

Policy and Planning Considerations

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THE Highway Act of 1962 required that every urban region with a population of 50,000 or more prepare a comprehensive land use and transportation study and plan. The Bureau of Public Roads required that the studies include inventories and analyses of ten basic elements: (a) economic factors affecting development, (b) population, (c) land use, (d) transportation facilities, including those for mass transportation, (e) travel patterns, (f) terminal and transfer facilities, (g) traffic control features, (h) zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, building codes, etc., (i) financial resources, (j) social and community value factors, such as preservation of open space, parks and recreational facilities; preservation of historical sites and buildings; environmental amenities, and aesthetics.

Thus was set in motion a national planning program involving nearly 250 metropolitan regions at a scale and cost never before dreamed of. So broad was the required study that it could be seen to relate to any long list of the cumulative ills and problems of the American city: obsolescence, decay and instability at the center, uncontrolled development at the periphery, a generally deficient living environment because of inadequate planning or no planning in the past, congested circulation, uneven accessibility, imbalance and obsolescence of public facilities, instability of activity patterns reflecting a general trend of escaping from the older city center to the newer suburban fringe, residential segregation and limiting of choice for minority groups, and finally a general indictment that the city is visually characterless and confused as well as noisy and uncomfortable.

Manifestly, the most perfect conceivable transportation plan, taken alone, could never hope to solve the total ills of the city. On the other hand, the result of these transportation and land use studies has been to lay the groundwork in this nation of cities for the greatest period of creative planning any nation has ever known. As the conviction, at both the Federal and the local levels, has grown that somehow the ills of the city must be faced up to and solutions found, many new tools have been developed: the annual recertification of the Workable Program for Urban Renewal, the Community Renewal Program, the Planning Provisions of Section 701 of the Housing Act of 1954, public assistance for regional planning, and more recently the Model Neighborhood Program of 1966 and the Neighborhood Development Program of 1968.

While these and many other special purpose programs such as those relating to health, education, and welfare; conservation; and pollution control were being introduced, it was hardly surprising that in the process of constructing thousands of miles of urban freeways in the Interstate System in the effort to keep urban America mobile, inevitably some violence has been done to traditions, human values, aspirations, goals, and objectives of the urban resident in America's cities. Opposition and open resistance to both highway programs and renewal programs has appeared, and in some instances entire urban highway programs have been brought to a virtual halt. It was clear that better ways, new and innovative ways, must be found to respond to the growing concerns of cities across the nation that the price paid for freeway building—in loss of tax dollars, in human dislocation, in community dislocation and in the visual scarring of cities—was too great!

One of these ways is the concept of development of multiple use and joint development of transportation rights-of-way, and a second way is the design team approach to transportation corridor planning. Out of the combination of these two ideas, emerges one insistent and compelling idea: that of using the highway to structure or restructure the city. The Bureau of Public Roads has declared itself "ready to work with the nation's cities—to seek new and bold uses of the joint development concept to achieve maximum use of that part of our scarce urban land which must be devoted to highway transportation."

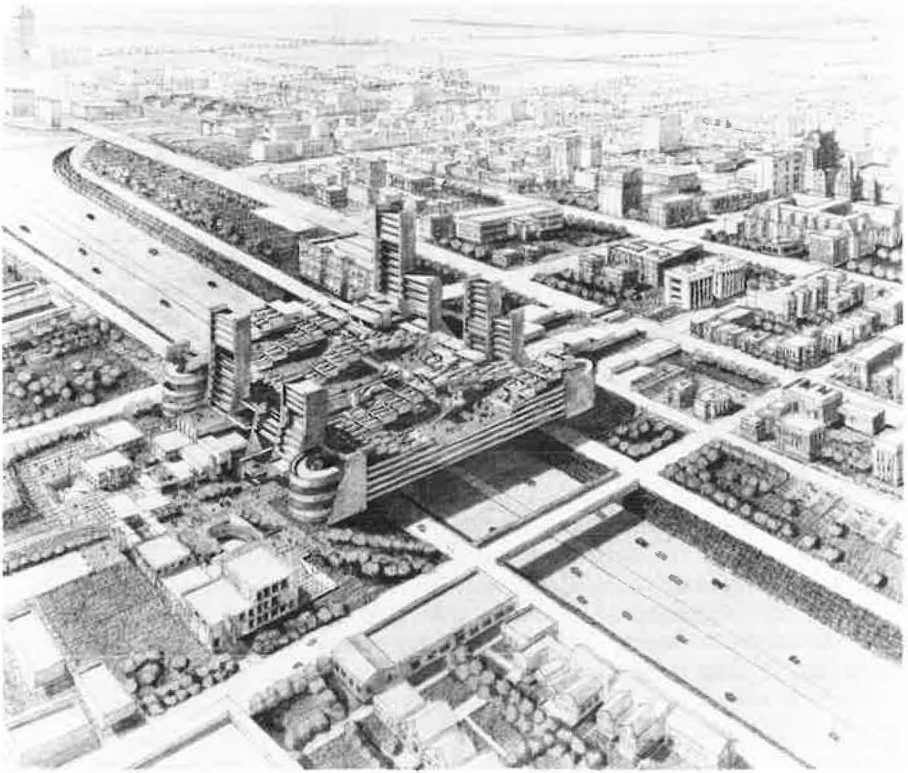
If the above approach is to succeed, cities must coordinate freeway considerations with the comprehensive planning of every affected community, city, and region. The planning and design of a freeway in the urban environment should be, in fact, accomplished by a competent planning body concerned with the shaping of each community, region, and state, and its highways into a balanced and integrated system. Proper weight should be given to the convenience, safety, comfort, beauty, and economic viability of every area served.

