

# COMPARISON OF PLANNING ACTIVITIES IN SMALLER CITIES IN INDIANA, KENTUCKY AND OHIO<sup>1</sup>

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*Abstract.* Planning activities in smaller Indiana, Kentucky and Ohio communities were surveyed through a questionnaire. The surveyed towns were required to be free-standing cities and suburban communities were excluded from the study. Size, class and state of location provided a basis for comparing city planning activities. Kentucky, with its advanced program for supporting community planning activities, provided the most active situation for town planning. Communities in Indiana yielded the lowest level of planning activity. Cities with populations of 10,000 to 20,000 had more planning activities than smaller communities. Approximately two-thirds of the reporting towns lacked trained planners, and most of the towns surveyed had never received a planning assistance grant (Section 701). Most cities were zoned and usually a comprehensive plan had been prepared but planning as a continuing or on-going process was absent in most of the surveyed communities.

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The provision of city planning services is a function which is usually associated with larger cities and metropolitan areas. The development problems of the larger city are generally viewed by society as being serious. In contrast, society has given a low priority to the resolution of problems which are characteristic of smaller urban places with many people viewing smaller cities as being relatively ideal habitats. A considerable body of literature has been produced on the problems of smaller urban places (Beckman 1958, Flora 1974, Hanscom 1963, Mayer 1963, Northam 1963, Warren 1972). A brief examination of smaller cities will reveal a variety of problems, which include economic stagnation and population decline, traffic and parking problems, inadequate community facilities, land use conflicts, urban blight and housing problems.

Recently, the need for planning in smaller cities has been receiving attention. Some states have stipulated requirements for planning activities in smaller communities and have established assistance programs for implementing these activities. In 1954, the 701 plan-

ning assistance program was established by the Federal Government for encouraging community planning in smaller urban places (Finney 1968). Field examinations, however, suggest that community planning is almost non-existent in many smaller cities. It can be assumed that variations in the level of planning activities are related to the availability of state and federal assistance, community size, the nature of enabling legislation relative to planning requirements for smaller towns, and the attitudes of residents toward the provision of community planning services.

A questionnaire was prepared on the subject of planning activities and mailed to 251 communities in Indiana, Kentucky and Ohio. The survey instrument addressed 4 broad categories of planning activities: planning operations (questions 1, 2 and 3), availability of planning expertise (questions 3-7), the use of data sources (questions 8-10), and the receipt of federal planning funds for plan making activities (question 11) (See Appendix A).

## SELECTION PROBLEMS

The intent of the study was to survey all towns which could be defined as smaller cities in the 3 state area. Four definitional criteria were needed. The

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data collection and presentation procedures of the United States Bureau of the Census provided 2 of the required criteria. The Bureau does not publish any detailed information for communities of less than 2,500 population. Inasmuch as several of the survey's questions involved the community's utilization of census data for planning activities, the Bureau's definition provided the lower size limit for selecting cities. Moreover, the Bureau's format for publishing information provides an additional important division. Cities of 2,500 to 10,000 population have only a limited amount of data which is published. A much larger volume of statistical information is published for cities of more than 10,000 population (U. S. Bureau of the Census 1972). Returned survey forms were divided into classes of 2,500-10,000 and 10,000 to 20,000 population.

The maximum size limit for smaller cities posed a serious problem because almost any value between 15,000 and 25,000 population could be proposed. A value of 20,000 was chosen as the maximum limit for the cities which were to be surveyed because if a population value of 15,000 were used as the maximum size, the number of cities in the survey would have been too small. It was also noted that the social and economic characteristics of communities became progressively more diverse above the 20,000 to 25,000 population level. Frequently the governmental structure of the community became more complex above this 20,000 threshold, as suburban communities and unincorporated developments appeared beyond the city's boundary of incorporation. When suburban populations were added to the city's population the summed total was often more than 25,000. Columbus, Indiana and Chillicothe, Ohio provide examples of this type of peripheral development.

