Walking, riding a bike, and taking a short car ride from home to work represent things of the past for most Americans. In many parts of the country, notably southern California and most metropolitan areas, the workers in a family face long commutes by automobile to and from their place of employment. This situation is particularly true for moderate income workers like teachers, fire fighters, nurses, retail workers, bank tellers, clerical office staff, and more. These and other members of the workforce that earn moderate incomes routinely can not afford to live in the vicinity of their place of employment. They must travel further and further away from their employment center until they can find housing that they like, that they can afford, and that is available.

Presented in this issue of the Shimberg Center’s newsletter is a summary of alternative techniques that local governments may want to consider as means of supporting the balancing of jobs and housing. These techniques are more fully described in the American Planning Association’s (APA) Planning Advisory Service publication PAS-516.

Also presented in this issue is a summary of a counterpoint paper by Wendell Cox of the Wendell Cox Consultancy near St. Louis and visiting professor at the National Conservatory of Arts and Trades in Paris.
Introduction

A community with a carefully considered land-use plan must still rely on the market conditions and developers’ decisions about the timing and mix of development. Local zoning and other land-use regulations control the location of development but they offer no control over the timing of the activity. Accordingly, there are a number of techniques that local governments may want to consider as a means to stimulate the simultaneous development of jobs and housing.

Allow Mixed Land Uses

Planners should consider amending land-use provisions of zoning districts to allow mixed uses. Areas zoned for commercial uses may not allow any type of residence in the zone. Yet, a residential unit positioned over street-level retail or office space can be a very appropriate and convenient land use. The APA recommends reviewing all zoning classifications for the purpose of insuring that compatible land uses are not specifically excluded.

Soften Separation Lines Between Zones

Rigid and inflexible lines of separation between land uses should be relaxed to support the balancing of jobs and housing. Local government planners should consider revising the land-use map and zoning ordinance to allow neighborhood commercial centers or employment areas at the edge of neighborhoods, at the transition from one land use to another, or at other appropriate locations as a means of supporting the notion of a jobs/housing balance. In addition to providing employment options, small-scale convenience centers can offer the neighborhood residents a walking or biking alternative to the automobile for some trips.

Mix Homes & Jobs in PUDs

The Planned Unit Development (PUD) offers a means of mixing different types of housing and nonresidential uses. Local planners should review their existing PUD ordinance to determine the types of land uses that are encouraged or required by the ordinance. The objective of this review is to identify ways to encourage or mandate the incorporation of compatible civic, office, and neighborhood commercial space in PUDs. Appropriate incentives should be considered for the developer as a stimulus for voluntary interest in enhancing the balance of housing with local employment opportunities. The PAS-516 paper points out that there is a minimum economic threshold that is required to support certain commercial activities. The example cited is that a population of 500 families is required to support a day-care center. Incorporating mandatory inclusion requirements will force planners to consider the critical mass requirements for supporting various commercial activities.

Home Occupation Regulations

Living and working in the same place is probably the ultimate job/housing balance. The regulations that control home occupations should be reviewed by local government planners for the purpose of expanding the variety of occupations that can be conducted out of the home while maintaining the nature and tranquility of the neighborhood. The review should focus on modifying restrictions that are unduly restrictive and the review may want to even encourage telecommuting.

Accessory Units

Sometimes referred to as “mother-in-law” units, accessory units are small apartment-like units added to single-family homes typically intended as a low-cost apartment for single-person occu-
pancy. Allowing accessory units in an otherwise low-density single-family neighborhood is frequently more palatable to the existing residents than encouraging development of large apartment complexes to accommodate the demand. This approach is particularly effective in areas with an abundance of jobs or college students. An important issue related to the accessory units is that of parking.

**Live/Work Units**

Live/work housing units are specifically designed and built to accommodate a business office in the home. Typically this arrangement may involve a separate entrance and off-street parking. Traditional neighborhood development (TND) regulations often have provisions for live/work units.

**Inclusionary Zoning**

Inclusionary housing programs require developers to include some number (or percentage) of the units in a newly developed subdivision to be sold at a price that is affordable to lower income families. The typical incentive offered to the developer is to allow an increase in density. The idea of the density increase is to reduce the per-unit cost of site development and thereby partially or completely compensate the developer for selling the set-aside moderate-income units at a price below cost. A basic requirement of the inclusionary zoning is that the lower-cost homes be indistinguishable from the market rate homes.

**Linkage Program**

A linkage-program is a technique in which a major development that will attract a sizeable workforce must provide or procure housing for the workforce that can not be satisfied by the existing local housing supply. In Florida, the term local is defined as housing being within a 10-mile or 20-minutes commute of the development. Determining the number and price range of the required units is based on a projection of the future workforce broken down into income categories and a comparison of the new demand for housing with the existing and planned available inventory. The difference between the number of units that will be available and the projected new demand represents the need that the developer must meet.

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**Counterpoint**

Not everyone agrees that a balance between jobs and housing location can be achieved. In 2003 Wendell Cox, of Wendell Cox Consultancy in the St. Louis, wrote *Myths To Live By: The Jobs-Housing Balance*. (See http://www.planetizen.com/node/76)

Mr. Cox points out that the average commuter in the US travels 12 miles to work each day. This average suggests that the interest, education, and skills of the job seeker and the requirements and preferences for the position that are imposed by the employer are not always matched by the employment opportunities found close to home. Cox also points out that more than 50 percent of the households have more than one worker and it is not unusual for these workers to go in different directions when leaving for work in the morning.

According to the American Housing Survey of households that have moved recently, only 22 percent cite convenience to place of work as the most important reason for their choice of location. Cox concludes that there is little hope for planners to achieve a jobs-housing balance if housing location choice is not based on conve-
nience to employment by nearly 80 percent of the households. He states, “It is people, not urban planning, that determines where people live and work.”

**Nature of the Problem**

In order to establish public awareness of the need for workforce housing, the Maine State Housing Authority produced the following excellent poster that also appeared in the Fannie Mae Foundation’s Housing Facts & Findings, Volume 4, Number 2.