

# STATE DEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND PLANNING

Irving Hand, Pennsylvania State Planning Board

•THE Washington Center for Metropolitan Studies, in a 1970 report prepared for the Urban Mass Transportation Administration (1), observed that "... state planning is an institutional jungle." The report stated that states making efforts to innovate and to plan comprehensively find this is a difficult task and that, although the powers of the states are great, state planning tends to be constrained by unmanageable bureaucracies and out-dated laws.

The Center further stated that, when planning is instituted at the state level, basic questions should be addressed about the functions and purposes of planning—questions that are complex both in their abstractions and in their applications and are not easy to answer. For example, putting "urban affairs" into operating departments has advantages organizationally, but the disadvantage is the burden caused by weaknesses in program management and goal development for the whole state.

All of the fundamental questions about the position and the role of planning in government not only arise in state planning but also are perhaps more difficult to answer. Is planning essentially an on-going process that should encompass all of government? Does it have specific programmatic concerns such as housing or public transit? Should there be a state "plan"? If there is, what does it mean and how is it to be used?

States potentially hold great powers over development. In the past, many judge that these powers have not been exercised in systematic or coherent ways. Obsolete administrative structures, unresponsive legislatures, weak governors, and restrictive constitutions have inhibited positive roles the states might play.

Notwithstanding some of the newspaper stories (2, 3, 4) following the 1971 National Governors Conference in Puerto Rico, there are signs that change is overtaking state governments and that they are beginning to respond and exercise their powers in more meaningful ways. There are signs of movement toward a period of "creative statehood," and that period should witness various approaches to the fulfillment of state responsibilities. If this is the case, state planning will take on new shapes and purposes and may become more significantly involved in state strategy formulation and expression.

Except in those instances, however, and perhaps even including where there is strong gubernatorial or key legislative leadership, a great deal will still depend on the understanding of federal institutions and bureaucracies. For example, within the context of the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act and Office of Management and Budget Circular A-95, the federal government will play a major role in determining whether state planning will become comprehensive and an effective tool of general state government or become merely a guideline "requirement" of specific functional programs, interpreted as another limited ritual to be performed in return for a federal grant.

Administrative reorganizations and constitutional revisions are undoubtedly strengthening the hands of governors. Increasing state fiscal responsibility and participation in a variety of functions implies a sense of coordination and the application of a central, comprehensive intelligence. But how are housing, transportation, economic development, and antipoverty efforts legislatively or managerially linked? Does each function tend to plan and act for itself? How effectively have state agencies planned and programmed together?

A consideration of state development policies and planning advisedly might take into account, as well, the judgments expressed by Tomazinis (5). He forecasts that a completely new era is about to commence in urban transportation and notes that, after years of (fruitless) efforts, it seems widely accepted today that, although transportation is perhaps the most important single factor in land development, the remaining

factors are many indeed and far exceed the single transportation factor in importance. As a result, professionals in the field and in governmental agencies responsible for the production and implementation of transportation planning and plans, especially in urban areas, need to adapt and improve both the plans they recommend and the process by which they study the problems and derive their conclusions.

Reflecting recent legislation, court actions, and experience with citizen groups, Tomazinis suggests several principles that are directly addressed to transportation planning but that offer insights into the usefulness of other elements of functional planning and are not without reference value to comprehensive planning as well:

1. The plan must meet the travel needs and provide for present and future travel demand of all population groups and sectors of the economy;
2. The plan must bear the absolutely minimum negative environmental impacts to the region as a whole and the specific localities and communities of the region;
3. The plan must provide for the maximum opportunities for the achievement of social goals and objectives that are in any way associated and facilitated by the transportation systems and at the same time strive to reduce by all feasible means the negative social impacts the plan may have;
4. The plan must be economically feasible, must minimize the total economic burden it imposes on the society, and must distribute its costs and benefits in a manner acceptable socially and economically; and
5. The planning process must be participatory and involve essentially the various governmental units of the region and the various population groups that make up the region.

Against the perspective of these observations, it is interesting to note some of the discussion in the 1969 State Legislative Program proposed by the Advisory Commission for Intergovernmental Relations as it dealt with state and regional planning.

The increasingly complex responsibilities of State government have created a need for strong, well-staffed, strategically located planning services to assist in formulating short and long-term State goals and needs and an inventory of resources for meeting them. The sophisticated task of relating innumerable programs and policies to one another and to those of other levels of government is a responsibility that States cannot avoid.