The deletion of smaller cities that were parts of metropolitan areas was a final problem. In cases where the suburb was immediately adjacent to a metropolitan center, selection was simplified. Recognition and removal of outlying suburban communities posed a serious problem and two criteria were used for identifying potential suburban communities: (1) the

population of the metropolitan center, and (2) the distance between the smaller city and the border of metropolitan development. Increasing progressively (according to metropolitan size) the distance criteria became large for conurbations such as Chicago, Cincinnati and Cleveland. The arbitrary distance criteria which was used required a space of 5 miles between the community in question and the boundary of urbanization for urbanized areas of 100,000 to 500,000 population. For urbanized areas of 500,000 to one million the distance criteria increased to 10 miles, and for urbanized areas of more than one million a distance requirement of 15 miles was used. Over 100 communities were deleted from the survey by applying the above criteria.

#### SURVEY RESULTS

A total of 251 communities were surveyed in the 3 state area and 95 communities (37.8%) returned the questionnaire (table 1). Eighty-nine Indiana

TABLE 1  
*Returned Questionnaires by State and  
Town Size Class.*

Location	% Responses	Tally
Indiana	31.5	28/89
Kentucky	32.3	20/62
Ohio	47.0	47/100
Pop. 2,500-10,000	36.3	71/194
Pop 10,000-20,000	42.1	24/57
Total Towns	37.8	95/251

cities were contacted and 28 (31.5%) responded. Sixty-two Kentucky towns were surveyed and 20 (32.2%) returned the survey. One hundred Ohio towns were contacted and 47 (47.0%) responded. Towns were also tallied by size class. The smaller size class (2,500-10,000 population) consisted of 194 cities of which 71 (36.6%) returned the questionnaires. The larger size class (10,000-20,000 population) contained 57 cities with 24 (42.1%) returning the questionnaire.

Almost all of the responses to the first question were positive with 88.4% of the

towns zoning land uses (table 2). Towns with comprehensive plans for guiding growth and development comprised 77% of the responses. Only 26.3% of the towns, however, had professionally trained planners who were employed by the city. An observed consequence of the absence of professionally trained planners was an inadequate treatment of community planning problems. Frequently, these towns had adopted comprehensive plans. The implementation of these plans, however, was a rare achievement. Similarly, zoning ordinances were enacted by these communities only to suffer from a lack of appropriate administration.

staffs, assistance from regional agencies and the services of planning consultants were totally absent in 6 of the surveyed cities. These communities lacked the fundamental requirements for providing the basic elements of community planning services. Thirty-four cities indicated that only one of the above mentioned 3 sources of planning talent was available.

The returned survey forms suggested a low level of activity in the use of data for planning. Forty-eight percent of the communities reported that census data had been used for planning purposes (question 8). For question 9 only 11.6% of the towns reported that they had used

TABLE 2  
*Responses by State and Class Size*

Question* (Abbreviated Form)	Indiana		Kentucky		Ohio		Total (All Towns)
	2500-10000	10000+	2500-10000	10000+	2500-10000	10000+	
1. Is land use regulated by zoning?	90.5**	100.0	81.3	100.0	82.4	100.0	88.4
2. Has your city adopted a comprehensive plan?	61.9	100.0	87.5	100.0	72.7	92.3	77.9
3. Is there a professional planning staff?	23.8	14.3	12.5	25.0	29.4	46.1	26.3
4. Regional or state planning assistance?	47.6	87.1	87.5	100.0	44.1	84.6	61.0
5. Complex answer!	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
6. Utilization of planning consultants.	76.2	100.0	50.0	75.0	85.3	92.3	78.9
7. Complex answer!	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
8. Use of census data?	42.9	71.4	31.2	50.0	48.1	92.3	48.4
9. Use of census tapes?	14.3	14.3	12.5	25.0	7.4	16.7	11.6
10. Use of planning data from other agencies?	33.3	14.3	12.5	25.0	10.7	36.4	18.9
11. Use of federal planning funds (701).	14.3	28.6	37.5	50.0	26.7	61.5	30.5
12. Complex answer!	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

\*In Questions 8, 9, 10 and 11, responses of "Unknown" are not tallied. Total values for these questions are No. 8=23; No. 9=27; No. 10=22; and No. 11=15.

