

COORDINATION OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING AND DEVELOPING TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES: WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM ABROAD?

E. H. Holmes, Consultant, International Road Federation

Coordination of transportation planning and general urban planning in several countries that were visited is not too difficult simply because both are done by the same planning units. Transportation is regarded not only as an element of the infrastructure to serve land uses but also as a land use. Therefore, it is included as an integral element of the overall plan. Planning is carried on generally in 2 stages. The first is a coarse-grained plan at metropolitan scale; the second is a fine-grained plan, including zoning regulations, for each jurisdiction within the area. At each stage, the plan is reviewed at a higher government level for technical adequacy to ensure compatibility between the infrastructure and the proposed public and private development. When the plans are approved, they become legally binding and can be changed only by repeating the process. Public programs can be kept in harmony because the planning units, which are the line units of government, also develop for approval long- and medium-range programs and annual budgets. Except for 2 cities visited, however, keeping the timing of private and public development compatible still presents difficulties.

•IN THE BELIEF that the experience of other countries might be helpful to the United States in meeting the problems of its urban areas, the Federal Highway Administration contracted with the International Road Federation to investigate the practices of several other countries in planning and developing transportation facilities. The study included Canada, Australia, and 8 European countries. Planning and some degree of control of development have been accepted practices for many years, particularly in European countries, but the relatively sudden emergence of the motor vehicle as an important factor in personal travel has brought the problem of realistic planning and development control into sharp focus. Planning and other officials are responding in a variety of ways to take full advantage of the capability of the motor vehicle to provide personal mobility while preventing its dominance of other desired urban values. Even though approaches to achieving compatibility among transportation and other elements of urban life are varied, a number of threads in the planning fabric are common to most of the countries visited.

ORGANIZATION FOR PLANNING

Perhaps the most noticeable common thread is the organization for planning, for generally transportation planning and general urban planning are carried out by the same planning agency or unit of government. In the United States, effort over many years was directed to developing coordination between transportation and land use planning, for here generally the 2 functions were being performed by different government agencies often at different levels of government. With all planning in a jurisdiction under a single unit of government, the need for coordination disappears. Transportation planning is but one aspect of the overall plan, and the transportation plan becomes an integral rather than a coordinated element in the broad total plan. Like the United States, other countries recognize that transportation must serve land use. But other

countries, in practice, also regard transportation as a land use. Therefore, it is planned as any other element of the infrastructure. The United States seems to have accepted too readily that transportation facilities must be planned to serve the independently planned land use; other countries perceive that the issue is 2-sided and that land can be effectively used only if the transportation demands of the proposed use can be effectively provided. Resting all planning functions in the same agency permits this integrated planning approach.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES

Another thread common to all countries visited seemed to be the legal requirements and administrative practices under which the continuum of planning from earliest concepts to ultimate realization of plans is authorized and under which a hierarchy of planning and development control has evolved.

In all of the countries, an official plan or policy for development exists at national or regional scale. In the larger countries, this type of plan is at least at provincial or statewide scale. These plans or policy statements are prepared for parliamentary approval by a cabinet department (such as the Department of Interior). They seek to channel appropriate development in areas best suited for it on an overall basis. Universally, policy discourages further growth in the largest metropolitan areas and encourages growth of the moderate-sized metropolitan areas or new or greatly expanded small cities.

Within general policies or guidelines, local officials must develop their more specific plans covering individual cities and metropolitan areas. Generally, the plans for the specific areas are developed in 2 stages, which are spelled out most precisely by regulations in England and Scotland where the 2 stages are identified as the structure plan and the local plan. Let us use Great Britain as an example. The structure plan is, in effect, a statement of goals and policies for development of the area with an accompanying sketch map at a "grain size" so coarse that individual parcels may not be identifiable. The structure plan is prepared for the metropolitan areas by planning departments representing the individual jurisdictions, for approval by the central government. The central government's review is focused on the adherence of the plan to national policies and guidelines and the technical adequacy of the planning itself. It does not undertake to exercise its judgment on the manner in which the local jurisdictions elect to provide for their development with respect to the character of housing (high or low rise) or density of development as long as transportation and other elements of the infrastructure can serve it.

