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FINAL REPORT

FUTURES PLANNING FOR LCCAL GOVERNMENTS

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STATE OF MINNESOTA

Submitted to

Office of Local & Urban Affairs
Minnesota State Planning Agency

by

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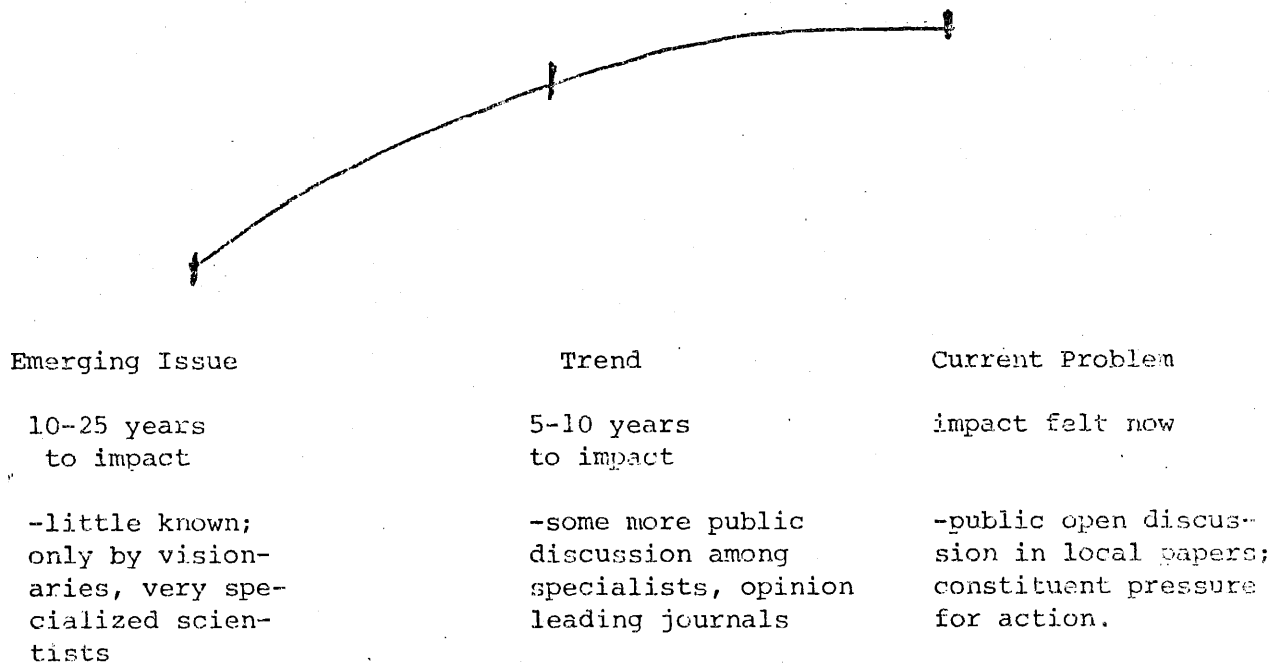
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FINAL REPORT
FUTURES PLANNING PROJECT

Project Background/Rationale

Futures has been called the art of planning so that an organization may be surprised by the future, but not dumbfounded. It focuses attention on attitudes, images and paradigms as well as specific techniques for forecasting the anticipated and unanticipated ramifications of today's decisions.

All public decisions deal with the future--the issue is how long term and how systematically the future is considered. Experts from the Institute for Alternative Futures in Washington, D.C. have pointed out why local governments find futures planning especially difficult: "City Commissions and County Councils like other legislatures are the places where current problems are often resolved. For a variety of reasons, however, local governments are often unable to anticipate emerging issues and prepare for them. The figure below is helpful for thinking about emerging issues.



"Local officials often feel that they can barely handle problems when they do become visible, much less seek out ones which can be deferred. Yet the energy crisis is a good example of why there is a need to anticipate. In 1970, local

governments might have acted very differently--particularly in their construction decisions--if they had been aware of future price increases in energy. In 1980, what are the counterparts to the energy crisis?"¹

Their Handbook on Local Government Foresight goes on to cite seven examples of local emergencies which could have been better anticipated and for which a quicker response capability could have helped, as well as forty unforeseen emergencies which local governments are likely to face in the next two to three years (1979-82) (See Appendix A-O)

Built into the question of inability to anticipate is the lack of motivation to engage in futures planning. This is often tied to an individual's conscious or unconscious image of the future, an image which is rarely examined or questioned. As the Handbook states, "Usually these images (both what might happen and of what he/she prefers to happen) are focused around this session's policies; sometimes the images and the assumptions on which they are based extend for a period of five or ten years. Seldom do they focus on the next generation, much less on two generations. Yet individual decisions based on implicit assumptions contribute greatly to the future that society is creating. Individually or collectively, they often have long-term impacts (an example might be development of a watershed for recreational use, particularly hotel construction). Most decisions involving capital investments have an impact lasting at least one generation (if not longer) and so do many social service programs (even those operated for only a few years)."

¹Bezold, Clement. Local Government Foresight, a Handbook Prepared for the Hawaii State Association of Counties Meeting, December 5-6, 1979. Washington, D.C.: Institute for Alternative Futures, 1979.

"Despite the importance of explicit and implicit assumptions about the future, legislators seldom have the chance to systematically consider the range of possible futures toward which society may be headed and toward which their decisions are contributing."

This project sought to translate this concern into alternative strategies for fostering futures planning by Minnesota local governments, taking into consideration both motivation and skill-building needs.

Project Objectives

The original objectives of the Futures Project included the following list:

- Develop a replicable program designed to foster futures planning by local government decisionmaking bodies and to present appropriate techniques
- Test a small-scale version of such a program focusing on a specific issue with a suburban community in September, 1980
- Evaluate the pilot program through interviews and other methods and incorporate changes as indicated
- Outline alternative programming strategies for use by other local governments

In actuality, the project was expanded to encompass an additional pilot session as part of a large annual conference. The following description reviews the details and results of both phases.

Project Activities/Results

A. PHASE I -- CITY OF BLOOMINGTON

The first phase involved the development of a small-scale version of a futures planning program in conjunction with a Housing Symposium sponsored by the City of Bloomington.

The Symposium had five overall objectives:

- To provide concise summaries of choices or significant alternatives for providing and maintaining housing.
- To paint a vivid picture of the housing future
- To challenge preconceptions about housing economics and demographics, and outline possible local government responses to these futures.
- To provide opportunities for dialogue between council members, commissioners, city staff and housing experts and practitioners.
- To provide a basis of shared experience which may eventually lead to a consensus on implementation of Bloomington's housing policies.

