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GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF  
COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING  
FOR THE URBAN-CENTERED REGION

By

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B.A., University of Montana, 1969

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

Master of Urban Studies

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

1971

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

For the purpose of this paper, I would like to define the urban-centered region. It is when an urban center dominates its surrounding area either socially, culturally, economically, or politically, or in all of these ways.

The surrounding area may or may not include other smaller cities and towns. The urban center or main city may be of any size. Therefore, the region that it is the center of will vary in size to a great extent. The important factor is that the urban center dominates. However, this paper will focus only upon the problems of transportation planning for those urban regions in the United States which include one large central city and several suburbs and/or satellite cities, all of which are politically independent of one another. I will attempt to explore: (1) some of the prerequisites that are necessary for effective transportation planning; (2) what has been done to date in this field in terms of organization and effectiveness; (3) what can be done in the future to attempt to insure success; and (4) some of the obstacles to effective planning that will undoubtedly appear. My

main conclusion is that urban transportation is primarily a regional concern, and, so far as is practicable, should be dealt with at the regional level.

That efficient transportation is necessary for any highly urbanized area, whether we call it a region, an SMSA, or a metropolitan area is, of course, beyond question. Scott Greer has stated:

Some tasks growing out of the dense concentration of highly interdependent populations are inescapable. The transport system must have a certain speed, capacity and predictability in circulating men, goods, and messages. Without transport a city (or region) would be merely a scatteration of villages, unable to combine and therefore unable to achieve a division of labor.<sup>1</sup>

#### REGIONAL PLANNING

A regional plan is a widespread attempt at better management of all the aspects and functions of that given region. It is comprehensive with a view toward insuring that the region's overall development will best serve the welfare of its present and future human population. It recognizes obstacles to progress and finds ways of overcoming them. The emphasis must always be on the future of life and growth.<sup>2</sup>

The subsequent recommendations of the regional plan

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<sup>1</sup>Scott Greer, Governing the Metropolis (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1962), p. 39.

<sup>2</sup>F. B. Gillie, Basic Thinking in Regional Planning (The Hague, Netherlands: Mouton and Co., 1968), p. 10.

must be made with regard to their consequences in associated fields, such as transportation and public utilities. More specifically, then, the regional plan should be concerned with the interaction of all the urban-regional phenomena with each other.<sup>3</sup>

#### REGIONAL-TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

There are several reasons which necessitate dealing with transportation on a regional basis. First of all, numerous municipalities within an urban region are connected to one another economically, culturally, and socially. A result growing out of this fact is that most of the travel in urban regions is intra-regional; that is, most of the trips begin and end in the same urban region.

A second reason for planning transportation systems on a regional level is that regions differ from one another and therefore each region's transportation program must be devised to meet distinctive regional needs. When a region improves the quality of its planning, the communities concerned can avoid the federal and state governments imposing standard formulas, therefore maintaining the home rule which they are so concerned about. However, federal and state governments must have some voice in urban-regional transportation because cities are links

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 11.



with other cities and the rest of the world, through the airlines, the railroads, and the intercity and interstate highways.

A third reason is that while primary responsibility for urban transportation can appropriately be placed at the regional level it cannot well be placed below that level. Many trips, many rights of way, and many transportation services cross local government boundaries. Where this happens, local governments acting by themselves can neither plan efficient transportation systems nor adopt and implement plans once made without cooperating with other units.<sup>4</sup>

A fourth reason is the inescapable fact that the different transportation systems are closely related, and that action on any one system will affect the others. For example, decisions respecting suburban railroads serving large cities affect the level of automobile use on the highways, which in turn affects the number of commuters that use the railroad, which determines the amount of money received by the railroad and which in turn affects the amount of money that can be used for efficient upkeep of the railroads. Thus, plans for different transportation systems must be considered, not by themselves, but with

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<sup>4</sup>Lyle C. Fitch, Urban Transportation and Public Policy (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co., 1964), p. 59.

reference to each other and in the framework of the entire urban-regional transportation system.<sup>5</sup>

A fifth reason that would support transportation planning on a regional basis is the fact that the methods by which persons, goods, and materials are moved from one place to another are so important to the effective operation of a city or urban region that in recent years they have largely come under the control of government. The municipal governments alone cannot provide for or supervise all urban-regional needs for highway, rail, water, and air transportation. State governments are also called upon for regulation, financial aid, and other activities. The national government recognized its responsibilities by establishing a Department of Transportation, giving it responsibility for coordinated and effective administration of transportation systems and calling for it to cooperate with state and local governments as well as private transportation companies in seeking effective transportation policies and programs throughout the nation.<sup>6</sup>

