THE CENTER FOR
Urban & Regional Studies
THE FIRST 50 YEARS

A history published in celebration of the 50th anniversary of The Center for Urban & Regional Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
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The Center for Urban and Regional Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill conducts and supports research on urban and regional affairs—research that helps to build healthy, sustainable communities across the country and around the world. The Center’s Faculty Fellows—all leading scholars in their respective fields—participate in both multidisciplinary research and more narrowly focused projects to generate new knowledge about urban and regional processes, problems and solutions. By supporting this network of scholars and connecting them to government agencies and foundations that commission research, the Center plays a vital role in linking the University community to ongoing efforts to address contemporary social problems.

**Ordering Information**

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The Center extends its thanks to the following individuals who gave interviews so that we could put together this history of the Center: Asta Crowe, Dave Godschalk, Ed Kaiser, Michael Stegman, Ray Burby, David Brower, Mary Beth Powell, Shirley Weiss, David Owens, and Stu Chapin.
The 50th anniversary of the Center for Urban and Regional Studies leads us to reflect on the legacy of the Center, its work, and its people. We want to capture the history of the Center and the experiences of those whose efforts created and sustained it over the years. To do this we reviewed archival material and interviewed each of the three directors and many of the long-time staff. What follows is a look back over time, at the people and projects that distinguish the Center as one of the leading urban research centers in the country.

THE FIRST 50 YEARS
As the troops returned home after World War II, cities in the U.S. were still the focal point for regional economies and culture. Downtowns were thriving as most of the jobs and commercial activity were located in central cities. In the 1950s, however, things began to change. Migration to suburban areas, large-scale urban renewal, the creation and growth of the interstate highway system, and racial tensions led to dramatic changes in America’s urban areas and their surrounding regions. With those transformations came an increased interest in understanding the forces behind the changes and in developing effective policies for addressing their negative impacts. This desire for a better understanding of urban and regional change and its consequences motivated the creation of the Center for Urban and Regional Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH).

The Center for Urban and Regional Studies began as a working group within the Institute for Research in Social Science (IRSS) at UNC-CH. In the 1940s and early 1950s the Institute supported a number of studies on urban issues, including anthropological studies of southern communities and a study of urbanization in the South.

In 1954 IRSS received a Ford Foundation grant to conduct a self-study on behavioral sciences at UNC-CH. The Behavioral Science Survey Committee was created and it identified six focal areas with “implications for research.” One of these, “demography and social epidemiology,” had a sub-area entitled “urban processes.” This led Gordon Blackwell, the

In The Beginning

It became clear to me that the education of urban planners needed a more systematic and scientific grounding for planning practice.

— F. Stuart Chapin

Institute for Research in Social Science (IRSS) at UNC-CH. In the 1940s and early 1950s the Institute supported a number of studies on urban issues, including anthropological studies of southern communities and a study of urbanization in the South.
The Early Years

Although the Urban Studies Committee had successfully created a forum for urban researchers, it wanted to expand its capacity for conducting cutting-edge, collaborative research on urban issues. Over a two-year period, from 1955 to 1957, the Committee prepared a grant proposal titled “Emerging Forms of Metropolitanism in the South,” focusing on the Piedmont Industrial Crescent—the area along the transportation corridor connecting Washington, D.C. to Atlanta. The Committee proposed to study the crescent between Raleigh, N.C. and Greenville, S.C.—because of its proximity to the University, and potential to shed light on a new kind of urbanization, one driven by the rapid proliferation of the automobile and new road construction.

In April 1957, the Ford Foundation awarded the Committee a five-year, $1 million grant to pursue its urban research agenda, including a multifaceted study of urbanization processes in the Piedmont Industrial Crescent. This grant was also used to facilitate communication among urban researchers at several southern...
universities. IRSS housed both of these activities, with Chapin heading up the research arm and Frederic M. Cleaveland directing the outreach program. A third portion of the grant went to the Institute of Government to fund research interpretation for state and local organizations. Perhaps most importantly to this history, the Ford Foundation grant formalized Chapin’s collective of researchers as the Urban Studies Program, the organization that in 1963 would be renamed the Center for Urban and Regional Studies.

The Piedmont Crescent project was highly interdisciplinary. It focused on seven distinct research areas:

- Economic studies of the Piedmont Crescent;
- Leadership patterns and community decision making in cities of the Piedmont Crescent;
- Power structure studies of the Piedmont Crescent;
- Newcomers to urban centers: why they move and their socio-political enculturation in the city;
- Role of the planner in urban development of the Piedmont Crescent;
- Livability qualities of urban development in the Piedmont Crescent; and
- Metropolitan development problems in the Piedmont Crescent and alternative approaches to their solution.