The program format developed by Bloomington staff addressed the housing information needs well, but was entrenched in current options and current difficulties. Program planners were aware that a futures planning component was missing, but were uncertain about the best approach to take. The Government Training Service worked with them specifically to tackle this programming objective.

A variety of futures periodicals were researched to identify possible methods as well as names of futurists who might be potential candidates to work with us in developing a curriculum. After screening several candidates, T. Lance Holthusen was selected. Besides heading a firm specializing in helping organizations prepare for the future, Mr. Holthusen is the former director of future studies for the Science Museum of Minnesota, a past president of Minnesota Futurists and has participated in several programs on housing futures with the Underground Space Center at the University of Minnesota.

We reviewed our preliminary ideas about the purpose of the session and possible approaches with Mr. Holthusen, and asked him to develop a plan to be critiqued by

Bloomington staff as well as our liaison to the City Council, Adrian Herbst.

The final outline for the one and one-quarter hour futures session is delineated below:

OVERVIEW--WHY THINK ABOUT THE FUTURE? (13 minutes-presentation)

- 4 Provocative Questions directed to Participants
- Paradigms of Reality
- Images of the Future
- Your Role in Creating the Future

DESCRIPTION OF SCENARIO TECHNIQUE (2 minutes-presentation)

DIRECTIONS FOR WRITING SCENARIO on "THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT"
(see Appendix A-1) (2 minutes-presentation)

SCENARIO WRITING (25 minutes-individual work)

SHARING SCENARIOS (25 minutes-individuals sharing within full-group)

GENERAL QUESTIONS/PARTICIPANT COMMENTS (8 minutes-dialogue)

- General reactions to what was shared
- Did your perception change during the course of the symposium?
(Would you have written a different scenario this morning?)
- Were your scenarios mainly negative or mainly positive?

CONCLUSION (5 minutes-presentation)

- Brief review of other Futures Planning Techniques

Approximately 70 individuals participated in the program, including members of the City Council, Housing and Redevelopment Authority Board, Planning Commission, civic leaders and staff. The entire program was video-taped.

Forty-five participated in the futures session and completed scenarios. This number reflected very little attrition following the previous topic. These scenarios were tabulated according to common components. A summary is included in Appendix A-2. Approximately seven scenarios were shared during the symposium--both volunteered and solicited-from representatives of various city contingents. After completing the scenarios, participants were asked whether they would have written a similar scenario that morning. All but two said yes.

Evaluation

The evaluation of the futures session was accomplished in several ways. The

videotape was reviewed and critiqued by representatives of Bloomington staff, the Government Training Service and the Office of Local and Urban Affairs. The futurist, Lance Holthusen, was asked to evaluate the session from his perspective, and to redesign such a session GIVEN NO CONSTRAINTS. Finally, telephone interviews were conducted with twelve participants (see Appendixes A-3 and A-4) to determine their reactions to the symposium in general and the futures section in particular.

Results indicated that the idea had merit but format and content should be fine-tuned.

General Comments:

Overview

- Good start but didn't live up to its potential
- Too much time was devoted to too little content; sounded canned
- Too open-ended; not specific enough
- Futurist should summarize trends identified during the day and project some implications
- Futurist should identify other societal trends which have been presented by famous colleagues (provide mind-expanders)

Scenario

- Effective summarizing tool for the day
- Responses affected by current media attention to housing
- Generally well received; people were attentive to the task
- Instructions could have been more specific in identifying components to address
- Should have had a more realistic timeframe
- Final Synopsis was instructive

General Presentation Style

- Needed more "discussion generators"
- Needed to show inter-relationship between various points

Sharing Scenarios

- Went well; Futurist was successful in getting a good mix of responses

Results of Telephone Interviews:

(See Appendix A-3 and A-4 for specific questions and results)

The interviews indicate that the futures session was considered to be an important part of the session. Ten out of 11 respondents would include a section on futures, if they were to design a similar seminar. Numerical responses regarding the session's applicability to decisions and impact on outlook fell in the

median range, with approximately half of the other topics rated higher and half rated lower. Respondents felt that the session did well in meeting its objectives, with approximately 75-80% responding "somewhat" or "yes" to each of the 6 statements. The two objectives which had greatest agreement were: Provided an introduction to the use of scenarios as a technique for discussion and decision-making, and provided an opportunity for participants to share ideas about future housing alternatives with each other.

Important Notes

The planning for this symposium was done in a very concentrated amount of time due to the fact that a pressing issue, mortgage revenue bonds, faced Bloomington decisionmakers. The short timeline meant that the futures portion was dealt with after much of the rest of the program planning had been finalized.

This presented several significant constraints: The Futures session could not be integrated into the entire plan. With more time, presenters could have coordinated material better for a more unified program. For example, demographics could have been better utilized as a futures exercise as well as for information. There was inadequate time for preparing resource materials or expecting registrants to do any pre-seminar preparation. Much value would have been derived from having registrants read common material, participate in a survey or delphi, or prepare a scenario ahead of time.

On the other hand, the fact that there was such a pressing housing issue made the topic more salient, insured high attendance and low attrition, and meant that participants had a higher level of knowledge than one might have anticipated about current housing problems. High motivation may have been a significant factor in their attentiveness to the scenario task.

B. PHASE II -- SIXTH ANNUAL PLANNING AND ZONING INSTITUTE

During the planning meetings for the Sixth Annual Planning and Zoning Institute, it became apparent that committee members wanted a session in which participants could actually translate the theme of Housing and Community Development: New Directions for Planning into future decisions for their own community. It was decided that an adaptation of the Bloomington session would be valuable. Larry Lee of the Bloomington planning staff was asked to build upon the experiences of the original program and develop an appropriate strategy.

The following objectives for the one and one-quarter hour session were selected:

- To explore methods for facing the future head-on with the assumption that if you know what you want to accomplish, you have taken a significant step toward achieving your plans for the future.
- To help participants summarize material on housing they have heard or discussed during the day and give them an opportunity to think about how they could apply this information to their own role in housing.
- To increase familiarity with techniques for planning for future and reduce apprehensiveness connected with "high-tech" terminology of futurists.

It was decided to retain some elements from the Bloomington session including the use of an overview and a particionary exercise. The overview was revised to become more of a summary of the day; the scenario became a questionnaire/worksheet. The latter was an effort to derive some of the benefits of the scenario techniques but in a more structured fashion. A shorter timeframe was used, specific indicators were requested, and a context for analysis was included. Several questions were based on extensively tested concepts. Change was the use of this document as the basis for brainstorming in small groups (which had been divided by city population sizes).