In order to keep planning from becoming impersonal,

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>University of Chicago Center for Continuing Education, A Report on the 1970 Conference on Mass Transportation (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 289.

as may happen on the state or federal level, and at the same time to keep it as broadly jurisdictional as possible, it seems that regional planning agencies are the most appropriate solution for the problems we now face in our urban-regional areas. The greatest benefit of regional consolidation for any urban phenomena lies in the fact that it will provide a unified, coordinated program of service, development, and control over an area larger than that previously served by one government. It will hopefully eliminate duplication of certain services formerly provided by several governments, and it will also be financially attractive, particularly if several municipalities occupy most of the territory that is consolidated.

## Chapter 2

### THE PREREQUISITES OF EFFECTIVE REGIONAL- TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

The primary requirements for effective regional transportation planning include adequate financial, technical, and manpower resources; broad area jurisdiction; comprehensive planning powers; and close ties to the interests of the community and the officials who bear the responsibility for making decisions relating to regional development and investment of public resources.<sup>7</sup>

### RESOURCES FOR PLANNING

Urban-regional transportation has been increasing in both complexity and cost of maintenance. This has resulted in the fact that the planning process is now very expensive and often requires much technical sophistication and expertise.

The research procedures alone that are utilized in massive transportation studies for analyzing economic and social data, carrying out projections, and gauging the relative efficiencies of transportation modes require the

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<sup>7</sup>Fitch, op. cit., p. 62.

use of computers, complex mathematical models, and a broad range of professional talent. Hence, these studies have cost or been budgeted to cost from \$4 to \$15 million each.<sup>8</sup> These tremendous costs are hopefully justified by the results of this planning.

#### JURISDICTION OF THE PLANNING AGENCY

Since urban transportation is a regional concern and is inextricably related to other aspects of regional development, it follows that transportation planning must be concerned with regional areas as a whole.

Ideally, the jurisdiction of a regional planning agency should cover the entire urban-suburban complex as well as contiguous territory likely to become urbanized in the foreseeable future. Since state, county, and municipal lines are not based on human demographic and ecological factors, this ideal is seldom attained. Usually, new patterns of cooperation and interaction among already existing jurisdictions are necessary.<sup>9</sup> However, this has proven to be successful only up to a certain point. It is usually unsuccessful when it reaches the

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<sup>8</sup>Richard R. Carll and Richard M. Zettel, Summary Review of Major Metropolitan Area Transportation Studies in the U.S. (Berkeley: Institute of Transportation and Traffic Engineering, University of California Press, November, 1966), p. 7.

<sup>9</sup>Fitch, op. cit., p. 62.

point that local jurisdictions must give up their autonomous planning powers to a supra-planning agency that will encompass many jurisdictions. This unwillingness to give up the least bit of power seems to stem from the strong desire of the localities involved to maintain home rule. The idea of home rule and the problems it presents will be explained more fully in a later section.

#### COMPREHENSIVE POWERS OF THE PLANNING AGENCY

The power of the planning agency should extend to all modes of transportation in order that they may be compared with each other as to costs and benefits, and in order that they may be used in a cooperative fashion that would best serve the public interest. Many experts feel that at the minimum a planning agency should have the power to: (1) review the plans of agencies specialized as to function, and (2) review the plans of agencies limited as to jurisdiction. The planning process should also take into account general land-use development and other basic services. Only with this kind of an arrangement can transportation development become integrated within the planning process with other aspects of urban development which will in any case affect it and be affected by it. Transportation planning, then, becomes not only a process for improving the efficiency of

systems for moving people and goods, but also becomes one of the many tools for guiding the shape of urban growth.<sup>10</sup>

EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE  
COMMUNITY AND ITS  
DECISION-MAKERS

To be effective, planning must be closely related to all phases of the political and decision-making processes. Ivory-tower planning, that is planning that does not relate to the political and decision-making processes, is unrealistic in this day and age, and often fails to gain community acceptance. Usually, it will have no strong support among those who most strongly influence development decisions. There has been a danger in recent years of ivory-tower planning taking hold because the planning enterprise has become an increasingly specialized function as evidenced by the increase in special planning agencies on all levels of government. But despite this tendency toward specialization, ivory-tower planning has not occurred and the planners and planning agencies have, for the most part, been in on the policy-making and implementation process. Very often, in fact, the planner has taken an active role in influencing policy. He has advocated plans before the executive, the legislature, the public, and especially those segments thereof which decide