These topics reflected the diverse interests of the Urban Studies Program’s interdisciplinary research team, including faculty members and research fellows from city and regional planning, economics, political science, and sociology.

F. STUART CHAPIN, JR. (1957 – 1969)

No single person can be credited for developing the Center for Urban and Regional Studies more than F. Stuart Chapin, Jr. Chapin was born in Northampton, Massachusetts in 1916 and earned a B.A. from the University of Minnesota and two degrees in city planning from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In the 1940s he worked as a community and regional planner with the Tennessee Valley Authority, and served as the planning director for Greensboro, North Carolina. Chapin joined the University in 1949 as a professor of City and Regional Planning.

Upon his arrival, Chapin began conducting research on urban issues with the Institute for Research in Social Science. Much of this research focused on methods for analyzing land use in cities, which in 1957 resulted in the publication of his classic textbook: *Urban Land Use Planning*. Upon completion of the first Ford Foundation grant in 1962, Chapin took a year’s appointment as a Fellow at the Center for Advanced Studies at the University of Illinois. It was here that he developed an interest in investigating household behavior, an interest that inspired both the study of moving behavior and residential choice, and the study of household activity patterns.
Although research began almost immediately, the Urban Studies Program did not yet have a permanent home. At first, the Program occupied temporary space in a former house on Pittsboro Street, as well as space in Miller Hall and Alumni Building. In 1958, the Program secured permanent quarters in Evergreen House.

After the expiration of the Ford Foundation grant, additional funding was secured from the state and other grant sources. By 1963, the research effort had expanded to include fifteen research areas involving over twenty members of the faculty and twenty-seven research assistants. Program research results were published through the Urban Studies Research Paper series and in Urban Growth Dynamics in a Regional Cluster of Cities (1962), edited by F. Stuart Chapin, Jr. and Shirley Weiss, a professor in the Department of City and Regional Planning. Many of the Program’s researchers contributed chapters, and in Chapin’s words, the book sought to “lay the groundwork for research which inevitably will absorb social scientists for the next generation.”

Throughout this period, the Urban Studies Program maintained its original focus on encouraging scholarly research in the area of urban and regional studies, holding semi-weekly, interdepartmental urban studies seminars for faculty, graduate students, and occasional guests. Many graduate students also completed theses and dissertations on subjects related to the Piedmont Crescent study. The doctoral program in the Department of City and Regional Planning, established in 1961, took good advantage of the educational resources of the Program.

For his part, Frederick Cleaveland brought together social science researchers from across the South to discuss urban research methods in small sectional meetings and a summer seminar held in Chapel Hill. By the early 1960s, the Urban Studies Program had established a reputation for cutting-edge research and a strong foundation for future growth.

In 1965 he became a member of President Lyndon Johnson’s Task Force on Cities, an appointment that strengthened his work and furthered his desire to secure permanent funding for the Center. Chapin’s support for the Center throughout the years was unflagging. He possessed an unwavering commitment to establishing a place where the study of urban and regional issues would be paramount. He stepped down as Director in 1969, but stayed on as the Center’s research director until his retirement from the University in 1978. His pioneering work in human activity systems, urban modeling, and urbanization of the North Carolina Piedmont earned him much recognition, including the Historic Planning Pioneer Award from the American Institute of Planners (now the American Planning Association). Chapin currently lives in White Salmon, Washington, where he has been active in efforts to preserve the Columbia River Gorge.

The biography written for his induction as Fellow of the American Institute of Certified Planners states that “through his teaching, mentoring, writing, and service activities, F. Stuart Chapin, Jr. raised the standards of technical competence and professional responsibility during a critical period of development of the planning profession. His devotion to the highest principles of professional practice, the clarity of his intellect, and his personal integrity have inspired a whole generation of planners. His contributions to the planning profession will long endure.”

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8 A Ten-Year Interdisciplinary Effort in Urban Studies, p. 2.
11 Research in Service to Society, p. 311.
In 1963, the Institute for Research in Social Science renamed the Urban Studies Program the Center for Urban and Regional Studies. Chapin continued to serve as Director and Shirley Weiss was appointed Assistant Director. At this time, the Center identified four “core study” topics for further exploration: the role of the planner in urban issues; political decision making about urban development issues; urban spatial structure and patterns of land development; and the role of industrial executives in urban growth and development.