I am certain that joint development and multiple use of transportation rights-of-way can become one of the most positively creative forces in the design and shaping of the American city of the future — if the program's full potential for good is guaranteed by a formally established requirement that the corridor design become an integral part of a comprehensive urban design concept plan for the city as a whole.

The joint project corridor concept, in its broadest potential use, provides a sophisticated and effective tool for refining and more sharply molding the form and image of the city if it is applied within a truly creative comprehensive planning and design framework, at metropolitan, region, city, district, community, and neighborhood level. By a "truly creative comprehensive planning framework," I mean a planning framework including all ten elements in the comprehensive land use and transportation study as required by the Bureau of Public Roads and an additional element — the design concept plan. This plan will provide a basic design framework for the urban structure at the scale of region, city, and district. Such a broad concept study for the entire city and urban region is absolutely essential if we are to transform a visually characterless and confused city into a city of dramatic beauty and visual excitement. Within such a comprehensive planning policy framework that will establish land use and transportation patterns including intensity of land development, open space patterns, and a broad expression of the basic skeletal form of region and city, the concept of joint development and multiple use of rights-of-way could become the most promising concept in the design of cities in the future. If the design concept team approach is valid and of such great promise in transportation corridor design (as I feel certain it is), then how much more valid must be the application of the design concept team approach to the entire city and metropolitan region itself.

Environmental and Social Impacts of the Physical Plan

In order to prepare a comprehensive plan which will satisfy the human values and goals of the community, better ways must be found to identify these goals and values. Sample surveys of attitudes are helpful but not always conclusive. Much more reliable information is needed on questions such as, What is the relation of the physical city to man and to society? How is individual and family life affected by the kind of city we live in? What is it that people value most in society, and what kinds of human potential is society most concerned with reinforcing and enhancing? What is the best environment for learning and growing as an individual in society? What is the cause of alienation of people from their society, their community, and from their identity with their immediate family and surroundings?



Proposal for a parking-housing complex over the John Lodge Freeway for Wayne State University. The facility would provide parking for 2500 cars and 260 one and two bedroom dwelling units. A clear span of 230 feet would be required and the structure might use a cable suspension system rather than truss and girder. (Source: O'Dell, Hewlett and Luckenbach Inc., Birmingham, Michigan, 1968.)

Much more must be learned about the contribution of a better designed environment toward satisfying psychological, social, and emotional needs of all the people of the city — the poor, the minorities, the disadvantaged, the uneducated, the forgotten — as well as of those who are thought to have fewer problems.

While there are no easy or conclusive answers to such broad questions concerning the goals of society, research into the response of urban people to the environment of the city has resulted in some tentative findings that have a significant bearing on what people look for and want in their environment. Urban sociologists and psychologists have studied human reactions to the human environment.

A few city planners have begun to do research on the kind of city people seem to want.

Kevin Lynch has contributed unusual insight into the problem of what people look for in the urban environment and has done much to articulate design goals for the city. His observations are clearly relevant to design for multiple use of rights-of-way. Such a comprehensive city-wide design concept study would include such considerations as provision for a wide variety or mix of activities, of accommodation, and of structural characteristics, development of a transportation grid with lines of circulation differentiated with respect to intensity and speed of travel, the encouragement of peaks of activity and density in sharply defined areas such as the central business district, the form of such intense use centers in relation to transportation corridors, and a system of linked major open spaces designed so as to give as vivid a visual image as possible.

