Southeast Negotiation Network

The Southeast Negotiation Network (SNN) is a program of the Center for Planning and Development at the Georgia Institute of Technology. SNN assists public officials, business leaders, community residents and public interest groups in the prevention and resolution of disputes. SNN promotes alternative dispute resolution and improved decision making through an integrated program of service, research and education, with particular focus on issues arising in the Sunbelt.

Objectives of SNN

The primary objectives of the Network are to:

- Provide a neutral forum and experienced facilitators for resolving policy, planning and environmental disputes
- Foster strategic planning in public and private decision making
- Develop and test innovative techniques for conflict management and consensus building
- Promote conflict resolution education at the primary, secondary, college and continuing education levels
- Build the capacity of communities, institutions and individuals to handle future disputes.

Alternative Dispute Resolution

Alternative dispute resolution as applied by the Network can be categorized into three primary groups:

Policy Dialogue is a process for developing public policy when issues and their solution are complex. A wide cross-section of public and private interests is usually involved in these issues. Policy dialogue brings representatives of these interests together and fosters an exchange of information and ideas, thereby reducing polarization. Within this setting, alternatives can be explored and their feasibility evaluated more effectively.

Policy dialogue has been used in diverse settings, such as developing national coal policy, exploring solutions to acid rain, setting environmental regulations in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, establishing hazardous waste policy for the state of South Carolina, setting annexation policy in Virginia and setting land use planning objectives in many local communities.

DSW 134045

STLCOPCB4034003

As an example, public participation in regulatory development, permit review and land use planning is traditionally conducted through a series of public hearings. However, this approach has often led to increased time and expense in adopting guidelines since the input of interested parties is obtained after guidelines have been formulated. Involving concerned parties in the development of guidelines has led to more comprehensive and efficient decision making.

Applications to the Sunbelt

The Sunbelt states have experienced rapid growth and economic resurgence. However, along with the prosperity, problems have emerged. Many cities are unable to meet the demands for services resulting from rapid growth. Social and environmental problems arising from development are prompting questions about the trends and nature of growth in the region. Decision making processes for setting public policy and for permitting regulated private activity are becoming strained and time consuming, and litigation is proliferating. Increasingly, active interest groups are beginning to challenge the traditional decision making processes.

As a consequence, alternative dispute resolution in the Sunbelt states is becoming increasingly important by providing opportunities to:

- Improve the quality of life in developing and urban areas
- Ameliorate growth impacts while retaining progressive development
- Broaden the forum for participation in policy-making
- Enhance decision-making processes through consensus building
- Reduce time and expense caused by delays related to litigation and procedural reviews.

Services Provided by SNN

SNN focuses the managerial and technical expertise of faculty and associates of Georgia Tech on the complex conflicts that often accompany planning, policymaking and development. Alternative dispute resolution is typically conducted at the request of a government agency, a participant in a dispute or an interested third party. As a general guideline, SNN can help participants:

- Clarify issues
- Identify affected parties and stakeholders
- Determine the willingness of parties to participate

DSW 134046

STLCOPCB4034004

The Southeast Negotiation Network
Center for Planning and Development
College of Architecture
Georgia Institute of Technology
Atlanta, Georgia 30332-0155

Gregory Bourne
Michael Elliott
Co-Directors

404/894-2350

DSW 134047

STLCOPCB4034005