The result was the following outline:

OVERVIEW	(15 minutes-orientation)
Summary of day in context of remarks on nature of change	
Discussion of the inertia of housing	

Introduction to Survey of Your Outlook for Housing--1980 to 1990
Purpose of exercise
Instructions

SURVEY QUESTIONS 1 and 2 (15 minutes-individual)

GROUP DISCUSSION/GROUP RECORDING OF INDICATORS
(20 minutes-small groups)

SURVEY QUESTIONS 3, 4, 5 (10 minutes-individual)

SHARING EXAMPLES FROM GROUP (10 minutes-dialogue)

CONCLUSION (5 minutes-presentation)

Review of purposes/uses of the questions in conjunction with other tools
for futures planning

Difficulty of future decisions

Keys - achieving community consensus on what you want community to look like

A copy of the survey and the objectives for each of the questions are included
in Appendixes B-1 and B-2.

Only 50 of approximately 250 registrants chose to participate in the session
even though it was billed as a General Session. A special program on Conflict
Resolution held at the same time drew the majority of conference participants. The
result was a small contingent in a large room--spread out to follow the posted
population categories. Participants were consolidated during the small group
discussions.

Those who attended were attentive to the task and each of the small groups
had a lively discussion. The recording of indicators showed the presence of several
individuals who were skilled in that method of group summary. Survey questions
were generally completed with care: The first had lengthy responses and the in-
dicators were often quantifiable. The second showed good distribution across all
columns although patterns did emerge. Participants were willing to share examples
with the group as a whole.

Evaluation

Two methods were used to evaluate this session. The first was included as
part of the standard evaluation form for the entire conference. Twenty-four par-

ticipants rated the session (approximately 50%) on a scale where 1 is Inadequate and 5 is Effective. The results follow:

5	4	3	2	1	
(2)	(11)	(6)	(4)	(1)	Average 3.375

This indicates that the session was considered adequate to effective by approximately 80% of the participants.

Besides this positive response, the data derived from the participatory aspects offers further indications that the session was valuable. For example, when respondents prioritized indicators for question three, 30% were additions based upon the small group discussions. This indicates that participants did incorporate input from others.

The questionnaire technique allowed participants to differentiate between positive and negative components of the housing future for a community and develop a more realistic picture. In addition, dividing into small groups by population size seemed to make the discussion of indicators more meaningful for those involved. This was supported by the fact that very different responses emerged from different groups.

Important Notes

Due to the conference setting, we did not have the kind of "captive audience" present at the Bloomington Housing Symposium. This provided some interesting insights. First, conflict resolution is a far more salient topic than planning housing futures for many people! Beyond that, it was interesting to note the reticence with which people approached a room obviously set up for participation. Some attrition can be attributed to the perception of a potentially threatening situation. This supports the hypothesis that futures planning may need to be incorporated into an ongoing program, rather than rely on self-selection.

It is also important to realize that the poor match of group size and room site created an awkward, uncomfortable setting for the exercise. The program would probably have fared even better had the expected numbers been on target.

Recommendations

Our experience with this pilot project confirms that there is a need for and an interest in some type of futures planning. It also appears that the approach most palatable to local decisionmakers is to incorporate it as part of an educational program with a broader focus.

Both models tested during the pilot Project have value as first steps in creating an awareness of futures planning objectives and techniques. Possibly their greatest utility lies in increasing the motivation of local officials to look beyond this year's problems to next decade's ramifications. The evaluations have highlighted their strengths and weaknesses of these approaches which can be changed as required.

In addition, futurist Lance Holthusen made the following recommendations for revisions to the Bloomington session:

- *The moderator should not also be a presenter
- *Have the same person who gives the introduction and/or overview serve as summarizer with no other role
- *Incorporate into the overview session the question: Why is it important to think about housing futures?
- *In the first section on Trends For the 80's, incorporate the futures perspective. Talk about trends descriptively--What are trends? How do you use and interrogate trends? What are their strengths? Limitations? What are they now saying?

He also supplied his ideal model for a Futures Planning program given no restrictions, as delineated below:

- *Expand to at least a day-and-a-half.
- *Focus entirely on "An Introduction to Alternative Futures Thinking"
- *Utilize housing as the specific subject for both theoretical and practical sessions (or most salient topic for group).
- *The Process and Agenda would look like this:

Audience: A heterogeneous mix of elected officials, related staff, interested special-interest citizens, general at-large citizens.

Pre-Seminar Activity: A survey or modified delphi which would be aimed at identifying the participants' stream of consciousness--that is both their level of awareness as well as projections based on their image of the future.

This would be a help for evaluation following the seminar. It would also serve to demonstrate in a preliminary way an important tool.

Seminar Materials: A customized workbook including:

- theoretical materials
- reprints
- data and plans related to Bloomington
- descriptions, examples and instructions related to tools and techniques of alternative futures thinking introduced in workshop
- glossary of terms
- annotated bibliography

Seminar Agenda:

DAY ONE: 4:30-6:00 P.M. Registration (films or refreshments for those who are early)

- 6:00 P.M. Dinner
- 6:45 P.M. Overview and Introductions
- 6:50 P.M. Why Think About The Future (paradigms of reality and images of the future)
- 7:50 P.M. Discussion
- 8:15 P.M. Entertainment: e.g. The Brave New Workshop Revisits 1984 or 2020; or the Prairie Home Companion reviews Lake Wobegone in the year 1999.
- 9:00 P.M. Social
- 10:00 P.M. Retire

(The delphi would be used with several of the seminar activities.)

- DAY TWO: 7:30-8:15 A.M. Breakfast
- 8:30 A.M. An Introduction to Tools and Techniques For Thinking About The Future:
 - General Descriptions
 - Specifics: Trends and Trend Interrogation
 - Futures Wheel
 - Relevance Trees
 - Cross Impact Matrix
 - Product Matrixes
 - Decision Matrixes
 - Delphi Studies
 - Scenarios
 - Others
 - Basic and Popular Literature
 - 9:30 A.M. Discussion
 - 9:45 A.M. Break
 - 10:00 A.M. Trends and Trend Interrogation
 - 11:30 A.M. Futures Wheel
 - 12:30 P.M. Lunch
 - 1:15 P.M. Futures Wheel Continued
 - 2:00 P.M. Cross Impact Matrixes
 - 3:00 P.M. Break
 - 3:15 P.M. Relevance Trees
 - 4:30 P.M. Scenarios and Follow-Up Assignment

The follow-up assignment would use housing as an example. The activities related to each of the tools and techniques would tend to use housing as an example as well. The assignment would be to write a scenario at home and return it within one week. The scenarios would be printed, summarized, and shared with the appropriate group. They could, then, be the starting point for a subsequent more subject-specific seminar, e.g. housing.