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 63.

on the acceptability of his plans and allocate public resources in order that they may be implemented.<sup>11</sup>

David C. Ranney stated in his Planning and Politics in the Metropolis:

Whether he likes it or not the planner is a key participant in the politics of planning. His initial decisions will generate actual or potential conflict. The planner may decide to alter his decision in order to avoid conflict. Alternatively he may go out and drum up support for his proposals from the community, or make his decisions in line with his own values and ignore the politicians.<sup>12</sup>

A report of the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations stated:

To be worthwhile and to serve a useful rather than an academic purpose, the respective facets of metropolitan area planning must be closely geared into use, tax levies, public works, transportation, welfare programs, and the like.<sup>13</sup>

Representation of community interests is also essential to the entire planning process. Community representation has usually been provided through lay planning commissions which have been established to guide the work of technicians. In some instances such bodies have succeeded in

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<sup>11</sup>David C. Ranney, Planning and Politics in the Metropolis (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1969), p. 114.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 111.

<sup>13</sup>U.S., House of Representatives, Committee on Intergovernmental Relations, Governmental Structure, Organization and Planning in Metropolitan Areas, A Report by the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 87th Congress, 1st session, Committee Print (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1961), p. 33.



achieving a community consensus. However, if very deep conflicts are involved, they can usually only be resolved at the policy-making level where all of the community's political pressures are focused most sharply. Thus, it should be emphasized that transportation planning, like other planning, cannot hope to be successful if it is isolated from the groups responsible for basic policy-making in the metropolitan region. Therefore, every level and unit of government at which decisions are made to allocate resources to the development of transportation should be drawn into the planning process.

## Chapter 3

### PAST AND PRESENT ORGANIZATION FOR URBAN-REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

For the most part transportation facilities in the United States in the past have not been planned or developed on a unified or integrated basis. We in the United States have made very little, if any, effort to fuse our various modes of transportation into a single coordinated system.<sup>14</sup> This was undoubtedly due in part to the laissez-faire attitude that prevailed in this country throughout the nineteenth century and into about one-third of the twentieth century. It has also been due in part to our system of federalism or separation of powers. We have a system whereby the power and authority to solve many of our domestic problems is vested in the individual state governments. Until very recently we have not had any national planning agency, nor have we had any national transportation planning agency. Transportation planning for the most part, though not all of it has been

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<sup>14</sup>The Council on State Governments, State Responsibility in Urban Regional Development, A Report to the Governors Conference (Chicago, 1962), p. 120.

left up to the individual states. Hence, our uncoordinated transportation system of today. Apparently these ideas were not necessarily the most beneficial when applied to the area of transportation due to the fact that so much of it is interstate.

For example, commuter railroads which were built mainly in the second half of the nineteenth century now find themselves in a crisis which is the result of twentieth-century conditions, namely competition from automobiles and bus transportation, which has mushroomed in the past 50 years.<sup>15</sup> Our national priorities have allowed and aided automobile transportation and the construction of highways to flourish at the expense of the passenger railroad instead of aiding in the development and maintenance of both systems as we might have done. The national government has subsidized the construction of highways with funds, yet regulated the railroads as if they were a profitable monopoly long after this had ceased to be the case.<sup>16</sup> The resulting effects are seen today in the overuse of highways resulting in traffic jams, and the underuse of railroads resulting almost in the complete demise of passenger service, with the public, of course, being the ultimate loser.

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Clairborne Pell, Megalopolis Unbound (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), p. 139.

Another mistake of the past has been to never calculate the social consequences that the lack of transportation planning and the haphazard development of it have produced. Yet, we have long had evidence that population growth and economic growth are indeed structured by transportation.<sup>17</sup>

Still today the organizational framework for urban-regional transportation planning continues to fail in several respects to provide metropolitan communities with the planning resources necessary for adequate exploration of transportation alternatives. Local agencies, though generally underfinanced and understaffed, have contributed somewhat to the solution of local, specialized transportation problems. However, they do not have the jurisdiction, in most cases, to influence broad patterns of transportation development. Regional planning agencies, also underfinanced and understaffed, have not been given the responsibility or the authority for comprehensive transportation planning, and usually do not have any counterpart policy-making body with authority to decide on and finance their plans.

