

# GROWTH MANAGEMENT: A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Philip Hammer, Hammer, Siler, George Associates, Washington, D.C.

This paper examines the role of the "growth management" framework being built at the local level and its effect on land use and transportation planning. Two considerations, fiscal and environmental, are basic to the position of local leaders who advocate managing or controlling growth along some rational lines. The key elements of growth management presented in this paper include tight controls over capital expenditures for water and sewer facilities and for transportation (both highways and transit); innovative revisions of zoning and subdivision regulations; coordinated administration of open space and park development programs; and initiation of new public mechanisms for joint public-private efforts in land development. Beyond these basic considerations, there are two other trends of particular significance. One is that the role of land use planning is taking on increasing significance as an integral part of the movement to manage growth. The other is that highway planning, which has dominated the transportation field, is losing its prominence in the local arena. This paper identifies three implications for transportation planning: Highway planning, as such, will come to have a new relationship to the local land use planning process; highway planning will be more fully integrated into a broader discipline of transportation planning based on multimodal movement of people and goods within growing urban areas; the linkage between transportation and land use planning will become a great deal closer in the future, with a set of relationships and feedbacks that will substantially cement the two disciplines.

•WE ARE in a period of profound transition on public policies affecting physical development in the United States. At all levels of government it is a time of groping and reappraisal.

In many respects, this reappraisal has been going on for several years. With the relative ineffectiveness of top-down approaches to the mounting problems of urban growth, a bipartisan effort was initiated in behalf of a "new federalism" pledged to shift responsibility and power for land use and development controls to the state and local levels. Before the guidelines for a new *modus operandi* could be fully worked out, however, crises in the environmental and energy fields have further complicated an already complex matrix of intergovernmental relationships.

This paper focuses on the functions of land use and transportation planning and on the new directions and imperatives posed for these functions by the events that are taking place. The basic theme of this paper is that a new "growth management" framework is being built at the local level that is decisively affecting both of these planning functions and their relationships to each other. New strategies are being called for in both land use and transportation planning, including strategies that can link them in a much closer liaison than existed before.

Following 3 decades of pell-mell growth, we are now witnessing a nationwide countermovement of public pressure that would check if not reverse past trends. It is no fly-by-night countermovement, although it has its share of kooks. At the middle of the spectrum of voices in the countermovement (and the middle is increasingly attracting

the real leadership of the community) is an insistence on managing or controlling growth along some rational lines.

Fiscal and environmental considerations are basic to the position of the hard-core middle. The continued horizontal growth in suburban jurisdictions has put immense financial pressures on local governments and their constituents, e.g., overextended utility systems, overextended transportation networks, duplication of services and facilities, excess capacities in close-in neighborhoods, bypassing of developable and potentially taxable land, rising service costs and taxes, and other forms of public and private inefficiencies. From an environmental standpoint, the negative forces have been building up in terms of mounting traffic congestion, physical blight, overcrowding in some neighborhoods and abandonment in others, and pollution (or degradation) of land, air, and water resources.

It has been the latter factor, damage to the resource base, that has finally triggered the clamor for control and management. Planners with their warnings and even public administrators with their rising tax bills had not provided the public with enough incentives for change in development policy. It took the issue of environmental protection and the mechanisms afforded by the conservation effort to provide the necessary muscle.

The evidence of this new insistence on doing something about the growth problem is a good deal more fundamental even than indicated by the dozens of highway projects that have been stopped by citizen action through the courts. There is a widespread movement to fashion new master plans calling for ceilings on future growth and prescribing precise definitions of settlement patterns. The first outlines of judicial review are just becoming visible. It is clear that capricious and arbitrary no-growth policies will not stand up in the courts; however, long-range development plans that limit and control growth within the framework of reasonable use, conservation, and protection of resources (both fiscal and physical) will be supported. There is little doubt that some form of growth management will dominate public policy thinking in the decade ahead.

If indeed there is any question about this following the introduction of environmental considerations and controls, the energy crisis should dispel it. No one fully knows the implications of fuel shortages for patterns of physical development and human settlement, but the pressures can only be toward different growth and development patterns in the future. The caveats are beginning to surface: Both time and distance factors in transportation must be shortened; compactness in development patterns must be sought in place of sprawl; higher densities must be given higher priorities in urban design; and the long-deferred issue of public transit versus highways must be settled, despite what Detroit does in mass producing smaller automobiles. These at least are some preliminary indications. Energy shortages coupled with environmental, entrepreneurial, public finance, and quality-of-life considerations can only mean growing interest in new patterns of land development.

The stage is already set for new growth management policies, however chaotic the lines of policy-making and implementation now are. Federal land use and urban growth legislation is in the making in Washington; even as these bills are being debated, EPA directives are already prescribing new development controls, and there will soon be others from the Federal Energy Office that could have even more drastic effects. Practically every state is in the process of developing land use plans; many already have them in effect, and some with very tight development restrictions. (This puts the states in the land use business for the first time on any broad scale.) And, as indicated earlier, many local jurisdictions are putting together plans and fashioning implementation programs on management of growth.