The vital need for such a planning capability is nowhere more clearly illustrated than by the problems arising from the increasing concentrations of population in urban areas, the plight of rural communities, and the attendant difficulty of matching needs for public services with available resources. While Federal grant-in-aid programs represent the major current national effort to assist the State and local governments, the constantly increasing number and complexity of grant programs frequently have served as an impediment to their effective utilization. These developments clearly underscore the need for a strong State and regional planning capability.

Governors and State legislatures must be able to allocate current resources among a number of competing needs through the budgetary and appropriation process. They need to analyze and assess the impact of individual programs on one another and to anticipate emerging problems and demands. These responsibilities require the closest relationship between highly qualified budget and planning staffs and call for a continuing, close, functioning relationship.

The need is increasingly recognized for a planning organization and for planning procedures capable of developing urbanization policies for the States and relating the complex Federal grant programs to one another and to State and local activities and resources. There is a pressing need for a method of coordinating departmental plans, many of which are required by Federal grant legislation as a condition for receiving funds. Yet most States do not have an effective means of coordination, and in only one-third of the States are State agencies required to obtain the approval of the governor prior to submitting applications for Federal grant assistance. The necessity of relating those grant-assisted local projects and programs which have a significant impact outside their own borders to areawide needs and objectives and to State plans and policies is still another complicating factor. Federal legislation now requires review of urban development grant applications from metropolitan areas either by a metropolitan-wide or State agency and State offices of planning are sometimes assigned a coordinative role for the utilization of Federal funds by both State agencies and their local units. However, effective planning and coordination often still is lacking. [One should note that the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act and OMB Circular A-95 is attempting to carry this forward in more positive terms.]

Not only do States have a responsibility for coping with urbanization after it has taken place; they also have a responsibility to plan for urbanization to come. The States need to act rather than merely to react. For States to fulfill their key role in the development of urbanization policy they must have a planning process that will develop the policies needed to channel and guide the growth of the State. The States through their constitutions and statutes determine the general outline and many of the details of the specific structure, form, and direction of urban growth. They should supply guidance for specific local government, metropolitan, and multicounty planning and development programs. They should establish a link between urban land use and development oriented local planning efforts and broader regional and national objectives. Although the evolution of effective State planning can be seen in a few States, it is doubtful if planning in any State government has arrived yet at a stage adequate for assuming its appropriate role in the development of State land use and urbanization policy.

Two reports of the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations include consideration of this problem and recommend that each State develop a strong planning capability in the executive branch of its State government. The Commission recommends that the planning function include formulation for consideration by the governor and the legislature of comprehensive policies and long-range plans for the effective and orderly development of the human and material resources of the State, including specifically plans and policies to guide decisions which affect the pattern of urban and social growth. The provision of a framework for coordinating functional, departmental, regional, and local plans is recommended. Further a method of formal review of State, regional, and local plans and projects and, where relevant, local implementing ordinances for their conformity with State urbanization plans and policy is recommended. More specifically, it is urged that multicounty planning agencies be assigned responsibility for reviewing applications for Federal or State physical development project grants from constituent local jurisdictions and that provision be made for review and comment on all local and areawide applications for urban planning assistance. Finally, it is recommended that State legislatures provide within their standing committee structure a means to assure continuing, systematic review and study of the progress toward the State urbanization policy.

A framework for state planning that emerges from a consideration of the ACIR model State and Regional Planning Act and from a consideration of the efforts in a number of states during the past several years suggests an emphasis on the management of resources within a short-range and long-range context. This implies the formulation and expression of policies and plans in some fashion.

When we take a look at the track record and find the cupboard not brimming over with "goodies," a couple of observations come to mind. One relates to the adequacy of the resources: money, manpower, information, and capability to do the job. The other relates to whether the case for planning is based on rhetoric or leadership (and public) conviction that policies, plans, and planning are essential to the decision-making processes of a complicated society.

A conference on organization for continuing urban transportation planning held by the Highway Research Board in late 1971 experienced some tough discussions in dealing with these points that are crucial not only to the organization but also to the very substance of continuing urban transportation planning. The relative role, support, and use of comprehensive planning in some reasonable comparison with transportation planning generated heat as well as (we hope) light; arguments as to process versus product, particularly within a context of planning as a management tool, were warm as well.