Another current problem is that in almost all metropolitan areas separate and often uncoordinated government units are responsible for highway planning,

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<sup>17</sup>University of Chicago, op. cit., p. 137.

highway construction, traffic control, regulation of and taxing policy on common carriers, vehicle registration, operation of public transit facilities, and related matters.<sup>18</sup>

#### STATE HIGHWAY DEPARTMENTS

The dominant force in urban-regional transportation planning for many years has been the state highway departments. In most states these departments have been primarily concerned with highways and private motor-vehicle transportation. Little attention has been given to broader urban-transportation interests. Also, these state highway departments have been in control of the funds allocated to highway-transportation planning. The result is that they are dominant in planning, financing, construction, and maintaining state highway systems, including the urban sections of those systems.<sup>19</sup>

Systematic highway planning in the United States began in 1934 when Congress authorized the use of one and one-half percent of federal highway funds allocated to states for surveys and planning and engineering investigations. The federal act provided that the one and one-half percent federal aid highway grants may be used only

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<sup>18</sup>Council on State Governments, op. cit., p. 120.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 128.

. . . for engineering and economic surveys and investigations, for the planning of future highway programs and the financing thereof, for studies of the economy, safety and convenience of highway usage and the desirable regulation and equitable taxation thereof, and for research necessary in connection with the planning, design, construction, and maintenance of highways and highway systems, and the regulation and taxation of their use.<sup>20</sup>

Most of these studies have been initiated and dominated by state highway departments due to the leverage they have by their control of planning funds and also because of their monopoly of the expertise in this field.

The use of state highway funds for research purposes is prohibited, however, by many state constitutions. Although some states have considered using various transportation systems, and although there has been an awareness by academicians of the need for coordination of transportation systems, very little has actually been done by the state agencies to bring this about. The implementation of much needed transportation improvements has many times been politically unfeasible due to the structure of state government. The fact of the matter is that most state highway agencies have personnel skilled only in highway and traffic engineering, and therefore they are more accustomed to thinking in terms of individual highway projects, rather than in terms of total urban transportation systems. Relatively few state highway

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<sup>20</sup>23rd United States Codes, Section 307 (C).

agencies have personnel with comprehensive knowledge of the relationship of highways to other aspects of urban development. However, because these agencies are familiar with the most advanced techniques of traffic projection and planning, they can play an important and direct part in metropolitan transportation planning by giving advice to the local agencies or to the urban-regional agency in charge of transportation planning.<sup>21</sup> Up to this point in time, however, state highway departments have very seldom given advice to local agencies, nor have they asked them to participate in planning, even when that planning directly affected their local area. On the other hand, some state highway departments have sought cooperation with local jurisdictions in highway planning and local land-use planning.<sup>22</sup>

#### CURRENT FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR COMPREHENSIVE COOPERATIVE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

In 1962, the federal government passed an amendment to the Federal Aid Highway Act. This amendment seemed to promise a new era in regional-transportation planning and cooperation between state and local agencies. The amendment provided that after

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<sup>21</sup>Council on State Governments, op. cit., p. 129.

<sup>22</sup>Fitch, op. cit., p. 65.

. . . July 1, 1965, the Secretary of Commerce shall not approve any program for projects in any urban area of more than 50,000 population unless he finds that such projects are based on a continuing comprehensive planning process carried on cooperatively by states, and local communities.<sup>23</sup>

Detailed instructions to guide urban-transportation planning utilizing federal highway funds were contained in two memoranda issued by the Bureau of Public Roads. The following is the first memorandum, which sets forth basic definitions:

Cooperatively--the establishment of a formal procedure--supported by a written memorandum of understanding--between the State highway departments and the governing bodies of the local communities for carrying out the transportation planning process in a manner that will insure that the planning decisions are reflective of and responsive to both the programs of the State highway departments and the needs and desires of the local communities. . . . If there is an unwillingness on the part of a local political unit within the entire urban area to participate in the transportation planning process in such area, a determination shall be made as to whether the percentage of the urban area affected is such as to negate an effective planning process for the whole area.<sup>24</sup>

The later memorandum extended the definition as follows:

Ideally, all political subdivisions should participate in the transportation planning process. This would insure full consideration of all pertinent factors and contribute to the resolution of any differences of opinion during the process of

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<sup>23</sup>23rd United States Codes, Section 134 as added by Federal Aid Highway Act of 1962, approved October 23, 1962.