Chapin’s interest in the factors that influence urban development led him to approach the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads (the predecessor to the Federal Highway Administration) to secure funding for developing a model of residential land use. In 1963, the Center negotiated a contract with the Bureau to develop a model for Greensboro, N.C. where Chapin had served as planning director. The Center enlisted the help of the University’s Computation Center to analyze growth patterns from 1949 to 1963. Chapin and his colleagues identified a number of factors that affected urban growth patterns, including access to employment, schools, and public facilities. Based on this analysis, the researchers created a model to predict where future residential development was likely to occur. Shirley Weiss assisted on this project, and Thomas G. Donnelly did the computer programming. A monograph from this study—A Probabilistic Model for Residential Growth—was published in 1965, and the growth model became known as the University of North Carolina Model. Edward J. Kaiser, who joined the DCRP faculty in 1965, also contributed to the land development research conducted at the Center.

During this time, the Center also began to expand the geographic scope of its work.
undertaking research projects in metropolitan areas outside of North Carolina. A national survey of moving behavior and residential choice, for example, was funded by the National Academy of Sciences. That study sought to identify housing and neighborhood preferences in a representative sample of American households. The scope of this study, surveys of 1,500 households in forty-three metropolitan areas, was beyond any the Center had previously undertaken. The National Cooperative Highway Research Program published the complete results of this research in a report entitled *Moving Behavior and Residential Choice: A National Survey*.

In 1965, Chapin began pioneering work on a series of studies of household activity patterns, based in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. Documenting the needs of historically underserved populations, this series of studies looked to discover ways to create a built environment and deliver public services that would serve all of a city’s inhabitants. To achieve this, the study explored how urban residents in two low-income neighborhoods—one with mostly black residents and one with mostly white residents—allocated their time to different activities and where they conducted those activities. The project was expansive, involving twelve researchers and five separate studies. Three books, including Chapin’s *Human Activity Patterns in the City* (1974), were published from this series of studies. Chapin’s work in Washington brought him to the attention of federal officials and he was appointed to President Johnson’s Task Force on Cities. In this capacity, Chapin visited many of America’s tumultuous inner cities and prepared a section of the Task Force report to the President.

Throughout the late 1960s, the Center built on its previous successes conducting studies on how various public policies affect urban growth, and on the satisfaction with and use of urban environments. During this time period, the Center began to draw international attention and hosted researchers from England, France, Holland, and the former West Germany.

Since its inception, the Center had exclusively operated on “soft,” grant funds. In the late 1960s, the Center sought a more consistent source of support for core staff and additional space and in 1969 was successful in that effort.

13 F. Stuart Chapin, Jr., written statement.
Support from the State

In 1969, national attention to urban issues was reaching a crescendo. In response to inner-city rioting, white flight, business relocations, and other urban problems, the General Assembly of North Carolina authorized a “Program in Urban Affairs” for the Consolidated University of North Carolina. The funding provided to this program—which supported urban studies centers at UNC-Charlotte and N.C. State as well as UNC-Chapel Hill—allowed the Center to become independent of IRSS.

The state’s largess (approximately $350,000 per year divided between the three universities) provided the Center with a stable source of funds for five full-time staff positions. Jonathan Howes, who had experience managing research at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, replaced Chapin as full-time Director of the Center. Howes had been a research assistant at the Center while a graduate student in the Department of City and Regional Planning.

“Things urban were really important, and were being funded, and so, it was a really good time to convince the state legislature that they ought to fund an urban center that would do applied policy-oriented research of use to the state of North Carolina, to make sure that we addressed urban problems in a sound way and came up with solutions.”

– Ray Burby

Regional Planning professors stayed on in non-funded roles—Stuart Chapin stepped down from the directorship to become Research Director, and Shirley Weiss and Ed Kaiser served as Associate Research Directors. In 1970, the Center moved into Hickerson House to accommodate an expanding staff. Chapin, freed from his administrative duties as Director, continued to study human activity patterns.


A leader who embodies the University’s dedication to public service, Jonathan Howes served as the Center’s second director. Over his career, Howes has held numerous positions in federal and state governments, agencies as diverse as the Urban Renewal Agency, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the North Carolina Department of Environment, Health, and Natural Resources.

Howes earned his bachelor’s degree from Wittenberg University in Springfield, Ohio, majoring in history and political science. While completing his master’s degree in City and Regional Planning at UNC from 1959 to 1961, Howes served as a research assistant at the Center. In 1966 he completed a master’s degree in public administration at Harvard University.

