This bibliography lists books and articles dealing with the structures and processes of local politics in the U.S., especially as they relate to urban planning. The primary intent is to help planners gain the political knowledge and awareness they need to effectively perform their role in the community political process. All publications are listed alphabetically, with separate sections devoted to books and articles. (JG)
URBAN POLITICS: Selected Readings Related to Planning

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Gaining Political Awareness

In order for individual urban planners and other professionals in municipal bureaucracies to understand their place in the governmental process and consciously shape their roles in it, they must have a realistic awareness of the political dynamics of the community in which they operate. It is the rare professional urban planner who makes a permanent, or even a long-term, commitment to a particular community. Most planners are journeymen practitioners who move from one community to another. They are drawn, during these days of shortage of qualified personnel, by wide open opportunities for professional advancement up the ladder of increasing responsibility and financial reward. They are also often pushed by failure to get their plans accepted and implemented by becoming identified with one or another side in political controversy, or by being stranded among the "outs" when a new administration comes into power. Those urban planners who prefer to be mobile need a guide to understanding the individual political character of the series of communities through which they move. On the other hand, those who become attached to a particular community need to understand its political dynamics not only in order to play a meaningful professional role, but also to survive the vagaries of political conflict and change.

There may be excellent state and local planning and land use control laws on the books, but this is no guarantee that the community will be either attractive or functionally efficient. Regardless of the administrative arrangement for planning, independent commission or department responsible
to the chief executive, planning outcomes are determined by the nature of community politics. The successful urban planner, like the successful mayor or city manager, must understand the political forces operating in the community and recognize the importance of individual and group special interests in decision making.

There are two kinds of knowledge about community politics that the urban planner needs to acquire. One kind consists of the facts about particular circumstances of time, place, and personalities: who has been elected or appointed to what office; whose political star is rising or falling; who is working with or against whom; who has won or lost on what issues. The urban planner needs this kind of information so that he can follow the changing configurations of community power, understand how local governmental decisions are made, and avoid becoming either a tool or victim in the struggle for power.

This kind of knowledge cannot be obtained from books, but rather from practical experience. The literature of government and politics can, however, provide the urban planner with the second kind of knowledge about community political dynamics. This consists of general propositions about how disagreements arise, how protagonists of the issues interact, and the rules and practices by which political and other institutions mediate them. Banfield and Wilson suggest that this kind of knowledge will help professional people in the public service to "understand the setting in which they work and the constraints that the system imposes upon them (so that they may) work more effectively and with less strain to themselves. A city planner, for example, may learn from the study of city politics to be more aware of the limitations upon him and more tolerant of them. This may help him to make plans that are more likely to be carried into effect."1

For the urban planner who wishes to make a useful analysis of the politics and governmental structure of the community in which he proposes to help shape public decisions the important questions relate not only to the course of individual political careers or events, but also to the role of government in relation to the environmental, social, and economic changes taking place in the community. He needs a more comprehensive picture of local politics and government than can be obtained from casual reading and interviewing. He needs a map of public affairs carefully researched and systematically organized.

Understanding the nature of the community political systems will do more for the urban planner than help him to influence the course of local decision making or to survive the dangers of his exposed position in the crossfire between rival politicians contending for power. Political awareness can also help him to acquire a deeper insight into the planning process itself. Every plan for community physical development has allocative consequences. It is intended to change the existing pattern of "who gets what" in terms of such values as development rights for property, transportation access, quality of public services and facilities, and share in the tax bill presented to the community. Conscious of his intent to reallocate these values, the urban planner may become more sensitive to the political effect his proposals will have upon people with different, and often conflicting, economic and social interests. Because planning does affect patterns of community land value and other value allocation, it is not simply an objective technical exercise. It is an integral part of the community political process.

The important points to look for in these readings are the concepts political scientists have formulated. These will help to sort out the elements that constitute what at first glance appears to be the confusing political scene. The readings also point out the stakes that players have
in the political game, the kinds of strategies they use, and the rules by which they play. The influence that the nature of the governmental structure and the particular economic, social, and demographic configuration of the community have over the locus of power and the kinds of public decisions that are made are also described.

These readings may be of interest to planning commissioners, professionals in line departments who are responsible for program planning, and political decision makers as well as to professional planners. They are all participants in the process of making policy and planning decisions. Sometimes they even play, or attempt to play, each others' roles.

Editor's Note: The introduction to this bibliography is a modified version of Chapter 1 of a work on Politics and Planning to be published by the Bureau in the new year. This book will also include some selected readings from the bibliography which are considered by the author to be the most relevant.

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5. CPL Exchange Bibliography #177

BOOKS


6. CPL Exchange Bibliography #177


O'Rourke, Lawrence W., *Voting Behavior in the 45 Cities of Los Angeles County*, Bureau of Governmental Research, 1953.


ARTICLES


11. CPL Exchange Bibliography #177


Clark, Peter B., "Civic Leadership: The Symbols of Leg," paper delivered before annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, New York City, (September 1960).


