

## A SKETCH OF THE PLANNING-BUILDING PROCESS FOR COLUMBIA, MARYLAND

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*With the increasingly difficult problems of urbanization, it is critical that the planning profession reassess and revise its separate advisory status and join wholeheartedly in the city building process—the worlds of finance, construction, and social organization. Using the new town of Columbia as an example, this article attempts to describe some of the implications of this new way of working, where the concept of professionalism is not jeopardized by personal commitment and involvement. It is a description of a multi-disciplinary approach to planning and building, viewed as parts of the same process rather than separate activities.*

If creative things are going to be done about providing working and living environments for the seventy million people expected to join the American population by the year 2000, planners may need to reassess their role and function in light of prototype planning experiences such as that of Columbia.

The very concept of planning has merged with that of building and the evolution of a community. The Columbia planning team spans every field of interest. It includes at the outset urban planners and designers, economists, mortgage bankers, real estate developers, marketing and scheduling professionals, as well as experts on nursery schools and day care centers, housing, recreation, and health, to mention a few. Working simultaneously, the planning team organizes and relates myriad data and ideas to establish criteria necessary to attain the community's physical and social goals. Within realistically set economic limits, a delicate balance must be struck between efficient engineering practice, a positive sensual response, and maximum market acceptance. The planning of Columbia is being done "in house" by this kind of integral team where a vital part of the planning-building process is the daily feedback and continuity from concept to the concrete realities of construction and occupancy.

This comprehensive approach to the complexities of community building may well be indicative of the demands that may be put on planners in the latter part of this century.

### MOTIVATING VALUES FOR COLUMBIA

The traditionally detached role of consultant-planner tends to discount the need for personal value statements and commitment. Part of our past failures reflect the fact that skills and technique alone are insufficient to sustain the human qualities of the city as it grows through the rigors of the building process. The following statement by James W. Rouse before a committee of Congress in support