Howes was recruited by Chapin in 1970 at a time when the Center was in transition from “its initial emphasis on research to a full array of concerns for putting research into practice.” This emphasis on engagement would be the focus of much of Howes work in the years to come. Howes encouraged his staff to become involved in local and state
In the late 1960s, Shirley Weiss focused her attention on the federal new towns program, which provided loan guarantees to the developers of large, community-scale developments that were being planned throughout the United States. The Center hosted a series of three seminars on new towns in 1969, funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. The results of these seminars, which were attended by researchers, policy makers, and residents of new communities, were compiled into two volumes edited by Weiss and Ray Burby, a research associate at the Center. Encouraged by the interest in new towns, Weiss applied for additional funding. In 1972, the Center received a $1,179,400 grant from the Research Applied to National Needs program of the National Science Foundation, to study the residential satisfaction and behavior of new town residents. Weiss and her research team conducted over 5,500 interviews in thirty-six new towns and conventional communities.

Those interviews focused on the behavior and attitudes of the respondents towards their communities.

The study culminated in the publication of *New Communities USA* in 1976, written by Burby and Weiss. New communities were found to have some clear benefits over conventional development, but were also found to be falling short of their promises to solve urban problems. Seven additional volumes were published under the New Communities Research Series, each providing a more in-depth look at aspects of new communities, such as access to health care, recreation, and transportation.

In the introduction to *New Communities USA*, Congressman Thomas Ludlow Ashley, a member of the Subcommittee on Housing and Community Development, declared the research to be “enormously helpful in helping us make a better case for a national growth policy and a new communities program.” Unfortunately, by the time the study results were released, interest in new towns had waned due to widespread financial problems resulting from the recession in the early 1970s. However, this study remains the definitive work on the new towns created during this period.

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16 Ray Burby interview.
17 F. Stuart Chapin, Jr. memo to Jonathan Howes, February 16, 1970.
Other research conducted at the Center during the 1970s focused on the emerging issues of the era. The energy crisis compelled the nation to look towards reducing its dependence on oil, and researchers at the Center began to address this national concern. In the early 1980s, Ray Burby collaborated with Mary Ellen Marsden, a sociologist at IRSS, and Nicholas Didow, a professor at the UNC School of Business, in research on load control programs designed to help energy companies reduce peak demand. The Alternative Energy Corporation (the present-day Advanced Energy), a research institution set up by the North Carolina Utilities Commission, funded this project. The study results still have relevance today, as energy concerns have resurfaced.

As the country began to focus on environmental issues, Center researchers began investigating hazard mitigation and coastal planning issues. In 1974, the North Carolina legislature passed the Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA), which provided for collaboration in state and local planning with the interest of preserving coastal areas. At this time, the Director of the Division of Coastal Management was David Owens, who had served as a research assistant at the Center while completing joint degrees in law and city and regional planning at UNC-CH.

The Division of Coastal Management (DCM), which administered CAMA, often came to Center staff for guidance on coastal hazard mitigation issues. Before the Storm, a 1982 report on using land-use plans for hazard mitigation completed by David Brower and Dave Godschalk, was instrumental in DCM’s creation of “administrative rules that set some general policy guidelines as well as put a mandatory post-storm planning element into…local land-use plans.” Center researchers and Dave Godschalk, whose long involvement with the Center began in 1969

NEW TOWNS RESEARCH

In the 1960s, the private sector began experimenting with new towns, as an alternative to suburban sprawl. Two notable examples were Reston, Virginia, established in 1964, and Columbia, Maryland, established in 1967. In 1968, the federal government passed Title IV of the Housing and Urban Development Act, and in 1970, passed the Urban Growth and New Community Development Act, both of which guaranteed loans and provided support for private entrepreneurs to plan and develop new communities. In doing so, the federal government hoped to provide living conditions that were superior to those available in the current suburbs.

By the mid 1970s, over fifteen federally supported new towns were under development in the United States. Shirley Weiss and her team at the Center felt there was too little evaluation of the successes and failures of these communities. Under a Public Health Service grant, Weiss started the New Towns Research Seminar series in 1969, inviting leaders in the field of new communities to speak to a group of faculty interested in the issue. The papers presented in the seminar series were compiled and published in two volumes in 1971.

Out of this seminar grew the New Communities Study, an effort to produce accurate information on whether new communities provided a better quality of life than standard
when he joined the DCRP faculty, also served as formal and informal consultants on various hazard mitigation programs administered by state and federal agencies.