\*\*Numbers indicate % of cities which responded positively to the question.

The use of regional agencies and planning consultants was common in smaller cities, with 61.0% of the towns relying on the services of regional agencies and 78.9% indicating that they had retained planning consultants. The availability of this resource, however, should not be construed as suggesting that planning was a continuing or on-going process in these communities. Less than 20% of the cities reported that the expertise of regional agencies was available as much as 50% of the time. Moreover, planning consultants were retained by only one-half of the communities during the 1970-1975 period. Professional planning

census tapes (table 2). Several of the survey forms contained remarks regarding the exorbitant cost of census tapes. The response for using data that was prepared by other private or public agencies was also low, with 19% of the communities answering positively. An unknown blank was inserted in the answer section for these 3 questions and the complete tally appears in Appendix A.

A final question examined the use of federal 701 funds for plan preparation activities. A primary goal of the 701 planning assistance program was to stimulate the development of planning activities in smaller cities. Moreover,

the federal planning assistance program was intended to promote the development of a continuing or permanent planning function in smaller cities. Only 29 (30.5%) of the communities reported that they had received funding from this source for the preparation of comprehensive plans. Almost one-half of the larger cities (10,000 to 20,000 population) responded positively to this question, whereas less than one-quarter of the smaller communities reported that they had received 701 planning assistance funds.

#### EVALUATION

Several premises are stated in the first part of the paper which suggest that some of the scores should vary according to either size class or state of location. It was expected that cities in the 10,000 to 20,000 size class would have more resources for providing planning activities. It was assumed that state assistance programs and state enabling legislation for planning activities would cause variations in the results of the study. Chi-square values were computed to test the significance of variations in the response pattern and significant values were obtained for the first 2 questions pertaining to the presence of zoning and the existence of a comprehensive plan relative to the influence of community size class (table 3). These values were invalidated

due to low expected frequencies:  $X^2$  values were voided in table 3 if 20% of the cells had an expected frequency of less than 5 (Segal 1956). Item 3 in table 3 generated very low  $X^2$  scores. Although an earlier section of this paper commented of this item's low positive response value (only 26.3% of the surveyed communities responded that a professionally trained planning staff was present), more differentiation had been expected in the response pattern for this question.

The use of regional or state planning assistance by smaller communities manifested a significant  $X^2$  value on a state by state basis, thus demonstrating the importance of differences in planning assistance programs and state enabling legislation. Most of the  $X^2$  value was produced by Kentucky's communities, emphasizing the role of the state's community assistance program. Question 6 yielded a significant  $X^2$  value on the use of planning consultants according to state. Ohio communities tended to depend on the services of planning consultants.

The 3 items on the utilization of data sources generated several significant values (table 3). The use of census data produced a highly significant  $X^2$  value relative to community size class. The high value was anticipated for question 8, inasmuch as more elaborate census data is published for cities of more than

TABLE 3

*Chi-Square Values for Surveyed Communities*

Question (Abbreviated Form)	Deg. Freedom	$X^2$ by Size Class	Deg. Freedom	$X^2$ by State
1. Was the community zoned?	1	4.26†	2	0.74
2. Had a comprehensive plan been prepared?	1	5.23†	2	1.71
3. Was a professional planning staff present?	1	.69	2	3.09
4. Regional or state planning assistance?	1	4.43*	2	9.07*
5. Complex answer!	—	—	—	—
6. Utilization of planning consultants?	1	3.11	2	8.95*
7. Complex answer!	—	—	—	—
8. Use of Census Data?	2	12.52**	4	9.19
9. Use of Census Tapes?	2	2.13	4	10.81†
10. Use of planning data from other agencies?	2	0.79	4	7.27
11. Use of federal planning funds (701)	2	5.98	4	9.24
12. Complex answer!	—	—	—	—

\*Significant at the 5% level.