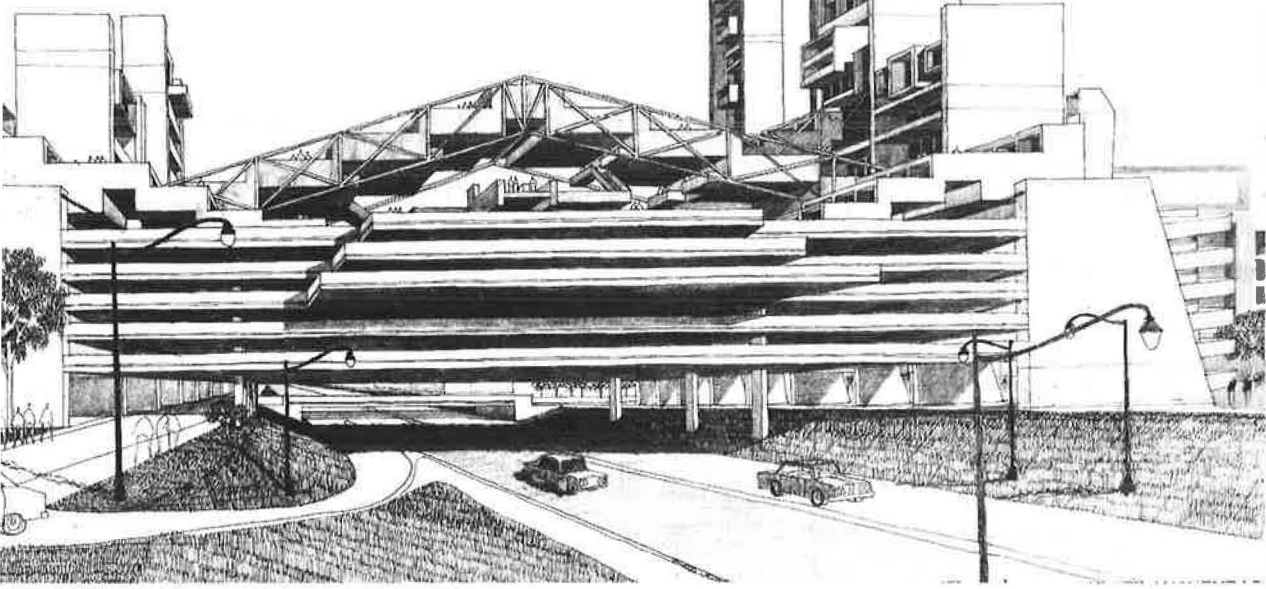
Such a metropolitan and city design concept plan must be intelligible to the citizens of the region and it must represent their goals for a metropolitan form that will include the opportunity for choice — by providing ready access to the greatest variety of goods, services, and facilities; choice of kind of habitat; and access to many kinds of environment at will, with maximum personal control over environment. This wide range of choice requires an environment of great variety — a fine grain mix of land uses and services linked together by quick and convenient transportation. It follows that there will be a possibility of a high degree of interaction between people but under the full control of the individual to interact or not as he wishes. Other goals would include reasonable cost, comfort, participation, growth and adaptability, continuity, and imaginability.

It is not likely that many of the 250 comprehensive land use and transportation studies now in preparation have found really convincing answers to the complex problem of identifying goals and translating these goals into physical plans which will adequately satisfy the goals. In order to make valid use of socioeconomic goals in determining metropolitan or city form, we must first determine how explicit goals can be better served by one physical plan than by another.

Unless we can give expression to socioeconomic goals in formulating the community development plan — the planning process itself might be academic, since effectuation decisions will be based on physical developments reflected in the plan. In the effort to determine priorities for programs for improving the life of people in the city, we must find ways to determine what are the really most critical social issues, what are the most urgent problems in the judgment of the citizens of the community. To do this the citizens must set the priorities; the people of the city must be involved.

This process of involving people in decision-making about the physical environment or the social environment is really much more

Side view of proposed parking-housing complex over John Lodge Freeway.



important than the plan on the wall. We must find a way to conceive of whole complex systems of development that engage the social, the economic, the physical, and the institutional in one comprehensive concept. The really important goals are the goals related to social and economic development. The formulation of a physical design plan for the city or region must rest on what kind of physical development is going to maximize the achievement of these social goals.

The relationship of people to community and of community to land is the basis for urban form. People want identity with the community; they also want to be free from the institutionalization of their lives that can result from over-planning and from massive and sudden change and human dislocation. The objective in urban planning is the development of the individual, of the family, and of the group.