This model has real merit, but assumes that a group of local officials will choose to take the time (and incur the cost) to sharpen their forecasting skills. Hopefully, there will be jurisdictions that will be inspired by the mini-session to devote more energy to futures planning.

The use of a specific subject as the context for learning a variety of futures techniques has particular value, making the time spent twice as productive. Another approach might be a series of shorter sessions, each of which focuses on a different technique. The key is to develop a level of decision-making expertise which can be used in the context of council, commission or board meetings.

A final note on the use of scenarios-----Although one Bloomington participant believed that they were too time-consuming to be used within the context of a council meeting, scenarios do have a number of advantages as pointed out in a report by SRI International, Center for the Study of Social Policy titled CALIFORNIA ENERGY FUTURES: Two Alternative Societal Scenarios and Their Energy Implications:

"The reasons for using scenarios is that they provide a framework to structure and gain perspective on societal issues that are outside the energy sector but that interact significantly with it. As such, they offer a new dimension over such traditional methods as economic comparison of options, energy-system and economic modeling, risk and cost-benefit analysis, decision analysis, and the like.

"The scenarios themselves are neither predictions of nor prescriptions for the future. Rather, they are two conceivable societal paths consistent with two contrasting sets of choices. . . The scenarios, then, seek to illuminate the range of

choices and to clarify the implications for the next 70 years of actions that could be taken over the next few years or decades. . .The scenarios. . .can help in making the required choices in the sense that they suggest relationships among choices, societal goals, and the effects of different decisions." (pp. S-3 to S-8)

Obviously, they are referring to sophisticated scenarios (as well as the Specific subject of energy) but the potential is there.

APPENDICES

Appendix A-0

Local Governments and the Future

Joseph Coates developed the following lists for local governments. The first deals with local emergencies in recent years which could have been better anticipated and for which a quicker response capability would have helped. The second list identifies forty unforeseen emergencies which local governments are likely to face in the next two to three years (1979-82).

Local emergencies which could have been better anticipated and for which a quicker response capability could have helped:

- (1) Asbestos pollutants in school construction
- (2) Dam failure
- (3) The BART tunnel fire
- (4) Evacuation from a major disaster site, as in Three Mile Island
- (5) Love Canal
- (6) The flu vaccine fiasco
- (7) Lead paint poisoning in old residences

Disasters and emergencies likely to affect local government in the next two to three years:

The following items are substantial long-term continuing risks at the local government level, and are of such a nature that they could occur at almost any time.

- (1) The Solar Energy Ripoff. As government moves in its inchoate way encouraging small, localized, fly-by-night activities to engage in solar construction, that technology will undoubtedly acquire the TV-repair/auto-repair bad name. What is worse, it will

cause a serious reaction at the local government level. This is a question that is fully tractable and avoidable, but government has to get off its hands.

- (2) Blackouts, Brownouts, Interruptions of Service. These are certainly likely to continue with episodes of hot summers and cold winters, as a result of energy interruptions and, more specifically, electrical interruptions. One can anticipate not only the effects that we have already seen, but perhaps more aggressive riots, crimes, and disruptions.
- (3) Vigorous Reactions to the Skyrocketing Costs of All-Electric Housing. Some policy interventions to anticipate, to deal with, and to mitigate an effective transition to other fuels or pricing policies is appropriate.
- (4) Water Supply Collapse. Particularly in our 25-30 largest old cities.
- (5) Water Supply Pollution.
- (6) Water Supply Shortages. Particularly in the relatively arid Southwest and West, where there is growing competition for water use in energy and agriculture.
- (7) Environmental Disasters From Hurricanes. As in Houston, Galveston, Padre Island, Southern Louisiana, both sides of the Florida coast, Key Biscayne. The potential for mass wipeouts of 500-5,000 people is real and very plausible in the next three years.
- (8) Environmental Disaster--Earthquakes. Certainly we are reaching the end of the earthquake cycle time in the San Francisco/Los Angeles area; the inevitable will happen. It is highly likely within the decade, and obviously likely within the next two to three years.
- (9) Floods. The riverine floods, such as in Orange County, California and other new flooding areas, as well as the old established flooding areas.
- (10) Nuclear Sabotage. Perhaps coming from a strike, protest, or environmentally-motivated movement.
- (11) The Problem of the Bag Ladies. The half-mad and the feeble-minded, released from mental institutions to halfway houses, are creating new kinds of urban blight over which there is growing dissatisfaction. After a few big episodes, there will be a major reaction at the

local government level, perhaps first hitting the states, but then soon to be realized as a reflection of federal policy. The generalized version of the problem is the halfway house.

- (12) Fires. Particularly in hotels and new large office buildings will create major crises in the construction, rental, and real estate industry. It will make the shirtwaist factory fire a wiener roast by comparison.
- (13) Polyurethane Poisoning. On a large scale from fires, this is a separate and distinct risk.
- (14) Collapse of New Structures. The episode in Hartford, with the snow load on the building, will undoubtedly occur in other places as a reflection of a variety of changing circumstances of design and financing of structures.
- (15) Landfill Collapse. Many new housing developments are in landfill areas, and collapse is likely to become a problem of growing concern, as is the more general problem of soil subsidence. The problem of soil subsidence will continue to grow as populations migrate.
- (16) Drugs in Schools.
- (17) Computer Fraud. Either in local communities or against local governments.
- (18) The Big Electronic Funds Transfer Heist. I forecast a \$500 million heist within the decade.
- (19) Striking Municipal Workers. This will undoubtedly occur as inflation and income lag hit increasingly distressed and aggressive municipal workers. A multi-force walkout of municipal workers--fire, police, sanitation, water works, etc.--may occur.
- (20) Transportation Disasters. Either involving toxic or nuclear material on trucks transported through local jurisdictions, particularly cities and towns.
- (21) Rail Accidents. Those involving toxics and substantial loss of life.
- (22) Air Crashes. Plane to plane, or plane to ground. The new sardine policy on airlines is without a doubt stressing the system.