Another Center study, funded by the National Science Foundation, addressed growth management issues through the lens of their legal feasibility. Godschalk, Brower, and two graduate assistants from the joint law and planning program issued a report in 1976 on constitutional issues pertaining to land-use regulations. This report served as a national guide for communities looking to craft legally defensible growth management policies. That study also resulted in an outreach program in growth management attended by many state and local planning and government officials.

As Director, Howes placed a strong emphasis on public service. Over his twenty-year tenure at the Center, Howes held an array of appointed and elected positions. For his part, Burby was active in the North Carolina Land Use Congress, a 1970s advocacy group that promoted state involvement in sound land-use planning. Center staff also provided considerable support to the N.C. Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA), with Burby serving as President from 1982 to 1983. The Center housed the editorial offices of the Journal of the American Planning Association from 1983 to 1988 when Ray Burby and Ed Kaiser served as co-editors of the journal. David Brower was instrumental in forming APA’s Planning and Law Division.

Because of a shared interest in urban research, the Center had always maintained close ties with the Department of City and Regional Planning. Professors from the department

suburban development, and to identify the factors affecting the success or failure of new communities. The project looked to be the definitive study on new towns in the United States. The study collected information from residents and administrators of thirty-six communities (including both new towns and conventional developments) throughout the country, utilizing a combination of surveys and interviews.

Weiss and her colleagues found that new towns were providing a better living environment for their residents than standard suburban development, but they still “fell short of achieving the full potential of the new community concept for solving urban problems and creating a better urban environment.” In particular, “The advantages of new communities included: 1) better land use planning and access to community facilities; 2) reduction of automobile travel; 3) superior recreational facilities; 4) enhanced community livability; and 5) improved living environments for low- and moderate-income households, blacks, and the elderly.” In the words of Ray Burby, “They were a better mousetrap, but marginally better.” The research team presented their results in New Communities USA, in seven volumes of the New Communities Research Series, and in a national conference on new towns.  

Lake Anne at Reston, Virginia.
took advantage of the Center’s resources, and numerous graduate students have served as research assistants or completed their theses and dissertations on projects funded through the Center. In 1987, in the interest of unifying the research and public service missions of both the Center and DCRP, a committee convened by the Provost and Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences investigated the feasibility of administratively joining the two entities. This proposed realignment would bring the Center, like DCRP, under the jurisdiction of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. On August 1, 1988, the new administrative structure became official.

In 1993, Jonathan Howes stepped down as Director to become Secretary of the Department of Environment, Health, and Natural Resources under North Carolina Governor Jim Hunt. The chair of DCRP—first Michael Stegman and then Ed Kaiser—served as interim directors of the Center while a committee was established to reassess its mission and staffing.

Over a five-month period the committee met and made several recommendations to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences,
including that the Director’s position be filled by an active researcher and be half-time rather than full-time. To ensure that the Center ran smoothly, the committee recommended hiring a full-time Associate Director who would handle day-to-day operations. Borrowing from the Carolina Population Center, the committee recommended that the Center adopt a “Faculty Fellows” model to encourage faculty in the social and behavioral sciences with an interest in urban and regional studies to work through the Center. In turn, the Center would provide Fellows with a variety of services including notification of funding opportunities, assistance in preparing grant proposals, and grants management services. These recommendations were accepted by the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Carolina Division of Coastal Management, of deliberately timing it. He said if he had thought of it, he would have.” (David Brower, personal interview)

Deliberately planned or not, the theatrical presentation was certainly successful. One of the policies that the CRC went on to adopt was a requirement that local governments include disaster planning in their land-use plans. The CURS report, Before the Storm: Managing Development to Reduce Hurricane Damages, was critical to the adoption and implementation of this policy. According to David Owens, the study, written by William McElyea, David Brower, and Dave Godschalk, was vital because it pulled “all that information together, putting a clear set of options in front of the CRC, educating them on the scope of the issue, the range of policy options available, and the implications of those policy options.”

Subsequently, David Brower, with Nags Head town planner Bruce Bortz, completed one of the first plans evaluating the impacts of natural hazards for Nags Head, N.C. This plan, “Hurricane and Storm Mitigation and Reconstruction,” won an APA award and was a pioneering example of hazard mitigation in coastal management.
A New Collaborative Focus

The search for a new director resulted in the appointment of William (Bill) Rohe, a faculty member in the Department of City and Regional Planning, as Center director. In his statement of interest for the position, Rohe emphasized developing relationships with national, state, and local government agencies, and expressed a commitment to serving the needs of faculty throughout the University with interests in urban and regional issues, broadly defined. Aiding in this task was the first person to hold the new Associate Director position, Regina Brough, who had previously served as Assistant Director of the Governor’s Center at Duke University.

