

OBSERVATION POINT

Suburban New-Towns Idea Deserves Careful Study

By Philip H. Power
Publisher

For both the suburbs and the core city of Detroit, the central issue that must be thrashed out in the next 10 years is the kind of relationship that will exist between the two.

It is in this context that the far-reaching report proposing a twinned core city-suburban development of a "new-town" presented at the Metropolitan Fund's annual meeting last week is so important.

Prepared after a long study headed by Dr. Hubert Locke, of Wayne State University, and a team of national physical planners, social scientists, political scientists and economists, the report fleshes out the original idea of the "paired new-town."

It proposes simultaneous development of a new-town community in two sites, central Detroit and the suburbs (now being the nearest suburban site suggested to this area, out of 10 proposed.) The two towns would be linked by special mass transit system, and the labor pool in one would feed the industrial development in the other.

The whole proposal is a \$1 billion venture, developed over 20 years with private capital, providing housing for 100,000 and jobs for 40,000.

Around 75,000 residents would live in the suburban segment, in a trio of villages clustered into a town setting on 8,000 acres. In the core city, around 25,000 people would live in a 600-2,000 acre site.

JUST WHY should the Metropolitan Fund, which I think is about the best thing for this area since the Tigers won the pennant, devote so much time, money and energy to a plan which on the face of it looks like yet another pipe dream scheme?

Simple. It's trying to face up to the biggest problem facing this entire area.

As a special policy committee of Metropolitan Fund pointed out in a supporting statement, "a competitive relationship between peripheral development and central city rebuilding would be pointless... there must be peripheral development to accommodate the quantity of future growth, and there must be central city rebuilding to enhance the quality of that future growth. Selfish competition between the two necessities could cause both to fail. Rather, the two need to be joined."

In addition, the report strikes to the heart of one of the biggest problems of the

area: Unplanned, higgledy-piggledy development of the suburbs.

But most important, the proposal seeks to find a route to an accommodation between whites and blacks, whose conflict lies at the base of the suburbs-city clash.

As Dr. Locke told me last week, "The most tragic reaction to this proposal that the suburbs could generate would be to treat it as merely a device to get black people out into the suburbs. The proposal deals with the more basic problems of how do you plan development in a metropolitan area in such a way as to eliminate decay, chaos and waste of funds."

The real thrust of the proposal, thus, is that if the proper planned development takes place, to provide people-white and black - with a healthy environment, the problems of racial tension and city-suburb conflict are going to be solved.

CERTAINLY, a lot of the report sounds like pie in the sky, and therefore it can be easily criticized.

What suburban local government unit is going to allow a special development district to be created within its boundaries? Wouldn't the money to be

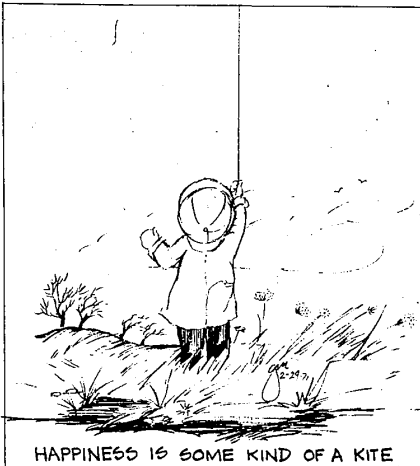
spent on the development - a massive sum, even by government standards - be better used benefiting a larger group than the 100,000 to be housed in the twinned new town? Will private capital actually support something as massive as this proposal?

But all the carping misses the main point: Up to now, our solutions for the suburb-core city mess have not worked. Money has been spent, but lit-

tle has happened; plans have been made, but little has been implemented.

The Metropolitan Fund study has sought to break out of the vicious circle of failure by proposing an entirely new look at the problem.

Under scrutiny, the new town proposal may prove to be defective. But it's a gallant effort, and as such it deserves the most careful consideration from this entire area.



Tim Richard writes

Kites Sign Of Spring

You can't really tell spring is coming by the home shows and garden shows, or even the boat shows, because those merchants work so far ahead of the genuinely warm season.

But you can't con a kid, and so the stores don't begin to peddle kites until the season is actually upon us.

Actually, kites are more a manifestation of winter's last gasp than the arrival of spring, but if kites are here spring isn't far behind.

UNLESS I'M missing something, however, I am spotting only two kinds of kites on the shelves and in the skies of our wind-swept subdivision. One is the traditional two-sticker, the other the box kite.

That's too bad. There are a lot of other exotic kites that can brighten our grey skies.

My own favorite, when I used to make them back in the Pleistocene era, was the star kite. You took three sticks of equal length and crossed them in the middle, giving you a six-pointed frame. With two lengths of string, you formed two partly-overlapping triangles, and there was your star.

With that kind of balance, the star kite needed a hefty length of tail. It also had a tendency to take plunges. But in a good wind, it was one of the more powerful kites in the meadow.

A little easier to handle was the granddaddy three-sticker, a modification of the standard kite. It had two backbones, instead of one, and a single cross stick. Its advantage was a lot of sail to catch the wind, and it was easy to handle.

FOR STICKS, you could salvage old, broken kites. It was better, though, if your dad had a power saw that could cut

slender sticks. You had to watch out for knots because a good wind would snap a stick at a knot.

There were those who said that newspaper was the thing to use for a kite, but with all due respect to my own product, this simply wasn't true. Newspaper is too heavy, and its softness made it tear easily.

If you use newspaper anyway, use the Observer rather than the News or Free Press. As an offset paper, we use a little better grade of paper than the dailies, which are printed by letterpress.

The best stuff was the tissue from the Hudson's or Federal's boxes. One sheet wasn't enough to make a full kite usually, so you had to be awfully careful gluing the seams.