Other countries follow procedures differing somewhat in detail but not in principle. The makeup of the metropolitan agencies charged with the preparation of the first-stage plan varies, but their functions are roughly the same, and in all cases the plan must be reviewed at a state or national level (sometimes both) and approved.

The plan at the metropolitan level must be sufficiently detailed to ensure that a balance is maintained among the various elements. Housing, industrial, and commercial development; schools; and similar functions need to be balanced against elements of the infrastructure such as water supply, sewerage, and especially transportation. At this level, the professional staffs of the planning agencies include a multiplicity of disciplines; the greatest emphasis is on the social sciences as public concern with social and environmental considerations mounts. When a staff cannot include all the disciplines that need consideration, the agencies commonly can call on the functional agencies of the higher levels of government. This is made easier by the progressive nature of the planning process and the continuing responsibility of the higher levels of government to approve the lower level plan.

When the coarse-grained plan is approved, it has the effect of law on the individual jurisdictions within the area. At this point, the elected officials of each jurisdiction must prepare a finer grained plan showing the public development proposed, including transportation, the allowable private development, and the zoning ordinances to control it. In England and Scotland, this stage of the plan is called the local plan. But,

whatever its name is, the local officials in all countries must produce detailed plans compatible with the first-stage plans for review by the metropolitan agencies and generally for approval at a higher government level. As soon as these plans are approved, they can be changed in any substantial degree only by repeating the process. And once approved, they become the basis for specific long- or medium-range programs and annual budget requests through which local jurisdictions seek financial aid from higher government levels to implement their plans. They show the nature and density of private development allowable under regulations; density is related to the capability of the infrastructure to serve it. Holding development density to the level that the planned infrastructure, particularly transportation, can serve is, of course, a critical feature of the plan, and it is considered carefully at the higher government levels during the review process.

TIMING AND FINANCING OF IMPROVEMENTS

Even if the planning process is effective, though, balanced development hardly can be achieved without coordination in improvement programs and in application of funds for specific projects within the programs. Here the hierarchy of planning serves well and is strongly influenced by the fact that the interdisciplinary planning agencies in the urban areas are line departments of the local jurisdictions. The plans they prepare are approved or adopted by the local elected officials before approval at higher government levels. In nearly all countries, long- or medium-range programs also are prepared by the planning departments in close cooperation with the local and national functional agencies that must execute the programs. These programs also are approved by the local officials to be submitted to the national governments for their approval and to serve as the basis of subsequent preparation and review of annual applications for financial aid in specific projects. Financial aid from national governments to local jurisdictions often is available for general purposes on some apportionment bases such as population and the economic circumstances of the locality. Categorical aid, such as that for transportation facilities, is seldom so apportioned but rather is allocated to the local jurisdictions to aid in carrying out specific projects in approved programs. By so doing, programs in transportation and housing, for example, can be kept in reasonable coordination.

Coordinating private development, particularly timing, with public programs, such as transportation, offers problems. These problems are being met with varying degrees of success. The most positive coordination, which works with almost complete success, is found in Stockholm and Canberra, Australia, where in each case the governing agency owns or can own all the land. Land is made available for private use, such as for housing or commercial or industrial development under terms specified in long-term leases. No other examples of such complete control were observed in the study. However, similar situations were found in some British urban renewal areas (some of which were quite extensive) where the local officials exercise virtually the same degree of control over the renewal areas as officials in Canberra and Stockholm do for their entire areas.