- (23) Terrorist Action.
- (24) Resurgence of Diseases Long Thought to be Dormant.
Such as the Cholera in Louisiana shellfish.
- (25) Microwave Pollution. It is worth noting that the National Academy of Sciences is having trouble getting its act together on the microwave study that it is doing. When people in local areas realize that they are effectively bathed in microwaves, and that those effects are from many points of view unknown or questionable, we will have a substantial new critical problem.
- (26) The Declining Economic Base. This phenomena will eventually surface as a major national and local government problem.
- (27) Vermin Control. As we begin to ban more and more pesticides, rats, roaches, and other things will become more of a nuisance.
- (28) Ecological Risks. Harbor spills, harbor explosions, soiled beaches.
- (29) Explosions or Detonations, in Harbors and in Sewer Systems.
- (30) Aquifer Contamination.
- (31) Road Maintenance.
- (32) Inversion Layer in Contaminated Areas, as in Donora, Pennsylvania.
- (33) Tunnel Collapse.
- (34) Impact in Built-up Areas of Satellite Debris.
- (35) Elderly Unable to Pay Property Tax.
- (36) Lead Pollution.
- (37) Growing Indian Claims in Various Regions. These are creating major perturbations to the real estate market by tying up and stymieing land sales.
- (38) Boomtown Conditions.
- (39) The Success or Failure of Urban Homesteading.
- (40) Bicycle accidents.

DETERMINING A HOUSING FUTURE

or

"THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT"

I. WHY THINK ABOUT THE FUTURE?

PARADIGMS OF REALITY and

IMAGES OF THE FUTURE

HELP CREATE YOUR FUTURE

II. "THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT"

We'd like you to write a scenario.

A scenario is a story or narrative about a vision of the future. It focuses on very specific descriptions and details in your vision. Since all of us have different paradigms and visions this tool helps to give others a chance to see a wide variety of alternative visions of the future. This is your chance to be a visionary.

EXERCISE:

The year is 2000. Jack is 25 years old, is married, has one child and is employed in Bloomington as a junior computer programmer. His wife Jill is security control officer at the Metropolitan Airport. They are in a lower middle income range with a combined income of \$52,000.00. Their three-year-old child is ready for her second year in preschool.

Jack and Jill want to obtain a living place in Bloomington.

Using what you know and have heard today, write a scenario or a short story and in it:

1. describe the living place they will or can obtain;
2. describe the obstacles they will face;
3. answer the question with any comments you'd like to add: "Do you think this is a positive or a negative scenario about housing futures in Bloomington?"
4. On your booklet cover please write your name and address, and/or identify yourself by one of the following categories:

City Council
HRA

City Staff
Commissioner

Banker
Developer
Other (please name)

SYNOPSIS OF HOUSING SYMPOSIUM SCENARIOS

	COUNCIL 7 Responses	HRA 4 Responses	STAFF 18 Responses	COMMISSION 6 Responses	OTHER 10 Responses	TOTAL 45 Responses
HOUSING TENURE						
Own	6	2	7	5	4	24
Rent	0	1	3	1	4	9
Company	1	2	1	0	0	4
Other	0	1	5	0	0	6
HOUSE DENSITY						
Low-density	0	0	0	0	0	0
Medium-density	2	1	5	2	6	16
High-density	4	2	9	4	2	21
BEDROOMS						
Two	1	0	7	3	2	13
Three+	0	0	0	0	0	0
FLOOR AREA						
<500 sq. ft.	0	0	0	0	1	1
500-1000 sq. ft.	4	1	6	1	6	18
1000+ sq. ft.	1	1	0	1	0	3
DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS						
Open space	3	1	7	3	5	19
Clustered	2	1	2	0	2	7
Mixed use	1	1	3	2	1	8
Conversion	1	0	1	0	4	6
Roadway design	0	1	2	1	2	6
HOUSING SHORTAGE						
Yes	2	2	6	1	3	14
No	1	0	1	0	0	2
FINANCING ASSISTANCE						
Government	1	3	7	2	6	19
Company	1	2	4	0	0	7
Relative	2	2	2	0	1	7
Other	0	2	3	0	1	6
PERCENT INCOME ON HOUSING						
Less than 35 percent	0	1	1	1	0	3
35 to 50 percent	2	0	4	3	2	11
More than 50 percent	0	0	0	0	0	0
PERSON ^{AL} VEHICLES						
Two	0	0	1	1	0	2
One	2	0	4	2	5	13
None	2	0	6	0	2	10

SYNOPSIS OF HOUSING SYMPOSIUM SCENARIOS (continued)

	COUNCIL 7 Responses	HRA 4 Responses	STAFF 18 Responses	COMMISSION 6 Responses	OTHER 10 Responses	TOTAL 45 Responses
TRANSIT						
Public transit close to home, used regularly	6	1	9	2	4	22
Company transit	2	2	0	0	0	4
Transit service poor, not used	1	0	1	1	0	3
NEW TECHNOLOGY						
Computer	3	0	3	0	2	8
Cable TV	1	0	3	0	2	6
Transit	2	0	2	1	0	5
Heating energy	5	3	8	4	4	24
Other	1	0	4	1	2	8
CHILD CARE FACILITIES	2	1	6	4	2	15
OVERALL IMPRESSION OF SCENARIO						
Positive	5	1	9	2	2	19
Mixed	2	2	5	1	2	12
Negative	0	0	1	1	2	4
No answer	0	1	3	2	4	10
POSITIVE ASPECTS						
-Living-working-shopping- recreation environment	4	1	7	1	0	13
-Attractive built environment	3	0	6	0	2	11
-Energy conservation	1	1	4	0	3	9
-Attractive natural environment	3	0	3	0	2	8
-Transit availability	2	0	4	0	1	7
-Close family and friendship units	2	0	3	0	1	6
-Other better health care, employment opportunities, shorter work week, use of resources, less crime, fewer traffic problems	4	0	4	0	1	9

SYNOPSIS OF HOUSING SYMPOSIUM SCENARIOS (continued)

	COUNCIL 7 Responses	HRA 4 Responses	STAFF 18 Responses	COMMISSION 6 Responses	OTHER 10 Responses	TOTAL 45 Responses
NEGATIVE ASPECTS						
-Shortage of affordable housing	2	1	3	2	3	11
-Less mobile	1	0	4	0	0	5
-Less personal choice	1	0	2	0	1	4
-Higher densities	1	0	1	0	2	4
-Energy costs	2	0	0	1	1	4
-Other	1	0	0	1	2	4
less privacy, necessity for both adults to work						

Source: Department of Community Development, Division of City Planning,
City of Bloomington, Minnesota, October 1980

HOUSING SYMPOSIUM-TELEPHONE INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear _____

My name is Barb Winn and I'm with the Government Training Service. I'm calling some of the people who attended the recent Housing Symposium sponsored by the City of Bloomington. We are evaluating this type of program to determine its value for other local governments.