During the mid to late 1990s, the Center’s research activity began to rapidly expand as many new Faculty Fellows were attracted to the Center. By 1996, there were fifty-one Faculty Fellows from sixteen departments. Supporting the recruitment of these Fellows was a new Center policy—also borrowed from the Carolina Population Center—that allowed a portion of the overhead funds returned to the Center to be shared with both the home departments of the principal investigators and with the investigators themselves. Adopting this Faculty Fellows model solved one of the Center’s previous dilemmas: finding enough talented researchers without the resources to hire them directly.

By the end of 1996, the Center, supported a total of twenty-five research projects. With Regina Brough’s departure from the Center in late 1995, Mary Beth Powell assumed the position of Associate Director. Powell came from the North Carolina Department of Environment, Health, and Natural Resources where she directed the Commercial/Government Waste Reduction Section. With Powell’s assistance, the Center launched several new efforts to raise awareness of

William M. Rohe

WILLIAM ROHE (1994 – PRESENT)

As the third Director of the Center, Bill Rohe ushered in a new era of collaborative research. Rohe became Director of the Center in 1994 after Jonathan Howes resigned to serve as Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Environment, Health, and Natural Resources.

“When Bill came on he really pushed for research projects…and involved other social scientists from around the University who were interested in urban affairs and urban policy,” recalled Ed Kaiser. Rohe recruited Faculty Fellows from across the University, recalling the multidisciplinary beginnings of the Center. Rohe also increased the Center’s grants management staff in order to provide those Fellows with a variety of services, including assistance in developing interdisciplinary research teams, finding funding for research projects, preparing and submitting proposals, administering funded projects, and disseminating research results.
its activities within the University and among potential funders, including the development of the Center’s first web page.

From 1995 through 1997, the Center increased grant support by nearly 300 percent a year. In 1996, Thomas Arcury, a Senior Research Associate hired in 1995, was awarded a $1.2 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to conduct a study on farm workers’ exposure to agricultural chemicals in eastern North Carolina. By 2000, the Center had surpassed the $5.5 million mark in extramural funding, managing $5.8 million in grants.

In the late part of the 1990s the Center continued to expanded its staff. By 2000, the Center had eight full-time and two part-time employees on staff. From 1994-2000, the number of Faculty Fellows increased from fifty-one to fifty-seven. The number of graduate students receiving support from the Center and gaining valuable research experience also increased, from twenty-two in 1995 to fifty-five in 2003.

In 1997 the Center broadened its activities to include community engagement. In partnership with Duke University, the Center applied for and received a three-year, $400,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to establish the Community Outreach Partnership Center or COPC (see sidebar on page 18). A storefront office on West Chapel Hill Street in southwest central Durham served as headquarters for this partnership which, in addition to UNC and Duke, included six neighborhood associations and over twenty-five other public and private organizations. Sixteen faculty members from both universities participated in projects designed to improve the surrounding neighborhoods by increasing affordable

Rohe has a double B.A. in psychology and sociology from SUNY Buffalo, a master’s in regional planning from Pennsylvania State University, as well as an M.S. and a Ph.D. in man-environment relations from the same university. His research and writing has been recognized with “best article” awards from both the American Planning Association and the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning. In 2005 he was awarded a distinguished professorship by the University and is now the Cary C. Boshamer Professor of City and Regional Planning. Rohe has maintained his research interests in housing and community development while serving as the Center’s current Director. Funders of this work include the Ford Foundation, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the MacArthur Foundation. Rohe is currently writing a book on the history, current challenges, and future of the Research Triangle metropolitan area.

Mary Beth Powell

In 1996 the Center began a NIH study on farm workers’ exposure to agricultural chemicals.

20 David Godschalk interview.
housing, expanding job training, and reducing crime. The program also provided community services, including a computer lab, tutoring for middle school children, and adult education. The outreach center’s activities involved a number of UNC and Duke students.

In 1998, two years after Hurricanes Bertha and Fran caused extensive damage to the North Carolina coast, the Center reestablished its relationship with the N.C. Division of Coastal Management (DCM). DCM funded a study headed by David Godschalk to investigate ways to improve the state’s hazard mitigation planning. After assembling information on hazard mitigation plans in other states, the study made recommendations to DCM on changes to hazard mitigation legislation in North Carolina.