Although there are good examples, even the better controls are not always effective. Toronto, long rightly regarded as a leader in North America in planning and urban transportation, is finding that development in its central area is rapidly exceeding the capacity of transportation facilities to serve it. Demand on the Yonge Street subway exceeds capacity in peak periods, and the street system (even Yonge Street itself) is heavily congested even at midday. While massive new office, hotel, and apartment buildings rise in the center, relief from rail or street congestion is years away. Ultimately, the balance between transportation and other development, with a neutrality among modes that existed until recently, may be restored. But, even with the sound planning and programming procedures existing in both Toronto and the province of Ontario, inability to control the timing of private development will hurt seriously.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

In all countries, public interest and involvement in the planning process are growing. In keeping with the formally structured approach to planning itself, the procedure for public involvement also has been spelled out in detail in most of the countries visited. A number of features for preparation and approval of the first-level or coarse-grained plan are common to many of the countries. Of course, there is some variation from one country to another.

1. When the plan is prepared, it must be made available for public inspection.
2. A period of 3 to 6 weeks commonly is allowed for comments.
3. Comments must be in writing, and favorable comments are not expected. The words "objections to" or "criticism of" the plan appear in some laws and regulations, for example.
4. At the end of the period, an inquiry or hearing usually is held. Only those comments previously submitted in writing may be considered.
5. Following the hearing, the local officials must act on each comment and must advise the higher levels of government of the action taken on each comment.
6. At the higher government level, the plan and the actions on all comments are reviewed and ultimately approved, perhaps with revisions, or returned for reconsideration at the local level.
7. The public is advised of approval and that the plan is legally binding on all local jurisdictions included in the planning area.
8. Appeal by a citizen to a court or a national ministry generally is provided for, but only on matters of procedure, not substance of the plan.
9. When the coarse-grained plan is approved, the citizens generally have no further opportunity to comment on the local finer grained plan or the resulting programs or projects.

Under these procedures, the local governments and the functional agencies of the national government that may have programs in the area are reasonably free to go ahead without further delaying actions after the plan is approved. This is in marked contrast to the practice for highways in the United States where the 2-hearing process does not begin until the route-location stage. This is long after public participation has been completed in Europe. Moreover, in Europe, the public sees and comments on the plan in all its breadth, if not its detail, and can better understand its full import. A single route or project may be difficult to view in perspective.

Although these practices generally have been well received by the public, it is quite apparent that times are changing. Citizens are seeking greater involvement in the planning processes, and local officials in several countries are enlisting citizen participation in planning as it develops rather than simply in the review of the planners' product. Notable programs are found in the United Kingdom and in Ontario.

In Great Britain, the results of surveys that may be conducted in connection with the preparation of the plan are made available for public review and comment. Citizens are urged to discuss features of the plan in neighborhood groups, and, if necessary, community development officers, paid with planning funds, go into the neighborhoods to organize groups not only to review and comment on the planning proposals or alternatives as they are prepared but also to participate in surveys to produce needed data. Along with these efforts directed toward informing the public on the detail of planning problems in their areas, broader scale public relations programs featuring media releases, films, and exhibitions portray the long-range, areawide goals. Outstanding public participation programs are seen in Glasgow, Scotland, and Liverpool, England.

In Ontario, citizen input is achieved to good advantage in Ottawa, and, in the Toronto resurvey, an ambitious high-budget effort (\$500,000 of a total budget of \$1,500,000) was launched to develop public awareness of the problems, provide mutual education of the public and local and metropolitan officials, and distill the total information obtained in the survey into feasible alternatives for further public discussion and, hopefully, a consensus.

WHY PLANNING IS MORE EFFECTIVE IN OTHER COUNTRIES THAN IN THE UNITED STATES

The procedures in planning, programming improvements, and control of private development in other countries seem to be more effective than those generally in effect in the United States. Among the reasons for this, several are prominent.

1. Transportation planning in other countries is regarded not as an independent function to be coordinated with land use planning but rather as a land use to be included as an integral element of the overall metropolitan area or city plan. By U.S. standards, the planning staffs in other countries are large and include or have easy access to professionals in all pertinent disciplines.

2. The planning departments in other countries are line units of municipal government. The planning director reports to the elected officials. Generally the planning department also develops for local adoption and higher level approval the long- and medium-range programs to implement the plan and the annual budget documents to finance the programs. The planning department is not only a line department but also a key, or perhaps, the key, department of the city government.