### THE GROWTH MANAGEMENT CONCEPT

It would appear that a new discipline of growth management is emerging in response to an accumulation of forces: the fiscal and environmental problems of sprawl so familiar to planners, the rising public concern about both the quality of life and the cost of living, and the new double-barreled crises of a mistreated ecology and a fuel shortage. The fact is that strong public efforts are being directed, primarily at the local level, toward pulling together the available tools of government to manage the level and distribution of physical growth.

For purposes of this paper, these efforts are called "growth management." These widespread efforts are mostly positive rather than negative (although going to court to stop expressways or getting injunctions against new private subdivisions seems to get the most publicity).

The trend is toward the kind of coordination between planning and public service delivery (i.e., implementation) that land use planners have been preaching for years. It is primarily a phenomenon affecting and related to local government, because that is where most of the implementation devices are and where there are pressure points that will respond to public opinion. There are currently few examples of a fully articulated growth management program, but two things are clear: that efforts to move in that direction are widespread and that attitudes toward planning and management of physical growth are changing rapidly.

What we are seeing in many situations is the promulgation of new master plans representing community growth objectives and the translation of these growth objectives into immediate implementation devices such as capital improvement budgets, street and highway construction plans, and zoning regulations. There is nothing new or unconventional about this approach except that it is finally being used. The more sophisticated efforts are moving toward an across-the-board integration of the key elements of growth management, which include

1. Tight controls (through PPBS techniques) over capital expenditures for water and sewer facilities and for transportation (both highways and transit),
2. Innovative revisions of zoning and subdivision regulations,
3. Coordinated administration of open space and park development programs, and
4. Initiation of new public mechanisms for joint public-private efforts in land development.

At whatever level of sophistication, these mounting waves of interest in growth management focus on the same thing: more effective control of settlement patterns. They want either to keep things the way they are or to control future growth in a way different from how it has been controlled. These efforts have another element in common; they work primarily within the framework of individual governmental jurisdictions where there are powers of implementation. This fact poses many problems, of course. It means competition and tension between different jurisdictions within any metropolitan region. It sets into motion forces that run counter to past efforts that have properly dealt with many of the basic problems on a regional basis, which is particularly true of transportation.

The potential intergovernmental confusion at the local level is compounded by developments at other levels of government. Through revenue sharing and other measures to improve local government capabilities, federal policy was directed toward a major shift in responsibility and power, but both the environmental and the energy crises have prompted new initiatives for direct federal action. Where the states' new head of steam in matters of land use and environmental control will carry them, nobody knows. And if the local jurisdictions decide on total and individual growth management, the role of regional bodies, both planning and operational, will be doubtful.

The fact remains, however, that the local trust toward growth management is under way. For both land use and transportation planning, and particularly for the relationship between the two, it is a new ball game, regardless of how the cookie crumbles.

At the risk of exaggeration and oversimplicity, a historical note might put the current situation in a clearer perspective. For nearly 3 decades, both land use and transportation planning have been concerned primarily with accommodating the suburban growth overspill that has taken place in America. Although both planning disciplines attempted to influence development along rational lines—with due regard for design, environmental, and efficiency considerations—the essential achievement was one of accommodating the torrent of growth that was generated. The most decisive policies of federal, state, and local governments were those that generated and supported the momentum of growth. One result was that most regional transportation and land use plans looked alike, with different types of growth neatly accommodated and tucked within a circular highway framework. This was only a minor product of the growth syndrome,

however (although it suggests that planning did little to solve the real problem that the patterns of sprawl created). The real problems created by growth patterns are at the base of today's countermovement of public opinion and public policy: large-scale despoiling of physical resources, overextension of local government capabilities, economic and social decline of the central city, and threats to quality of life, which are now widely perceived.

### Growth Management and Planning

Beyond these basic considerations, there are two other trends of particular significance. One is that the role of land use planning is taking on increasing significance as an integral part of the movement to manage growth. The other is that highway planning, which has dominated the transportation planning field, is losing its support in the local arena. These two countertrends will determine the kinds of relationships between land use and transportation planning in the days ahead.

The heightened role of land use planning has already been alluded to. After decades of only peripheral success in influencing settlement patterns, it appears that planning is being thrust into a key position within the growth management context. Regardless of how effective one feels that planning has been in the past, its new role can greatly increase its relevance to measures of implementation.

There are two reasons for this strengthened role. One is that the exercise of governmental powers to manage the level or distribution of growth, through capital expenditures, delivery of public services, control of land use, and so on, calls for a planning framework if it is to be effectively coordinated. As local governments respond to public opinion and to environmental and energy considerations (including federal directives), they are turning to the planners for guidelines on the basis of which public programs might be timed, budgeted, and administered to meet growth management objectives. The evidence that this is happening throughout the country is widespread.