From 1996 to 1999, the Center hosted visiting researchers through the Floyd B. McKissick Visiting Scholar program. The program, funded by Shirley and Charles Weiss, supported weeklong visits during which these scholars gave lectures and led discussions on their areas of interest. The Center continues to house the Weiss’ book collection on urban livability, and serves as regular host to the Weiss Urban Livability Fellows, an interdisciplinary group of graduate students.

In an effort to disseminate news of its projects and achievements, the Center began publishing a semi-annual newsletter, the CURS Update, in 1996. The first two issues were sent out to over 700 foundations, government agencies, research centers, and practitioners across the state and nation. The CURS Update is currently sent to over 2,500 recipients. In 1999, the Center hearkened back to its beginnings by including brown bag luncheons as part of its speaker series, highlighting the work of its researchers.

It is sometimes difficult to quantify the results of Center projects, but one project had especially clear results. HUD’s Community Outreach Partnership Center (COPC) program which funds universities to provide assistance to community groups, awarded the Center a $400,000 grant in 1997. The Center, collaborating with faculty from Duke University, met with neighborhood groups and non-profits in order to assess community needs. The Center leased a storefront on West Chapel Hill Street in southwest central Durham, an area chosen by the city for a multi-year revitalization plan. The newly-established community center, run by a locally-hired director, served as the base for several projects. Those projects included:

- A crime prevention project to improve community/police relations
- A project to improve public housing residents’ usage of self-sufficiency programs
- An education program to make residents aware of their rights in the face of housing discrimination
and bringing in experts on different urban issues for the edification of both faculty and students. A working paper series, also established in 1999, has been used to disseminate the results of research conducted at the Center.

In the late 1990s, the idea of “smart growth” caught on in the planning community. Smart growth seeks to combat urban sprawl and its negative side effects of traffic congestion and environmental damage. In 1999, the Center hosted a series of meetings on smart growth led by David Godschalk and attended by state and local decision makers, as well as University students, staff, and faculty. These meetings produced draft legislation for the North Carolina General Assembly, which was introduced by Senator Howard Lee in the same year.

To expand its focus on this topic and the emerging knowledge- and information technology-based companies, the Center launched the Smart Growth and New Economy Program in 2001. David Salvesen, who received his Ph.D. from the UNC-CH’s Department of City and Regional Planning, was hired to direct this program, to investigate how economic trends affect local and regional smart growth strategies, and to disseminate the findings to a wide audience. To date, the program has completed over fifteen projects, including a series on neighborhood and school planning. The program also completed a smart growth report card for North Carolina, assessing the performance of the state’s smart growth efforts.

In 2002, the Center partnered with the University’s Center for the Study of the American South on an initiative to study the impacts of affordable home ownership on families and communities. The project, co-

- A job training program looking to match employer needs
- An economic development program establishing a neighborhood construction company
- Consumer credit counseling to build community wealth
- A collection of oral histories, photography, and writing by neighborhood youth

In addition to these projects the community center provided many benefits to its surrounding neighborhood. The storefront had a computer lab for neighborhood access, and provided free computer training. Community members could also take part in literacy training, Adult Basic Education (ABE) and General Equivalency Degree (GED) courses. The community center published a free neighborhood newsletter, Neighborhood Connections, and provided meeting space to local groups. Most significantly, the project gave the neighborhood a central focus, one that encouraged the revitalization of its surroundings and gathered residents together to create a community.
sponsored by the Enterprise Foundation and the National Building Museum, resulted in a multi-disciplinary conference in the fall of 2003 with over one hundred attendees. In addition to targeting policymakers and fellow researchers, the project had a large public outreach component through an oral history and photography exhibition, first at a mobile gallery in San Antonio, Texas, and then at the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C. This project was codirected by Bill Rohe and Harry Watson, Director of the Center for the Study of the American South, and resulted in the book *Chasing the American Dream: New Perspectives on Affordable Homeownership*, a collection of the papers presented at the conference (Cornell University Press, 2007).

Since the early 1990s the Center has conducted a number of research projects for the North Carolina Governor’s Crime Commission, addressing subjects as wide-ranging as evaluating the efficacy of after-school, community-oriented policing, and domestic violence prevention programs, to studying the amount and nature of crimes against Latinos in North Carolina. These projects were conducted by researchers from various disciplines, including Gordon Whitaker from UNC’s School of Government and Anna Waller from the Department of Emergency Medicine. The most recent Crime Commission project was a 2005 study examining juvenile structured day and alternative learning programs conducted by James Fraser, a Senior Research Associate at the Center.