Studies have shown that the frequency and extent of use of physical facilities such as schools, public health facilities, recreation and athletic facilities, branch libraries, social clubs, churches, and shopping facilities may be greatly influenced by the location chosen for these facilities and by the relationship to the other facilities. For example, it has been found that people tend to be more likely to use a public health clinic or a branch library if it is located in or adjacent to a shopping center or next to a school. Such desirable relationships can be expressed as location criteria and will help the planner develop policies that are problem-oriented — that have to do with solving problems of the here and now.

Continued effort must be made through the use of opinion surveys and human response studies of a psychological and sociological nature to determine which alternative design concepts — for housing, for shopping, for schools, parks, health centers, family centers, employment areas — are preferred by the people of the community.

In the design for multiple use of transportation rights-of-way, individual projects might be examined with respect to such environmental factors as neighborhood and social impacts, city and regional impacts, open space and nature, cultural assets, amenities from the road, and economic factors.

In examples where freeways have already been completed and opportunities exist for multiple use development, the design concept should be in harmony with the social goals of the citizens in the affected neighborhood, and might include facilities needed to serve the people in the area — housing, shopping, a recreation center, for example.

Intergovernmental Relations and Responsibilities

The Federal role, particularly through the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Transportation in the joint development and multiple use of rights-of-way, is essentially one of encouraging a wider adoption of the concept at the local level. The Model Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966 establishes methods for Federal encouragement of coordinated metropolitan development.

The regional planning agency must make a favorable recommendation on any proposed joint use project as consistent with the comprehensive regional plan. The regional planning agency and the comprehensive land use and transportation planning agency might well include in their planning programs an evaluation of multiple use of rights-of-way in connection with the total mileage of the freeway network being studied. This evaluation could lead to a priority rating of all possible sections of the freeway network which could accommodate multiple-use and joint development projects based on such evaluation factors as compatibility with the planning and design criteria relating to the general location of the project, benefits to the adjoining section of the region, functional relationship to surrounding land use, and circulation considerations and economic justification factors. It would be logical for the comprehensive land use and transportation study to formally recommend general lineal sections of the freeway system that it believes to be advantageous for multiple use projects, and also those lineal sections which should be specifically excluded from development of multiple uses over air rights where the disadvantages would clearly outweigh the advantages.

The state highway department should provide a formal policy statement representing its commitment to cooperate with cities, counties, and towns and the terms governing granting of air rights, stan-

dards of development, clearances, basis for purchase or lease of air rights over the freeways and contract procedures generally.

The city through the city planning commission of the central city should have responsibility for independently studying joint project opportunities within the city while the transportation planning agency would invite joint project proposals. Initiative should be with the comprehensive city planning agency because that agency is responsible for preparation and updating of the comprehensive city plan, including the urban design concept plan, which provides a direct visual design framework and criteria for evaluation of the visual design as well as all other comprehensive planning aspects of the project.

The government jurisdiction that controls the private property adjacent to the study area and has planning jurisdiction over the study area is the logical body to coordinate the preparation of planning studies for multiple use projects. The actual studies and plans will logically be developed by the government or private agency that intends to use the project when completed.

Four general types of public building opportunities in relation to the comprehensive city plan include medical facilities, educational buildings, government facilities, and cultural public assembly facilities. In addition to these categories, other use types might include churches, welfare institutions, labor union halls, and civic social and fraternal associations. In those projects involving a variety or a combination of uses such as housing; public, cultural, and recreational facilities; and private shopping facilities, a special development authority would be the logical primary sponsor responsible for the construction of the project and its management and leasing or cooperative ownership arrangements.

Zoning and Land Use Controls

The zoning ordinance should provide a planned development district to accommodate a variety of compatible uses and to permit and encourage the maximum creativity and design innovation. The project should be evaluated as a total unified design entity compatible in land uses and design concept with the surrounding land uses.

It may frequently occur that major multiple-use projects may require exceptional consideration and possibly waivers of existing zoning or other use controls that were not enacted with such innovative developments in mind. If present zoning ordinances do not provide effective district controls for such projects, the appropriate Federal agencies such as the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Transportation might initiate the development of recommended zoning district definitions and regulations for consideration by local jurisdictions at county or city level.

Program Priorities

It is most logical that the comprehensive planning agency play a strong continuing role in fostering the joint project concept and coordinating its use. A major responsibility of the planning agency should be to identify the potentials for the joint project development at the earliest possible stage of selection of route and design characteristics to assure that the potentials are taken into account in relating the route to the land use plan for the adjoining area. There should be early, continuing, and full collaboration between the comprehensive planning agency, the transportation planning agency, and the user-developer agency interested in the multiple use project. The planning agency can furnish the joint developers with all available information or development needs on the recommendations of the design concept plan.