\*\*Significant at the 1% level.

†Significant score but due to expected frequency values of less than five, the chi-square significance test was inappropriate.

10,000 population. Pronounced variations existed relative to the state of location for this item, but the  $X^2$  value was slightly less than the 5% level. Question 9, on the use of census tapes, generated significant  $X^2$  values relative to the state of location; however, the value was voided due to low expected frequencies. The expense problem relative to acquiring census tapes was mentioned above. The question on the use of data from other agencies also failed to generate significant  $X^2$  values.

The  $X^2$  values for question 11 regarding the receipt of federal planning funds (the 701 program) were marginal with quantities which were close to the 5% level. On a state by state basis the  $X^2$  value was slightly less than the required confidence limit. As in question 4, the Kentucky towns accounted for most of the variation. The  $X^2$  value for question 11 regarding community size class was 5.98 and the 5% significance value with 2 degrees of freedom is 5.99. The positive response pattern in the larger towns accounted for most of the  $X^2$  value.

Planning activities may be summarized by preparing a crude unweighted index. The first section of the paper divided the survey's questions into the 4 groups: 1. planning operations, 2. availability of professional planning services, 3. use of data sources, and 4. receipt of federal funds for planning activities. The index was constructed by selecting 1 or 2 questions from each group. Table 4 presents a tabulation based on the percent of positive responses for questions 2 (presence of a comprehensive plan), 3 (existence of a professionally trained planning staff), 4 (regional or state planning assistance), 8 (use of census data), and 11 (use of federal planning assistance funds). Question 3 was selected because it was identified with 2 of the 4 groups (planning operations and the availability of professional planning services). The selection of the other 4 questions in the index represented the author's opinion of the most appropriate item for each group.

The index clearly reflected the concentration of planning activities in the larger towns, which yielded an index value of 67.5 (table 4). This value compared with the mean value of 49.3, and the index

TABLE 4  
*Index of Planning Activity.*

Location	Size	Index Value*
Indiana	(2500-10000)	38.8
Kentucky	(2500-10000)	51.9
Ohio	(2500-10000)	41.4
Sub-total	(2500-10000)	43.0
Indiana	(10000-20000)	54.3
Kentucky	(10000-20000)	65.0
Ohio	(10000-20000)	75.4
Sub-total	(10000-20000)	67.5
Grand Total		49.3

\*The index values represent a summarization of questions 2, 3, 4, 8 and 11.

value for smaller communities, which was 43.0. Moreover, the index of planning activities showed that there were distinct variations in planning activities relative to state of location with Kentucky and Ohio having index values which were distinctly higher than those for Indiana. Generally, planning activity has received less emphasis in the state of Indiana. Local support for community planning has been less than enthusiastic. However, it should be noted that Kentucky and Ohio have received substantial benefits from a number of federal programs which have emphasized community planning (e.g., Appalachian Regional Council and the Tennessee Valley Authority).

Raw association values were used to explore the possibility of linkage between questions. Since the survey had a positive-negative format, conventional correlation procedures were inappropriate. Table 5 presents values for correspondence of positive responses between 2 separate questions. All questions were evaluated, except questions 5, 7 and 12 (the response format for these questions was inappropriate), and questions 1 and 9, which were characterized by a very uniform response pattern. The most important feature in table 5 is the variation between question pairs and the average response for that question. For example, 96.6% of the communities which responded "yes" to question 11 (receipt

