pursue this subject further. They may be obtained from L. T. Wallace, Extension Economist, California.)