Because the Interstate System is far advanced in planning and construction in most of the major cities of the nation, a high priority assignment initially will be an evaluation of all existing freeway routes as to feasibility of multiple use of rights-of-way, and as to impact of such development on present planning and design concepts and on completed projects in the vicinity of freeway development project proposals.

Panel Discussion

MR. BURMEISTER: With the sophistication of the comprehensive planning that has been carried on by the various planning units in these cities and in areas and regions we now have for the most part quite well-developed land use plans, and with these land use plans in mind we can to a considerable degree develop the type of multiple use that might be desirable for the highway.

I believe that the organization of intergovernmental committees consisting of elected officials is one of the best ways to get at the protection of these proposed uses so that our land use planning will not be totally disrupted. I am thinking of master plans, I am thinking of zoning ordinances, and so forth.

Do you believe that the present methods of protection I have mentioned are adequate to assure that when these highways are ultimately developed on the basis of the current land uses that these land uses will still be effective: in other words, that for selfish gains the local units have not changed residential areas to industrial areas, and so forth?

MR. BLESSING: Recently a map was made of the Detroit area, in which the intent was to show the time span between initial speculative investment in large land areas and eventual development. I think the time span was about 25 years, and herein lies the problem. An investor purchased rural farm land, paid taxes on it over a 25-year period, often he sought changes in zoning, and then was ready to develop it. Since zoning is essentially the instrument of the local incorporated area, the developer approaches the local jurisdiction to secure zoning changes.

Local pressures by developers on local zoning boards make effective land use control difficult in terms of regional land use planning. This would seem to suggest that if you are going to spend all the time, money, and effort in making a comprehensive regional plan, through a council of governments or similar administrative device, more effective regional zoning controls must be found.

The essential problem is whether you can do something at a level comprehending the regional pattern that is going to provide effective zoning control. The local suburban village and township jurisdictions are frequently susceptible to influence, often with good intentions, so that it may be questioned whether the regional plan can be effectuated without some form of effective regional zoning. Since suburban zoning is usually administered at the level of towns, townships, and villages, their zoning ordinances and maps should reflect the proposals of the regional plan.

MR. TABOR: Mr. Blessing stated that the citizens should set priorities and social goals. It seemed to me that if we start talking about social goals it becomes a pretty ambiguous term. Social goals do not stay social goals very long. They become political goals one way or the other, and they become political goals pretty quickly. I think that the elected governing members of a local government eventually have to make decisions and set the priorities based on these political goals.

I think the sooner we start realizing that we are talking about political goals, and we have to go through a political process to try to determine what we have been traditionally doing, that we are going to come closer to understanding the decision-making process.

We have to talk in terms of politics. We have to talk in terms of who is going to finally make those decisions, and it is not going to be citizens themselves, it is going to be elected governing board members that are going to make those decisions.

MR. BLESSING: Well, I essentially agree with you. But for any city that has been through street riots where millions of dollars of damage was done, it was an emotional thing. A riot is a search for a share in decision making as Irving Rubin has expressed it. It changes the political thinking of that city.

Now, just as encouragement, we have 108 citizen members in the Detroit model city governing board. We tried last April to effectuate

through council action a rather considerable modification of the 1950 master plan of major thoroughfares, so the citizens' board said they were going to take a look at it. They wrote the council and asked that no action be taken until they rendered their report. There were two extensions of 30 days each, and within the past month there have been some intensive discussions again with this citizens' governing group and its committee on transportation. The citizens were running the committee, and discussions were set up to determine the wishes of the citizens.

Fortunately the citizens through the large 108-member group sent a letter to the common council in which they concurred in all but three route problems. I would say 95 percent of the thoroughfare plan gained the concurrence of the Model City group after discussions.

As it stands, I believe we will have favorable citizen action on all but one route. And that route is not insoluble. It may be resolved the way the citizens propose; there may be some degree of reasonable compromise.

In effect, the mayor and council said to the citizens "We will listen to you — we want your comments, and your support, but in the final decision responsibility rests with the elected officials, with a responsibility to the entire city with broader interests than those of the Model City with a population of 140,000 — less than 10 percent of the total city population."

In this way you approach problems seeking with constructive cooperation in order to avoid an impasse. I agree with you that this is what democratic government is all about. But you have got to give some attention to both the city-wide and local citizen points of view.