TABLE 5  
*Association Between Questions Based on Percent of "Yes" Responses*

No.	Question	2	3	4	6	8	10	11
2	Adoption of Comprehensive Plan	--	29.7	67.6	81.1	56.8	20.3	37.8
3	Professional planning staff	96.0	—	56.0	92.0	72.0	26.0	44.0
4	Regional planning assistance	86.2	24.1	—	75.9	58.6	25.9	41.4
6	Use of consultants	80.0	30.7	58.7	—	49.3	20.0	30.7
8	Use of Census Data	91.3	37.0	73.9	80.4	—	34.8	47.8
10	Use of data from other agencies	83.3	38.9	83.3	83.3	88.9	—	55.6
11	701 assistance program	96.6	37.9	82.8	79.3	75.9	34.8	—
	Means from Table 2	77.9	26.3	61.0	78.9	48.4	18.9	30.5

of 701 assistance funds) also responded positively to question 2 (adoption of comprehensive plan). This value compares with 77.9%, which was the mean for the total population for question 2. With increasing positive deviations from the mean, the possibility of proportionally stronger linkage exists between questions.

A row-by-row examination of table 5 indicates that the availability of a comprehensive plan (question 2) was not associated with a strong planning effort on the part of the community. Scores for the question pairs are only slightly greater than the means from table 2. The question pairs of 2 and 8 (use of census data), and 2 and 11 (701 assistance program) manifested modest positive variations. Question 3 (professional planning staff) was distinctly associated with a well defined planning effort. This question was linked with distinct departures from the means for questions 2 (adoption of comprehensive plan), 6 (use of consultants), 8 (use of census data), and 11 (701 assistance program). Question 4 (regional planning assistance) was linked with questions 11 (701 assistance program), and 8 (use of census data). Question 6 (use of consultants) presented average scores. Communities that used census data (question 8) were strongly associated with positive response patterns for questions 10 (the use of data from other agencies) and 11 (701 assistance program). Positive departures also occurred for questions 2, 3 and 4 relative to this question. Question 10 (use of data from other agencies) was associated with a response rate which was almost double that of the mean for questions 11 (701

assistance program) and 8 (use of census data). In the case of question 11, all of the departures from the mean were distinctly positive except for the response to question 6 (use of planning consultants). Linkage patterns in table 5 suggest that a strong community planning effort could be identified with positive responses to questions 3 (professional planning staff), 10 (use of data from other agencies), and 11 (701 assistance program). A secondary linkage pattern would involve questions 4 (regional planning assistance) and 8 (use of census data).

In preparing the data for table 5, scores were first assembled on a state-by-state basis. In Indiana, 100% of the towns that received 701 planning assistance funds also received assistance from regional or state planning agencies. The association between these 2 questions was also very high in Kentucky. In Ohio the federal planning assistance program tended to be linked with higher positive response values for question 3 (existence of a professional planning staff) and question 6 (utilization of planning consultants). In preparing table 5, additional differences, which were oriented to state patterns, emerged regarding the use of census data and the use of planning data from other agencies.

#### COMMENTS

The respondents to the survey frequently commented on problems which were encountered in requesting 701 funds (question 12). One city stated that it had applied twice and had been rejected each time. Finally, the community put

up \$10,500 of its own money to fund the study. A number of the other responses focused on the issue of the 701 program. A study completed in 1967 by the Housing and Urban Development Department indicated that only 29.0% of the program's appropriations were being expended in small communities and counties. Furthermore, only 6.1% of the eligible communities in the Midwest received 701 funds between 1960 and 1965 (Hammer *et al* 1969). To this day the 701 program suffers from inadequate funding, and larger cities and metropolitan areas are better able to receive appropriations from the program (Cohen 1975). Recently, inflation has decreased the effectiveness of federal appropriations for planning and the 701 program has sustained substantial budget cuts during recent years.