The king of the kites was the box kite, but you had to have awfully good string, and you had to be extra careful in a strong wind. Because of their complexity and the ease with which you could lose one, however, I avoided them. Who wants extra disappointment?

THE TALES about snakes milking cows and porcupines throwing their quills are scientific nonsense, but Charlie Brown's tale about the kite-eating tree is the absolute truth. There are trees that aggressively attack kites. They don't do it by extending a branch as you might think; rather, they are more vicious, actually sucking the kite into the middle boughs.

A tree was more likely to be a kite-eater if it stood alone in a field. Perhaps a kite-eater's anti-social tendencies were caused by loneliness, perhaps by genetic perversity. But the truth is that such trees exist, and you want to avoid them.

DISSENT

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By ESTHER L. HEDFIELD
Farmington

I am fed up with the fulminating of American feminists. They are so outmoded they're new, like unwelcome styles. They say women aren't free; that they are exploited and underprivileged. Noise pollution!

Let's assume that most women enjoy bearing and rearing their children. But children grow up and go away, and that leaves a mother with a decreasing sense of importance. After all those years of living for others she's stuck with herself... and in middle class suburbia, usually a very busy husband. This gives her time to worry about what she wants to do. It's a disturbing time.

LAST WINTER I attended a 10 session program, "Investigation into Identity," sponsored by the Oakland University Continuum Center for Women. This program is built around testing and discussion to help women determine where to direct their energies. It was held at the Farmington Community Center, Jan. 14 through Feb. 11, 1970. The fee was \$85. Now you may think this a bit stiff, but it depends on how desperate you are.

The fact is, I was desperate. I have young children at home, but already I could project to the time when I'd be on my own with no one depending on me, and thus no role to depend on. It was a "Who am I and where am I going?" search.

Further, all my models had come off their pedestals, and I had to face thinking about what I wanted to do, for myself.

THE SESSIONS relieved my anxiety for a few weeks because I was "doing something." The encounter-group techniques were "fun and games," though not enlightening, because I had experienced discussing feelings in my church activities and with friends.

The testing was not enlightening either, because I already knew my abilities, and where there was disagreement between self-knowledge and the test, we were told to discount the importance of the test. For example, one test score rated me as being very reserved. My husband and friends hooted at that.

So, mad at the psychologist and the whole shebang, on the morning of the last session I started phoning around to see what my possible choices were. I stood at the kitchen phone in my nightgown for two hours and dialed one number after another, jotting down all the information. Did I feel vindictive? Did I feel angry? Yes! Did I feel good? Yes! Did I learn something about myself? Yes!

NOBODY ELSE could "do my thing." Nobody else could decide. As a matter of fact, nobody else cared but me! Oh yes, my family cared about my being peaceable to live with. But I had to spend \$85 to find out that it's my life and nobody else's. No god-figures existed to tell me what to do.

By taking my own initiative, I found out, piece by piece, what I did want. And it's an unfinished symphony, because I'll always have to keep on listening to my own strings.

So the program seemed like a bust! But it turned out to be just the kick in the pants I needed. Was it worth \$85? I have begun to think so.

R.T. Thompson writes

Growth Warrants SC Request

Schoolcraft College's Board of Trustees has finally come into the open with something they have been jawing about for several months—a request to voters for an additional mill for operations and debt retirement.

Matter of fact, the board had just about decided to ask college district electors for the additional mill a year ago but decided the timing might be bad.

The decision was reached in a special meeting two weeks ago—a session that not only was special but, more than that, was held with none present but trustees.

WHY? SIMPLY because the meeting was advertised on the bulletin boards at the college but no place else. Even the press wasn't aware of the session and wasn't told. Reporters did know such a meeting was to be held sooner or later for the purpose of deciding whether to request an addi-

tional mill and, if so, then to set a date for a special election.

Be that as it may, the trustees picked a date in September for a special election on the one issue—an additional mill for all-purpose use.

At the present time, the college levies 1.77 mills to homeowners in the five communities in the district including Livonia, Garden City, Clarenceville, Plymouth and Northville.

That, with additional state aid, is all Schoolcraft has to use for operational expenses and building construction.

WHY DOES the board feel it should ask for additional millage at this time?

The reasons, as explained by the administration, are: the college has reached the half-way point in its projected total enrollment of 10,000; it is now at a point where it must start work on Phase II of the building plans; it is rapidly ap-

proaching a financial bind in operational expenses with additional staff needed for the increased enrollment; and it isn't far away from contract negotiations with the Faculty Forum, which represents the faculty in bargaining.

Board representatives feel they must get plans for Phase II on the drawing boards as soon as possible, pointing to ever-increasing cost of construction.

They also emphasize that the college has asked for a millage increase only once in its 10 years of operation, and that was for .77 mills several years ago.

Its financial advisors have reported that present indications point to the state equalized valuation increasing at the rate of eight per cent annually for the next eight or 10 years. This would double the SEV in a matter of eight years, but board members quickly stress that the enrollment will probably reach the projected 10,000 well in advance of that time.

ONLY RECENTLY Gov. Milliken proposed a lid on enrollment at the state's large universities with the thought that community colleges could take up this slack.

That only leads to a prediction that within a six or eight-year period, the Schoolcraft enrollment will soar as high as 15,000. Automatically, it will involve an expanded building program inasmuch as 15,000 students will be 5,000 more than the projected 10,000 at Schoolcraft.

The trustees may take devious ways to get some of their ideas across, but it appears in this instance that this is solid thinking for the future.

Perhaps the voters won't think so when the special election comes up, but right now the board feels additional millage is necessary, and we agree with it.

Editorial & Opinion

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