be put in by local government. How much of the cost of public investments is borne by the community at large depends on how much new residents must pay for hook-up to the system. Most municipalities require connection charges for sewer and water to cover the public-provided capital outlay. When charges do not cover the cost of the public investment, the entire community shares the remaining costs.

Effects on housing costs

The policy decisions of local government which reduce public costs of residential development directly and indirectly increase private housing costs. Connection charges and subdivision improvement requirements directly increase the costs of new housing. Furthermore, increased charges and the value of new required improvements may be capitalized into the value of existing homes, which has the effect of generally raising housing prices in the community. The result may be the pricing of some lower income families out of the housing market.

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A regional center for applied social science and community development

Reprinted June 1984

WREP 17

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school districts the potential to increase property tax revenues is of increasing importance. The limitation, however, may prevent a government from increasing its tax levy to the point that it does not increase its expenditures.

Local government costs also increase with popula-

tion. While costs may be borne by the new property owner—not current residents—a substantial portion of these costs are borne by all taxpayers rather than the users exclusively. It is important to note that such revenues may be used to reduce public costs of residential development.

Subdivision improvement requirements

Many local governments require a developer to put in public facilities before a subdivision is approved. To gain the approval of such plans, the developer must follow specific procedures and meet certain requirements. These requirements are often established by some communities consistent with legal and planning restrictions on development, and need to be considered for each type of housing in a residential zone.

The density of development (the number of dwelling

units per unit area) is another technique for influencing the location of new development. While not common prac-
tice, it is a method used by some jurisdictions to control urban development and to reduce public costs of residential development. Subdivision improvement requirements are usually integrated into a jurisdiction’s subdivision regulations. As they represent policy, they are adopted through an ordinance process.

The sitting of new schools by school districts can also affect the development pattern. The government of school districts may be required to hire more teachers and build more classrooms. If existing schools, for example, are crowded, an influx of population may require investments in new classrooms. If, on the other hand, there is unused classroom capacity in the district, the potential to increase property tax revenues is limited. However, if the number of children in the district increases, the potential to increase property tax revenues is increased. This means that school districts have a direct effect on the cost of installing facilities and providing public services. If the number of children in the district increases, the potential to increase property tax revenues is increased. This means that school districts have a direct effect on the cost of installing facilities and providing public services.

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for hook-up to the system. Most municipalities require connection charges for sewer and water to cover the publicly-provided capital outlay. When charges do not cover the cost of the public investment, the entire community shares the remaining cost. In some cases, a municipality that has recently replaced connection charges has increased revenues and the costs of local governments? In some cases, low income families may not be able to afford the connection charge, and therefore may not be able to gain access to the system. These revenues are intended to offset these costs. Systems development charges (also called a "feeder" charge) for the ten Oregon cities examined varied widely, from $650 to $3,000. These charges are intended to provide an introduction to what local governments can do to minimize public costs of new residential development. The purpose of this publication is to provide an introduction to what local governments can do to minimize public costs of new residential development and the possible effects of local government policies on the community.

Coping with Growth

Minimizing Public Costs of Residential Growth

Bruce Weber, Extension Economist, and
Richard Beck, Extension Community Development Agent, Oregon State University

What effect does population growth have on the revenues and the costs of local government? In some states, revenues are apportioned from liquor sales and cigarette taxes to cities and counties on the basis of population estimates and motor vehicle registrations. When population and vehicle increases are met, police stations are usually based largely on the number of residents in the district. This source of revenue increases with population growth. Public service expenditures for water and sewer service also increase with new residential development. Depending on a state's tax laws, property taxes may or may not increase in proportion to new residential development. Additionally, new residential development brings with it both costs and benefits. Connection charges and subdivision improvement requirements directly increase the costs of new housing. Furthermore, increased charges and the value of new required improvements may not be appropriate in any particular instance. However, by adopting policies which address the various factors identified above, communities may be able to keep the public costs of residential growth to a minimum.

The authors appreciate the review and comments of: Ron Canham, University of Arizona; Judith Cichowicz, Executive Department, State of Hawaii; H. R. Guenthner, University of Idaho; Carl J. Hoffman, Montana State University; Bernard M. Jones, University of Montana; John C. Phillips, University of Nevada; J. Oren, New Mexico State University; Paul Larsen, Utah State University; J. O. Young, Washington State University, and Frank E. Busby, University of Wyoming. The University of Guam Extension Service, W. P. Leon Guerrero, director, also participates. Extension invites participation in its programs and offers them to all people without discrimination.

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The fact that a residential development often does not pay its own way has led more than one community to ask whether any growth is desirable. However, most local government efforts to increase public costs of residential development also have some positive and negative effects. In making choices about residential growth and local policies to influence growth, communities must balance these costs and benefits.

Conclusion

Residential growth brings with it both costs and benefits. Local government efforts to increase public costs of residential development also have some positive and negative effects. In making choices about residential growth and local policies to influence growth, communities must balance these costs and benefits.

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