Other comments reflected suspicions regarding the planning process while recognizing the need for zoning and land-use control. One response noted that the community's greatest problems were oriented toward developments which were occurring just beyond the city's boundaries. Funding for planning through the mechanism of the community Development Block Grants and through Section 208 (Water Quality) were also mentioned. A final series of comments given in answer to question 12 reflected on the need for planning: "Proper planning is crucial to small communities. We need more state and federal financial help", "We have never received a grant of any kind but certainly need several", and "Small towns have the same problems as larger ones, it is just that the degree is different." Perhaps one of the most illuminating comments received was: "What are 701 funds?"

#### IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

A severe problem of continuity exists for planning activities in smaller Indiana, Kentucky and Ohio cities. This is a problem that is neither new nor atypical to cities in the midwestern United States (Kaufman 1961). The 701 assistance program has provided assistance for only a small proportion of the eligible cities in Indiana, Kentucky and Ohio. The presence of a trained planner in the adminis-

trative structure of the surveyed communities was rare. By comparison it was noted that more than 90% of the 3 state region's 36 cities of more than 50,000 population have planning departments. Moreover, the problem of inadequate community planning services may be greater than the survey results indicate. Sixty-three percent of the communities in the 3 state area failed to return the questionnaire. If data were available for these communities, the percentages in table 2 might have been reduced.

The survey results suggest that smaller cities could be receiving more effective planning services. Improvements should be provided by enhancing the present state and federal programs. The most important problem is inadequate funding and the dimensions of the present assistance programs. These programs could be expanded to better provide for the needs of planning in smaller communities. Detailed manuals could be prepared regarding planning functions and activities in smaller cities. Either an existing state agency or a regional institution which contains a research library, that serves as a depository for federal documents, could serve as a data bank for smaller cities. This operation would require assembling and publishing data based on census tapes and other information sources. Educational programs channelling planning information to smaller communities could be instituted. Correspondence materials, short courses and newsletters would be candidates for educational programs on community planning. More encouragement could be given to regional agencies to provide planning assistance to smaller cities.

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## Appendix A

## CITY PLANNING ACTIVITIES IN SMALLER CITIES AND TOWNS

The questionnaire below is designed to provide information on planning activities in smaller cities and towns in Indiana, Kentucky and Ohio. Generally, state and federal tax monies are disproportionately expended on large communities. This is often rationalized in the belief that problems associated with land use control, growth and development are non-existent or unimportant in smaller towns. This questionnaire is being sent to over 200 city clerks in the states named above. From the information supplied by returned questionnaires I plan to examine local planning activities in smaller communities to test the belief that the type of problems identified above are non-existent in smaller towns. Therefore, your cooperation in returning this questionnaire is vital to the success of this project.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Are land use activities in your community regulated by zoning?  
84 Yes  
11 No
2. Does your city have an adopted comprehensive plan?  
74 Yes  
19 No
3. Does your city employ a professional planning staff? (A professional planner is defined here as a trained person with academic and professional background in city or regional planning).  
25 Yes  
68 No
4. Has your community received professional planning services from either a county regional or state governmental planning agency?  
55 Yes  
35 No
5. If Question No. 4 was answered YES, what proportion of the planner's duties involved your community?  
5 75% to 100%  
8 50% to 75%  
8 25% to 50%  
36 0% to 25%
6. Have private planning consultants been utilized for planning purposes in your city?  
75 Yes  
20 No
7. If the answer to Question No. 6 was YES, did the utilization occur during  
26 1975  
21 1970 to 1974  
15 1965 to 1970  
8 Before 1965
8. Has your city used published census data for city planning activities?  
46 Yes  
24 No  
23 Unknown
9. Has your community used census tape data for making city planning decisions?  
11 Yes  
55 No  
27 Unknown
10. Has your city used data gathered by other agencies such as the Sanborn Mapping Service, social welfare planning agencies, or a state agency such as the State Health Department or the State Workmen's Compensation division for making planning decisions?  
18 Yes  
54 No  
22 Unknown
11. Has your community ever received federal "701" planning funds for city planning activities?  
29 Yes  
51 No  
15 Unknown