

tioned, but it poses important questions and offers methods for problem solving more often than simplistic answers.

—Lane Jennings

■ Methods for Community Planning

The Community Planning Handbook

compiled and edited by Nick Wates. Earthscan Publications Ltd. Available from the Futurist Bookstore for \$24.95 (\$22.95 for Society members), cat. no. B-2370.

The Community Planning Handbook, edited by Nick Wates, is a useful resource guide for people who want to influence the design of their city or town. Wates's well-organized primer on community planning offers numerous ideas that could be helpful to "ordinary" people who are interested in organizing a local planning effort but may not know how to begin.

One of the book's strengths is its wealth of examples. Half of the text is devoted to Wates's selection of 53 methods for involving local people in physical planning and design projects. Each strategy is concisely presented in two pages, with checklists, photos, and useful tips. Many of the methods described aim to engage public interest in the early stages of a building project.

A design fest, for example, can stimulate community thinking about a specific theme by having teams of volunteer designers develop visual displays related to the project in a public space, such as a shopping center. The event, which may last for several days, encourages public comment and becomes an evolving exhibit-in-process; ideas generated by the design fest can then be presented and debated at a public symposium.

A second strategy is to create an electronic map of a community project—using 3-D images, aerial photog-

raphy, video clips, sound, and text. People can explore the map on computer terminals in cafes and libraries or at home, post their comments, and read what others think. Other methods for mustering community interest include model-building projects, interactive displays called "street stalls," and highly structured future search conferences, where a cross section of community members try to create a shared vision of the future.

Wates acknowledges that every community-planning process is unique and advises citizens to be flexible in their thinking. Yet many of the methods he describes could save citizen planners time by providing a range of options, and in some cases serving as models.

The Community Planning Handbook, attractively designed and well illustrated, presents a brief overview of general principles that can be applied to most community-planning

approaches. It also provides 16 short scenarios of common development situations, such as making use of derelict public land, creating a new neighborhood, improving the state of historic buildings, and regenerating an inner city area. The "Contacts A-Z" section lists organizations from around the world that offer support for community planning, with a heavy emphasis on groups based in the United Kingdom. —Dan Johnson

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