Would you be willing to spend about fifteen minutes answering some questions about it?

(If yes, thank them and begin).

(If they say it isn't a good time, ask when you can call them back).

A. 1. Which topic or speaker do you remember best from the Symposium?

2. What points did that speaker make which contributed to making that part of the program most memorable for you?
(probe to get as many points as possible - but be non-directive)

B. Now to refresh your memory, I'll list the major topics covered at the Symposium and ask several questions about each one. For these questions, we will use a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is low and 5 is high).

3. The first topic dealt with the impact of demographics on housing (Gillaspy). How would you rate that presentation regarding:

the amount of new information presented	1	2	3	4	5	NA	(Not applicable)
---	---	---	---	---	---	----	------------------

applicability of the information to decisions you have had to make since then	1	2	3	4	5	NA
---	---	---	---	---	---	----

4. Public's role in joint venture development (Caldwell)
How would you rate that presentation regarding:

applicability of the information to decisions you have had to make since then	1	2	3	4	5	NA
its impact on your outlook	1	2	3	4	5	NA

5. Priorities for housing development in the next 20 years (Caldwell)
How would you rate that presentation regarding:

applicability of the information to						
decisions you have had to make since then	1	2	3	4	5	NA
its impact on your outlook	1	2	3	4	5	NA

6. The premise that "concerns about affordability could lead to inappropriate public policy" (Swan)

the amount of new information presented	1	2	3	4	5	NA
applicability of the information to						
decisions you have had to make since then	1	2	3	4	5	NA
its impact on your outlook	1	2	3	4	5	NA

7. Potential impact of Congressional Action on tax subsidies for housing (Edson)

the amount of new information presented	1	2	3	4	5	NA
applicability of the information to						
decisions you have had to make since then	1	2	3	4	5	NA
its impact on your outlook	1	2	3	4	5	NA

8. Description of the magnitude and distribution of housing subsidies (Solem)

the amount of new information presented	1	2	3	4	5	NA
its impact on your outlook	1	2	3	4	5	NA

9. The use of mortgage housing revenue bonds to achieve clearly defined purposes (Solem/Swan)

applicability of the information to						
decisions you have had to make since then	1	2	3	4	5	NA
its impact on your outlook	1	2	3	4	5	NA

10. Specific problems of density and ways to deal with them (Jarvis/Putman)

the amount of new information presented	1	2	3	4	5	NA
applicability of the information to						
decisions you have had to make since then	1	2	3	4	5	NA
its impact on your outlook	1	2	3	4	5	NA

11. Clustered housing approaches (Jarvis/Putman)

the amount of new information presented	1	2	3	4	5	NA
applicability of the information to						
decisions you have had to make since then	1	2	3	4	5	NA
its impact on your outlook	1	2	3	4	5	NA

12. Why it is helpful to think about and plan for the future (Holthusen)

applicability of the information to						
decisions you have had to make since then	1	2	3	4	5	NA
its impact on your outlook	1	2	3	4	5	NA

13. Scenario Writing (Holthusen)

its impact on your outlook	1	2	3	4	5	NA
----------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	----

(ASK ONLY IF GIVES AT LEAST ONE HIGH RATING ON APPLICABILITY)

- C. In several of the topic areas I listed, you mentioned that the information presented at the symposium was applicable to decisions you have made since then. Could you tell me some examples of how you have applied this information? (Probe and prompt -- get as many as possible)

- D. The next group of questions deal specifically with the futures presentation at the symposium. There were several reasons for including a futurist in the program. For each of the objectives, we'd like to know whether you felt it was accomplished. Please answer YES, NO OR SOMEWHAT after each of the following statements:

DID YOU FEEL -

THE FUTURES PART OF THE PROGRAM. . .

(Ask for comment
if answer SOMEWHAT)

- | | YES | NO | SOMEWHAT | (Comments) |
|---|-----|----|----------|------------|
| 14. Pointed out the impact of today's decisions (whether planned or not) on the future | | | | |
| 15. Provided the opportunity for you to summarize for yourself what had been covered during the day | | | | |
| 16. Provided the opportunity for you to reflect on your values in the area of housing | | | | |
| 17. Provided an introduction to the use of scenarios as a technique for discussion and decision-making | | | | |
| 18. Provided an opportunity for participants to share ideas about future housing alternatives with each other | | | | |

19. Fostered a long-term view of housing decisions YES NO SOMEWHAT (comments)

E. 20. If you were to design a similar seminar, would you include a section which focused on futures? YES _____ NO _____ DON'T KNOW _____

(If No) Why?

(If Yes) Do you have any suggestions on how to improve the futures section?

F. 21. FINALLY, I'd like to ask you to rate the value of the symposium OVERALL on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is Waste of Time and 5 is Very Worthwhile:

Waste of Time			Very Worthwhile	
1	2	3	4	5

Thank you so much for your help. If you are interested in the results of this evaluation, they will be available from Larry Lee in Bloomington's planning department.

HOUSING SYMPOSIUM-EVALUATION SUMMARY

Total number of interviews conducted: 12

Names and positions of persons interviewed:

Larry Lee, Planner

Mary Alice Connor, Planning Commission Member

Audrey Kohlstedt, Planning Commission Member

James Lindau, Mayor

Roger Blessum, Councilman

Robert Darr, Councilman

Adrian Herbst, Councilman

Neil Peterson, Councilman

Thomas Spies, Councilman

William Berryman, HRA

William Belanger, HRA

Rick Geshwiler, Senior Planner

Results of Interview:

A. 1. Which topic or speaker do you remember best from the Symposium?

Craig Swan

Tom Gillaspay (demographics)

Jim Solem

Futures topic

Land Use & Design Session

Craig Swan

Bonding Authority - played devils advocate

Professor from U - took negative side rather than pro side - offered another point of view -- offered alternatives

Land Use and Design Session

Jim Solem

Bill Caldwell

Professor from U - laid out how differences do affect economy

Land Use and Design Issues

Land Use and Design Issues

Public Sector's Role in Housing Provision and Finance

Charles Edson

Marc Putman - Land Use and Design Issues

2. What points did that speaker make which contributed to making that part of the program most memorable for you?

Edson - Quality of the presentation; handles self well, real pro, added a lot of confidence to the symposium...gave the impression that he had been through this before - legitimized the whole process

Land Use - discussion on garage doors, driveways for small lot areas

- Seeing how other communities are dealing with density housing and street design issues
- in the interest of developing affordable housing, things usually are pretty blah...this session showed how we can be creative and still affordable
- offered good alternatives
- offered innovative ideas that are low cost - now know that we don't have to go with regular options (i.e. road widths)

Edson - Very good - effective, came with credibility

Solem - had alot of knowledge, background and experience (hands on)
Spoke realistically; got away from fantasizing - talked about being creative and imaginative

- discussed ability for community to sell corporate bonds to get reasonable interest rates to finance housing

Swan - discussed how whole issue has snowballing effect - he said to slow down - played devils advocate - said things I wanted to hear

- pointed out relationship between interest rates, affordable housing, etc.