3. The plans in other countries carry real authority. When a metropolitan area plan is approved at higher government level it actually becomes municipal law or has the effect of law. Similarly, local plans carry equal legal authority with respect to zoning and other controls when they are approved at metropolitan level. Local officials may not approve any substantial changes, including zoning variances, without approval of officials at higher levels of government who are less subject to local political pressures.

4. Citizen participation has been more formally organized in other countries and is now being given a far greater share of attention in plan development than generally is the case in the United States.

In the United States, planning for transportation traditionally has been an independent function to be coordinated with land use or general planning, but, beyond that, plans for the different modes (highway, transit, and rail commuting) have been independent of one another. Only recently have there been reasonably successful efforts merely to plan all modes of transportation as a single function. Transportation has become competitive within itself; the different modes compete not only for patronage but for government largess in funding. Moreover, transportation finds itself in confrontation with environmental and other groups sincerely concerned with preserving amenities of the urban area and the general quality of urban life that they see the automobile damaging. People in other countries are no less concerned than those in the United States with the environmental impact of the motor vehicle, but they seem to recognize better that transportation is essential to the survival of the city.

Many European cities are providing traffic-free areas or pedestrian precincts for retail and certain office-building uses. Many are highly successful, but others are less so. Observation indicates that the more successful (those in Cologne and Hamburg, for example) have good access by both transit and private vehicles and ample nearby parking. In Copenhagen, on the other hand, business has not fared well on the widely known traffic-free street, whose access by private vehicles is not good. Whether a cause and effect relationship exists is not known, but it is highly suspected. Geneva gives an excellent example of an effort to preserve the aesthetic and historic values of the old city by making it virtually traffic free. But Geneva recognizes that there must be good access by private vehicles, as its recently completed multilevel parking garage under Lake Geneva and stepped-up express bus service using reserved lanes and sophisticated traffic control on approaching arterials demonstrate.

These and many other examples show that the use of the land is related to the necessity to serve it with transportation facilities and the acceptance that access for some uses needs to be oriented to transit, access for some needs to be oriented to the private vehicle, and access for some needs to be oriented to both. The modes of trans-

portation to be provided or provided for are not regarded as competitive but as complementary.

What this seems to mean is that these cities in other countries are providing balanced transportation not in the sense of funding but in terms of the mode that is needed to serve the planned land use. Although the specific term was not used in any other countries that I can recall, the fact is that European, Canadian, and Australian practice demonstrates the true meaning of balanced transportation. It is transportation in balance with other development. Attaining this balance is a key objective of the other countries. Although this balance generally can be attained in the plan, it cannot be reached and maintained over time without adequate public control over private development to ensure that land use does develop as planned.

Stockholm and Canberra, both of which have fully adequate controls, illustrate the working of this definition of balance. In Stockholm, plans call for city center orientation and high-rise residential development in the outer city and suburban areas. New residential communities are developed primarily as high-rise apartments clustered around new rapid transit stations located at about 1-mile (1.6-km) intervals as the rail system is extended. Coordination in timing of each element is made possible by development controls and public improvement programs. Transportation is dominantly and deliberately rail oriented and is in balance with other development.

In Canberra, the nature of the development desired by the people calls primarily for single-family, large-lot living with an outdoor orientation. There, plans specify a strict limitation on the development to be permitted in the city center; rapid new growth is to be accommodated in satellite towns connected with the city center and one another by both freeways and transit lines. Its transportation is dominantly oriented to the private vehicle, but it, too, is in balance with other development.

Stockholm and Canberra both have transportation in balance with other development. Achieving this balance in these 2 cities was greatly facilitated by their total control of development, but reasonable balance is being attained in many other cities as their authority to control development in some way encourages the implementation of their overall plans. They are by example showing us the real meaning of balanced transportation. What we must do to match their progress in this direction is to accept that it is not only right but also necessary to adopt reasonable limits on individual freedom in the interest of the greater good of the whole community. Do we have the political maturity to do so?