Center staff and researchers have embraced the University’s commitment to public service throughout its history. Jonathan Howes, Bill Rohe, and Ray Burby all served on the Governing Board of the Urban Affairs Association, a professional organization for urban researchers. Burby helped foster the growth of the North Carolina Coastal Federation, a nonprofit organization concerned with coastal issues founded in 1982, and served on its Board of Directors from 2000-2006. Mary Beth Powell served two terms on the State Infrastructure Council which was responsible for the funding of water systems throughout the state.24

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24 *CURS Update, May 2001.*
Into the Future

Since the mid 1990s, the Center has been a service-oriented organization, sending out funding alerts to its Faculty Fellows and providing proposal development and grant management assistance. These services have been successful in attracting and retaining researchers from a wide variety of departments and schools across campus. At the end of 2007, the Center supported seventy-two Faculty Fellows from twenty-three academic units and employed three research associates.

The Scholar-in-Residence program, with funding from the Latane Fund managed by the College of Arts and Sciences, supports College faculty in the development of large interdisciplinary research proposals. This competitive program provides scholars with a course buyout, funds for proposal development expenses, and office space in Hickerson House.

In 2005, the Center established the Carolina Transportation Program, a joint effort undertaken with the Department of City and Regional Planning, with funding from the College of Arts and Sciences and the Vice Chancellor for Research and Development. The program’s focus areas include transportation planning, transit, non-motorized transportation, and land-use patterns and their impacts on health, environment, energy and economic development at local, regional, national, and global levels. Since its inception, the program’s faculty and staff have published over twenty articles and reports, and it has organized a regular series of seminars. The program actively supports graduate students interested in transportation issues. Initially directed by Asad Khattak, Daniel Rodriguez, an Associate Professor of City and Regional Planning, assumed the position in 2006.

With Mary Beth Powell’s departure in late 2004, Todd Owen became the Center’s Associate Director. Owen, a graduate of the Department of City and Regional Planning, previously worked for the North Carolina Division of Emergency Management, specializing in natural hazards mitigation.

In its 50th year, the Center managed approximately thirty-five projects totaling over $10 million in six major areas of research: economic development, environmental protection, housing and community development, poverty and equity, sustainable development, and transportation. The Center’s long history of work on natural hazards continues as Hurricane Katrina brought hazard mitigation back into the national spotlight. The Center’s more recent work on natural hazards includes FEMA-funded studies...

“I’d like to think of the Center as matchmaker—we match the research interests of our Faculty Fellows with those of foundations and government agencies that fund research.”

— Bill Rohe

Todd Owen

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on improving emergency preparedness in disadvantaged communities, a study of factors influencing flood victims’ buyout decisions, and an NSF-funded mentoring program for emerging hazards researchers. Center staff, led by Senior Research Associate Spencer Cowan, have been involved in disaster recovery planning in the Gentilly area of New Orleans.

In 2007, the Center formalized its relationship with the Center for Community Capital (CCC), a sister center at UNC-CH. CCC, directed by Roberto Quercia, was created several years ago to increase economic opportunity for undercapitalized communities and households, focusing on techniques that are effective in building sustainable wealth and assets. CURS agreed to handle the financial management of all CCC projects and to provide CCC with other administrative support. CURS and CCC also collaborate on projects of mutual interest.

In 2008 the Center began the Sustainable Communities Initiative in partnership with the Institute for the Environment’s Center for Sustainable Community Design. The Initiative is a collaborative effort that seeks to promote sustainable community development in North Carolina, the nation, and around the world through projects and research conducted by faculty, research staff, and graduate students in both Centers.

The Center for Urban and Regional Studies continues to promote the mission of the University by supporting urban and regional research and applying that research throughout the state and nation. To date, the Center has published over 1,150 reports, monographs, and books detailing its work. It contributes to UNC’s teaching mission by involving students in the many research projects managed by the Center.
Conclusion

Over the years, the Center for Urban and Regional Studies has made major contributions to research on a wide range of urban and regional issues. From its humble beginnings within the Institute for Research in Social Science, the Center has grown into a nationally respected center for research on the issues that affect people and the places where they live, work, and play. The Center has maintained its original dedication to research and education: researchers are provided the opportunity to pursue the study of important topics while students are given the opportunity to hone their research skills on policy-relevant projects. The research conducted through the Center has enriched national debates on urban and regional issues, and influenced a broad range of development issues throughout the state and nation. The Center plans to continue building upon its successful track record as it moves into the future.

...research in this discipline can make a difference. I think there is an ethical responsibility for those in the academy to speak to real problems and real issues in this state.

– David Brower

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