Gillaspy - discussed impact of demographics on housing decisions for the elderly

Swan - tempered presentation; brought up points on side **that** may not have been thought of; make sure if you issue bonds, make them innovative - offer incentives; have restrictions

Holthusen - exercise was on projecting forward - a different approach

Caldwell - discussed problems with innovation in obtaining financing;
importance of private developers obtaining financing to
avoid government red tape - becomes developer's problem

3. Demographics	5	4	3	2	1	Average
Amount of New Information Presented	0	1	7	2	0	2.7
Applicability of Information to Decisions	0	1	4	4	1	2.5
Public's role in Joint Venture Development						
Applicability of Information to Decisions	4	2	3	2	1	3.5
Impact on Outlook	0	4	2	3	2	2.73
Priorities for Development in next 20 years						
Applicability of Information to Decisions	1	3	2	4	1	2.91
Impact on Outlook	1	0	5	4	1	2.64
Concerns about Affordability...						
New Information Presented	5	3	2	0	0	4.3
Applicability of Information to Decisions	3	6	1	0	1	3.91
Impact on Outlook	3	4	3	0	0	4.0
Potential Impact of Congressional Action						
Amount of New Information	3	0	3	5	1	2.92
Applicability of Information to Decisions	3	1	1	5	2	2.83
Impact on Outlook	1	3	2	4	1	2.91
Description of Housing Subsidies						
Amount of new Information	1	4	4	1	2	3.08
Impact on Outlook	1	3	3	4	1	2.92
Use of Mortgage Revenue Bonds						
Applicability of Information to Decisions	2	6	2	0	1	3.73
Impact on Outlook	1	6	3	1	0	3.33
Specific Problems of Density/Clustered Housing						
Amount of New Information	4	4	2	1	0	4.0
Applicability of Information to Decisions	5	3	2	1	0	4.09
Impact on Outlook	3	3	2	1	1	3.6

Why it is Helpful to Plan for Future	5	4	3	2	1	Average
Applicability of Information to Decisions	3	0	3	4	1	3.0
Impact on Outlook	3	0	3	3	1	3.1
Scenario Writing						
Impact on Outlook	3	2	2	1	2	3.3

C. Examples of how information has been applied

We are currently revising zoning ordinances - information presented has been helpful in deciding minimum lot sizes that could be used (alluded to angular facing of garage doors to street) slide presentation was helpful here

Affordability Discussion - Gave me a better appreciation for different factors involved

Info used to make decision on HRA proposal for medium density housing - i.e. traffic density problem

Proposal on Control Data plan - do not believe issues of environmental impact have been discussed or taken seriously

We are presently implementing the mechanics for issuing housing revenue bonds

Based on info received at symposium, turned down a couple of development proposals

Cities could be looking at and expecting improved confidence in decision-making - turned down a couple of developments - no aesthetic creativity, responded to market place dollar wise rather than housing wise; symposium gave us the confidence we needed to turn them down

Info will be used to help us meet our goals

Tabled project on Bloomington Ferry and Auto Club Road - came in with plans for fourplex's-all identical. Tabled it to look at other developments - felt they should have looked at more architectural aesthetics - more creativity, improvements - symposium gave me more confidence to make this decision

Planned development for Control Data - voted for project based on info received at symposium

Voted against condo project

Working on project now that may issue bonds- want to follow correct procedure. Helped me to see overall picture, other ramifications, other options, impact on price of homes; symposium tempered me

Helped with decisions on two projects we are currently looking at: Boisclair project at 98th and Normandale; Madsen project at 99th and Aldrich

Helped in discussion of housing development plans that have come before council
Dealt with first revenue bond issues and development housing plan

D. Futures Symposium

	YES	NO	SOMEWHAT
14.	7	4	
15.	6	3	2
16.	6	3	2
17.	8	2	1
18.	9	2	
19.	5	3	3

20. If you were to design a similar seminar, would you include a section which focused on futures?

10 YES

1 NO

21. Rate the value of the symposium OVERALL:

1	2	3	4	5	AVERAGE
(0)	(0)	(2)	(6)	(4)	(4.16)

Specific responses to futures section of program:

One participant felt that the conference discussed or alluded to a "hidden agenda" item all day; that is, the Control Data proposal. Felt that the futures portion of the program was included to deal specifically with this proposal and suggest that in the future, this type session be more hypothetical.

Another participant did not feel that the session presenter was effective. Felt he spent too much time with overview and discussion - felt the participatory portion of the program should have started sooner.

The presenter should have shared with us his point of view as a futurist... "I'm a futurist. Here is where it is going and here's why." Felt that the session forced people to write a scenario on not what they felt but rather what others wanted to hear.

Felt the session was too unrealistic...should make it more practical. Discuss matters at hand (i.e. comprehensive plan). Follow-up with consequences of your decisions. (Did not feel this type of exercise would work in a council meeting - no time, not practical).

One participant felt this exercise was really a waste of time...felt that they are already taking a long-term view of the future.

One person suggested that the scenario be written in a small group of 4-5 people. The group would discuss the matter and then write the scenario based on their discussion.

Totally unique and new to me. No suggestions for change.

One suggestion was to present this exercise at the beginning of the day - it would force the participants to think about what they hear the rest of the day.

Rick Geshwiler suggested that the group get together two or three times during the day to reiterate what had been discussed and to use this information to form the scenario. Also suggested that two or three people be selected and asked questions about their perception about the future using sensitivity-type questions (i.e. question value system, etc.) Once the values have been identified, the scenario writing exercise may be quite different since they may have to start thinking about what they would be willing to give up or change in regard to their values.

1. If the housing market in your community were operating ideally, what would be happening? How would this show up ten years from now?
(List as many indicators as you can)

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal black ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper appears slightly aged or off-white. There is no handwriting or other markings on the page.

- maintenance of existing housing?
- construction of new housing?
- relationship to other community facilities such as transportation, shopping, recreation, social and educational services?
- rented housing?
- density and type of housing?