The other reason, as noted earlier, is that the courts are holding that growth management must proceed on the basis of a reasonable plan. It is not within the power of local governments to peremptorily prohibit the inflow of people, goods, or investments. They can, however, take measures to manage and control growth in such a way that their environments are protected, their resources are conserved, their financial capacities are matched, and their character is preserved. Again, basic to such management efforts is a plan that relates goals and objectives to the resources at hand.

### Changes in Planning

Even as land use plans take on greater importance in public policy-making, they will be subject to important changes. Long-range master plans must be recast to have direct relevance and usefulness to short-range programming and budgeting. In some jurisdictions, new staging plans are being devised to translate long-range objectives into short-range program recommendations. Regardless of the methods used, land use planning will be thrust much more actively into the governmental process.

A different situation is emerging for highway planning. For many years highway planning has enjoyed a high degree of independence and has exercised a high degree of initiative in providing the transportation response to urban growth. The large-scale availability of federal and state funds and the use of state personnel in major highway planning efforts have supported a largely independent approach to transportation planning in most urban areas. This is not to say, of course, that highway planning has not been integrated into local and regional land use planning processes; both legally and as a matter of practical cooperation, highway and land use planning have been closely interrelated. The fact remains, however, that the land use patterns of most urban areas (particularly the suburbs) have reflected the strong influence of highway patterns, which in turn have often reflected transportation rather than land use objectives.

In most cases, land use and transportation objectives have not been incompatible. Both sets of plans have had as their primary goal the accommodation of growth, and it has been the responsibility of the land use planner to be aware of the implications of the highways that are proposed. Again, however, joint plans have been predominantly

highway-oriented for the obvious reason that highways have been the backbone of physical settlement patterns.

The strong influence of highway planning on development patterns, however, may now be waning. Dozens of highway projects have been stopped in the courts following citizen actions relating to environmental impact. There are uncompleted urban segments of the Interstate Highway System and other primary road networks throughout the country. Questions are now being raised by responsible citizens and public officials about the preponderant influence that highway planning may have played in the development process in the past. The new concept of growth management puts primary emphasis on determining optimum patterns as well as levels of growth; then transportation planning can provide one of the major tools for achieving the land use objectives. Highway plans that have been projected in many urban areas are no longer being accepted as givens but are being subjected to reexamination in light of new values and priorities of public policy.

In theory, of course, this has always been the joint approach of land use and transportation planning. It has rarely been brought into sharp focus, however, because of the overwhelming momentum of growth pressures that forced primary attention on accommodating the growth syndrome. The turn now is toward managing and controlling growth, not simply accommodating it. The efforts of local governments to rethink the development process is being matched by innovative approaches at the state level that point in the same direction—in some cases involving direct intervention in the local development process. Environmental and energy imperatives are also interjecting the federal government into the process, as already noted.

There are three obvious implications for transportation planning:

1. Highway planning, as such, will come to have a new relationship to the local land use planning process;
2. Highway planning will be more fully integrated into a broader discipline of transportation planning that relates to multimodal movement of people and goods within the growing urban areas; and
3. The linkage between transportation and land use planning will become a great deal closer in the future, with relationships and feedbacks that will substantially cement the two disciplines.

It is only through the effective wedding of these two disciplines that the objectives of growth management can be achieved, of course. Along with the availability of water and sewerage, transportation is the most decisive determinant of the human settlement pattern. If new and more efficient patterns of development are sought, their realization will depend on how well transportation facilities accommodate their requirements. New definitions of economic viability might have to be applied to the transportation systems under consideration; new technologies might have to be explored more vigorously if transportation systems are to serve new patterns of development. In any event, effective land use planning cannot proceed without effective transportation planning involving rapid transit, bus systems and other movers of people and goods in addition to automobiles.

### Problems and Issues Ahead

The foregoing has dealt primarily with political and institutional changes that are taking place in response to changing problems and conditions. The transition taking place in public policy has been a long time in the making, but it also reflects crises that have triggered governmental responses not foreseen a few years ago.

There should be no doubt that urban America faces continued heavy growth pressures over the next 2 decades, despite all of the talk about zero population growth and the facts about the falling birthrate. There will be continued pressures to develop or redevelop lands. These pressures will reflect shifts in the location of people, businesses, functions, activities, and institutions and responses of government to meet the demands generated thereby.

Even at today's relatively low birthrate, the momentum of growth will call for substantial population increases for another 30 or 40 years. The household formation rate is still close to its all-time peak. Although rural-urban migration is off sharply from what it was in the first two postwar decades, it is still under way; there are also continued shifts of population and plants between and among metropolitan areas.