

There is need for further study. A major problem in the study of suburban centers mobility is the lack of activity (employment and land use) and travel behavior data in and around suburban centers. Such data is more readily available for central business districts.

REFERENCES

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PLANNING, POLITICS, PUBLIC POLICY AND TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT

by

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Transportation planning is not my field. My areas of interest relate to planning, politics and public policy in governmental institutions. To the extent that transportation is part of all that, it is of interest to me.

I also come at the field as much from a political practitioner's perspective as from an academic perspective. I have been involved in local government in Chapel Hill for 13 years and currently serve as Mayor. I have chaired the Triangle J COG, I am Vice-Chair of our MPO, I was President of the National Association of Regional Councils when we began the 2020 process, and served last year as the President of the North Carolina League of Municipalities at a time when it had a very full legislative agenda in Raleigh. What you are going to hear reflects my work as a participant in local government as much as it represents my areas of academic interest.

In the University I teach a course called North Carolina Politics and Public Policy and a graduate seminar in Planning and Government. In these courses I deal with transportation as one of the central policy concerns.

In areas which have strong local and regional economies, suburban congestion is perhaps the most potent local political issue. In the future, elections will turn on the way local elected officials deal with the congestion problem. Congestion was the issue which defeated Harvey Gantt, the popular two-term Mayor of Charlotte, NC, in 1987 and which changed the Board of Supervisors in Fairfax County, VA. Traffic congestion, whether in a suburban setting or elsewhere, is

second only to the location of locally unwanted land uses (LULU's or NIMBY's) as a decisive and divisive political issue. The NIMBY question, the place where you locate landfills and other locally unwanted land uses, is the most difficult issue for any local politician to deal with. It has produced a new acronym, NIMEY, Not In My Election Year.

Local officials are turning to growth management programs that are increasingly exotic to find solutions to local development problems. An aggressive program of growth management will include an adequate public facilities ordinance, such as the one in Montgomery County, MD, or a traffic management ordinance, as is under development in Chapel Hill, and impact or development fees. But whether these programs produce the results that their sponsors seek is very much open to question. The value to the voters is uncertain and the return to the local politicians who institute them is problematic. We have not had enough experience to assess the local political impact of aggressive growth management. We continue to see areas which have strong local and regional economies, become ever more inventive in their growth management efforts.

We will continue to see innovation on the part of local governments in growth management, particularly in those states which give flexibility to local governments in development management. I do not see any end to the trend as long as these areas maintain their strong local economies. When the local or regional economy begins to sag, though, we can expect to see some retreat from growth management by those local governments as they seek to revive their economies.

Let us now look at politics at the state level, focusing on the state legislatures. It is significant that the National Conference of State Legislatures is a participant in Transportation 2020. While it was somewhat difficult to get NCSL to the table, they are now there they will be key participants in this process in the future.

What will happen in legislatures when local growth management leads to a new breed of local officials, much more aggressive about intervening in local development processes? Will the legislatures become motivated to look at growth management as a style and as an activity in which the state should be involved?

There are not many clues so far to the answers to those questions. But you can look at several states that have some major initiatives in the growth management field which, for the most part, grew out of legislative activity. Notable among these are Florida, Oregon, Vermont and Maine.

Florida has by far the most comprehensive state-wide system of growth management. The legislation requires the governor to prepare a state comprehensive plan and the legislature to adopt it. Further, it mandates local comprehensive planning, and sets up a system of regional councils have local elected officials as well as state appointees in their membership. Thus, the state's interests are represented explicitly at the regional level.

The regional councils also have regulatory authority that is based on "developments of regional impact" as defined in the statute. Thus certain large-scale developments must be dealt with in planning at the regional level. Areas of critical state concern also are identified and must be included.

While Florida's system grows out of the enormous growth pressures that exist in that state, there are elements of the Florida system that could be replicated in other states.

Maine is not a state noted for governmental innovation, and yet the legislature became convinced that they needed an approach to growth management at the state level despite the fact that many municipalities in the state did not even have planning boards or zoning ordinances. Those which do tend to be in the metropolitan areas along the I-95 corridor. Many of the resort areas in the state have experienced growth problems in the last half dozen years. These problems provided the impetus for the legislature in Maine to enact their growth management program.

Because it was enacted only last year, it has not been evaluated. The "bedrock" of the Maine approach includes strengthening of regional institutions and mandatory planning at the local level. All local governments must prepare a plan and they will get state financial and technical assistance to do it. The plan must be produced according to standards which are set forth in the statute and completed within a couple of years.

In North Carolina our legislature has recognized the need for a more comprehensive approach to growth management. They have created a growth management study commission, on which I serve, one of two non-legislators in a group of ten. Our task is to recommend to the session of the General Assembly that will meet in 1989, a permanent commission on growth management. The Commission will recommend the creation of a permanent committee on growth management which, in turn, will recommend some kind of broader framework, not unlike Maine or Florida. Thus, all signs point to more direct state intervention in growth management.

In addition to state intervention, I favor the formation of more powerful extra-local institutions at the regional and sub-regional level that can bring together the various parties and interests. Local governments, the corporate sector, the transportation providers, both public and private, all must come together if we are to have an effective planning mechanism. At the local and regional level, we have mixed economies which are market-driven, but heavily regulated. The degree of regulation will increase as growth pressures and growth management become more pervasive. Regional or sub-regional institutions are required that can cross not only the jurisdictional lines, but also the sectoral lines, public and private. These are needed to forge regional consensus and make feasible the regional decision making that must take place if we are to confront the congestion problems that bring us here today.

There are models at the regional level that are worth examination, but none of them are close to having the capabilities that the problems require. In New York, for example, there is the Regional Plan Association. A marvelous institution, created in the 1920's entirely with private support, it still exists today. But many of the corporations that supported it through the years have been decentralized to other parts of the country, and indeed other parts of the world. The support for the important work of RPA is harder to achieve because corporate leaders now work elsewhere, beyond the region.

In Pittsburgh, there is a similar organization called the Allegheny Conference on Community Development. The Conference serves as an umbrella organization through which movers and shakers in the Pittsburgh region can work.

A new organization in Los Angeles is now emerging. The Regional Institute of Southern California has been formed by the Southern California Association of Governments. Combining the political and corporate leadership of this region, it is intended to serve as mechanism for consensus - building on critical regional questions.

Effectively confronting problems of suburban congestion requires action in the context of new imperatives for growth management. Transportation planners must work with political leaders at the local and state level to bring attention to the congestion issue.