2. A scenario prepared by the Stanford Research Institute describes societal conditions that might exist in the year 2000. Would these conditions be beneficial or detrimental to achieving the housing indicators you described in question one? *(Check one box in each row)*

	Beneficial	No Effect	Detrimental	Don't Know
A majority (but not all) of the population finds the pace of a high-consumption lifestyle basically unappealing. Consumption patterns change from emphasis on material wealth to greater emphasis on the quality of life.				
Population growth in large cities slows. Smaller communities in outlying areas absorb much of the population increase.				
The total number of households in Minnesota will increase by about 20 percent.				
Work patterns are very diverse; the boundaries between work, learning and leisure are becoming blurred.				
The proportion of household income spent on housing will increase about 40 percent				
Government tax policies continue to subsidize home ownership through deductions for interest and property tax expenses.				
Institutions, governance and economic activity have gradually become more decentralized				
Personal transportation is similar in character to today. However, vehicles are far more fuel efficient.				
Government strongly discourages energy use through energy taxes and development standards				
People have come to rely more directly on and participate more actively in their neighborhoods.				

3. Share your indicators from question one with others at your table.
Have someone record the indicators on a large sheet of paper.

- A. From this list compiled at your table, select three indicators you feel would be the most important to achieve in your community if existing or anticipated future obstacles were no problem.

(Write the indicators in the spaces below)

- B. A probability scale is printed below each indicator. What is the probability for achieving each indicator in your community during the next ten years?

(Circle the probability most closely approximating your answer. 1% is a very low probability and 90% is a very high probability of achieving the indicator)

Indicator (1) _____

Probability (1) 1% 10% 25% 50% 75% 90%

Indicator (2) _____

Probability (2) 1% 10% 25% 50% 75% 90%

Indicator (3) _____

Probability (3) 1% 10% 25% 50% 75% 90%

4. What is the population of the community you represent? (Check one box)

Less than 1,000
1,000 to 2,500
2,500 to 5,000
5,000 to 20,000
More than 20,000

5. What is your role in housing provision?

Member, governing body
Planning Commissioner
Professional staff
Consultant
Citizen group representative
Other _____

Please leave the completed survey at your table. Results of these surveys will be tabulated and published in Community Development Briefs and the Sixth Planning and Zoning Institute Proceedings.

Appendix B-2

SUMMARY/EVALUATION OF FUTURES PLANNING SESSION PLANNING & ZONING INSTITUTE

by Larry Lee

Outline of Content

Objectives: To explore methods for facing the future head-on with the assumption that if you know what you want to accomplish, you have taken a significant step toward achieving your plans for the future.

To help participants summarize material on housing they have heard or discussed today and give them a chance to think about how they could apply this information to their own role in housing.

To increase familiarity in the techniques for planning for future and reduce apprehensiveness connected with "high-tech" terminology of futurists.

Summary of day in context of remarks on nature of change: Many see change as a threat and inevitable, consequently they can only react to it. Moreover change is seen as a process which forces us to lose something--we move from the familiar to the unknown.

Alternatively we can and should see change as an opening-up process--a movement toward something we want to happen. From this viewpoint change represents a gain. Change need not be threatening if you can use it to achieve clear gains.

Discuss Douglas Porter's comments on change induced by the "doubling-twins" of interest and inflation. Illustrate how Charles Edson's comments showed new developments (new mortgage instruments, housing block grants) that could give communities more flexibility to achieve their particular goals.

Inertia of Housing Discussion of slow rate of addition to and replacement of housing stock because useful life of a unit expected to be 60-100 years. Acts as brake on rapid change induced by external circumstances. Comment on demonstration value of introducing new concepts in a small portion of housing inventory.

EXERCISE:

Question 1

Purposes were to:

1. focus on desired results and improvement; remove influence of existing obstacles
2. be future oriented
3. challenge old strategies, lead forward construction of new strategies (this is achieved as you proceed with other steps of planning process)

4. provide tool which is easier and faster to use than a scenario
5. emphasize it is futile to plan without knowing where you want to go

Evaluation

The objectives were achieved. Many people needed more space than provided on the sheet. Lead to very productive discussion at Question 3. Many people wrote in terms of indicators which are quantifiable (actually second part of planning process which we did not pursue). Many people spent full ten minutes completing this question. The concept for this question has been extensively tested, derived from work of the Center for Constructive Change, Durham, N.H.

Question 2

Purposes were to:

1. relate one set of future trends to indicators in Question 1
2. introduce participants to output from a scenario
3. describe purpose of a scenario (to explore implications of critical policy choices, scenarios are neither predictions of the future nor detailed plans for it)

Evaluation

The concept for this question was untested. From all indicators it worked very well. Answers were distributed across all columns although patterns do emerge. Many people found their indicators generally agreed with this scenario, which is Scenario 2, the low-growth scenario from the SRI California Energy Futures Report. I can also see a pattern emerging that shows while eight aspects are beneficial to housing indicators, two are detrimental. This shows that the question can be used to evaluate trade-offs within a particular scenario.

Question 3 - Group Discussion with recording of indicators

Three out of five tables had proficient recorders who appeared to have practice in the method of group summary. These were tables with largest cities. Only one table failed to get an adequate recording of options, however, the discussion at this table was good. They verbally shared their indicators, the recorder just didn't do a good job of getting the indicators on paper. Question 3A coopted indicators which were not used in Question 1.

Question 3A

Purpose was to prioritize indicators after a chance for discussion.

Evaluation

Worked fine; no problems completing this question.

Question 3B

Purpose was:

To evaluate perceived obstacles to achieving desired housing future and to act as a more sophisticated measure of attitude toward housing future instead of asking whether you consider this to be a positive or negative future.

Evaluation

This question was used in a delphi survey conducted by NEXT magazine. It appears to have worked well. Answers ranged all the way accross the scale. Individuals gave both high and low probability scores to indicators on the same questionnaire.

At end of questionnaire, I went back over questions explaining their purpose, why they were structured that way, and how they could be used in conjunction with other tools as part of a futures exercise. I also pointed out that many of these methods are processes we do in our heads all the time, the skill of futurists lies in getting people to formalize these thoughts in meetings or on paper so that communities can move toward a consensus on their view of the future.

Summary

1. Future techniques are not only for people in think tanks. They are basically writing down what you do in normal decision making.
2. Housing policy choices from here on will be more difficult because most of the easier decisions and decisions which can be made in relative isolation have been made. Housing choices will increasingly be made in concert with social and political choices in a host of other areas from economic development policy to environmental, tax and population policies.
3. One of the keys to dealing with this complexity is deceptively simple; achieve community consensus on what you want the community to look like, then broaden the base for this image of the future every time you get a chance.