In Pennsylvania, the Appalachian Program and the Federal Land and Water Conservation Act, both enacted in 1965, have been instrumental in gaining a recognition for statewide development policies and planning.

The Appalachian Program stimulated a consideration of 52 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties (half of the people and three-fourths of the geography) that may be too dominated by past trends. Nevertheless in 1968, we produced a first cut at a state development plan in connection with projects funded in whole or in part by the program. It took an interstate, a statewide, and a multicounty regional interplay that had not previously occurred to produce this expression of direction, priorities, and projects. On the basis of this experience, we undertook a somewhat similar examination of the state's southeastern 15 counties, and that experience was eloquent commentary on the adequacy—or inadequacy—of our information and capability to deal with highly complicated and personally and politically sensitive issues and questions.

The Federal Land and Water Conservation Act, along with 2 state programs (Project 70 and Project 500), has revealed the achievability of expression of development policy and planning. A statewide outdoor recreation plan (and program) has been completed and was officially approved by the necessary state and federal agencies last fall. It reflected a state interagency participation of substantial importance and also significant multicounty regional contributions. Coordination with appropriate federal agencies was continuous and during the several years involved (1965-1971) fairly typical with regard to the tensions of bureaucracy balanced with moments of understanding.

Building on this experience and the growing recognition for state planning, both functional and comprehensive, in Pennsylvania, the staff directed attention in 1970 to a program design for state comprehensive development planning. That effort dealt with state responsibilities in terms of goals, objectives, and targets; considered social, economic, and physical concerns; took into account a regional view in formulating judgments "from Harrisburg," as it were; and looked at each major responsibility within the spectrum of the others in the interest of gaining a more viable sense of the costs and the benefits of alternatives.

With the emphasis now being placed by the Governor on a state investment plan, the economic focus has taken on heightened priority, a judgment appropriate to the times. The Office of State Planning and Development (formerly the staff of the State Planning Board) has been established, directly responsible to the Governor, and is charged with the responsibility to prepare that state investment plan within 16 months (starting January 1972). It remains to be seen how time and circumstances will permit comprehensiveness to be dealt with in the development of the state investment plan. It is expected that the state investment plan will provide the framework for all functional plans and planning, including (and especially) transportation.

It is not clear, however, how it will deal with the growth versus no-growth issue that considers not only economic productivity but social and environmental impacts as well, a value structure that Toffler talks about in *Future Shock*, or the contrasting views of an affluent society versus one that is going through the dislocations of a recession and 6 percent unemployment.

The times and the state of the art suggest that state development policies and planning be approached incrementally with regard to both time and major elements. It should deal with time in the sense of building on an issues-oriented base, which covers major questions a state government may face and increasingly rounds out the comprehensive context within which information is compiled, analyses are made, and judgments are formulated. It should deal with major elements in the sense of formulating a policy posture in major areas of responsibility, on a functional basis, drawing from increasingly shared population, economic, and land use (for example) information and analyses.

State development policies and planning, including transportation, need to reflect a common base of population, economic, and resource information and analyses. State governments need to be encouraged to move more in the direction of a goals definition that is part of a systematic consideration of overall objectives, targets, needs, deficiencies, implementing programs and projects, and the periodic recycling of these judgments.

Functional elements will always compete for priority of attention and support, e.g., transportation versus education and welfare versus environment. But if each functional element is to be viewed and understood as fitting into a total structure rather than as being the umbrella for the solution to all questions, then overall definition and direction must gain the same recognition and support and produce a usefulness that often is associated only with the reality of a physical facility we can see and use.

This larger context is important for transportation decisions. It is essential to intermodal judgments. This larger context is important and is essential to transportation decisions and intermodal judgments, among other reasons, because these decisions and judgments should be used by society in shaping what it determines it wishes to be.

## REFERENCES

1. Comprehensive Planning for Metropolitan Development. Washington Center for Metropolitan Studies, Washington, D. C., 1970, p. 101.
2. Bruckner, D. J. R. No Clout—Governor's Powers Steadily Declining. Los Angeles Times News Service, Sept. 1971.
3. Lisagor, P. Bad News for Governors. Chicago Daily News, Sept. 1971.
4. Bruckner, D. J. R. States Are Copping Out. Los Angeles Times News Service, Sept. 1971.
5. Tomazinis, A. New Elements in the Urban Transportation Process for the 1970's. Presented at AIP Conf., San Francisco, Oct. 1971.