<sup>24</sup>Bureau of Public Roads, Instructional Memorandum 50-2-63, March 27, 1963.



developing proposals for improvements.<sup>25</sup>

In addition, the later memorandum sets forth 10 basic elements of transportation planning:

1. Economic factors affecting development.
2. Population studies.
3. Land use.
4. Transportation facilities including those for mass transportation.
5. Travel patterns.
6. Terminal and transfer facilities.
7. Traffic engineering features.
8. Zoning ordinances, subdivisions regulations, building codes, etc.
9. Financial resources.
10. Social and community value factors.

The last point is further developed as follows:

In the development of transportation plans it is important that full consideration be given to the possibility of utilizing these facilities to raise the standards of the urban area. Open space, parks, and recreational facilities are important environmental factors. It is becoming more and more important in our transportation planning that additional attention be given not only to the preservation and enhancement of existing open space, but also the providing of additional open space in anticipation of future development. Similarly, conscientious attention should be given to the preservation of historical sites and buildings.

Care should be exercised in selecting locations for new transportation facilities so that neighborhoods are not disrupted. To the maximum extent possible, cutting through school districts, ethnic groups, fire station districts, etc., should be avoided.

New transportation facilities should be made to blend into the natural landscape, taking advantage of scenic vistas, topography, etc. The location and design of new facilities should be such as to insure

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<sup>25</sup>Bureau of Public Roads, Instructional Memorandum 50-2-63 (1), September 13, 1963.

a pleasing appearance for the motorist, the pedestrian, and the nearby residents.<sup>26</sup>

### RECENT COMPREHENSIVE URBAN-REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION STUDIES

The most significant urban transportation studies of the past decade have been special ad-hoc studies rather than the products of ongoing planning agencies.

Most of the largest metropolitan regions have undertaken such studies in the past decade. The studies have usually grown out of a sense of impending crisis, resulting from rapid growth and from evidences of transportation deterioration, such as growing congestion or the worsening plight of public transportation.<sup>27</sup>

These major regional studies examine population and employment growth, land-use patterns, and other factors pertinent to urban development, and from these factors they project transportation demand. Most of these

. . . major studies are headed by directors and conducted by professional staffs. They are afforded general guidance and control by policy committees which perform such functions as controlling the budget and personnel selections, overseeing at least some of the technical aspects of the studies, reviewing the progress of the studies, and making judgments among alternative courses of action and policy developed by the staffs.

The policy committees ideally represent the main interests concerned with regional transportation. Thus they usually include representatives of the Bureau of Public roads, state highway departments, and county and city officials.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Carll and Zettel, op. cit., p. 16.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

As indicated earlier, however, where studies were financed predominantly by highway research funds, and where the Bureau of Public Roads and state highway departments had a monopoly of technical expertise, a viewpoint favorable to highways and private motor vehicles tended to dominate. Highway planners for the most part have not been willing to make concessions to transit systems even to bus transit operating on highways. The concern with transit has only been with its ability to relieve peak-hour traffic congestion, not with planning to take advantage of its inherent economies.

#### LOCAL PLANNING AGENCIES

In many cities, local transportation planning is handled by the same planning agency responsible for land use and other physical planning. Also the scope of city-transportation planning is limited by the facts that the state is the dominant force in highway development and that regulation of privately run transit is shared with or is exclusively handled by the state.<sup>29</sup> Also, local planning agencies frequently lack the resources for effective planning. A major proportion of their funds and staff time is devoted to routine planning and administrative activities, such as drawing up and administering building

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<sup>29</sup>Fitch, op. cit., p. 75.

codes and zoning, as well as day-to-day consultation with officials about general urban problems, such as relieving traffic congestion on main streets or improving the city's sewer system. Local planners also lack strong political support and many are unable or unwilling to take an active role as advocates for the plans they develop. Another reason for city planners being limited in scope is that planning activities by individual municipal departments and agencies are very often little related to the work of the central planning agency or to each other.

Local planning is by definition limited in jurisdiction. Only 31 central cities, mainly in the smaller metropolitan areas, encompass as much as 75 percent of the area population, and the growth trends indicate that in most cases this proportion will decline. Outside central cities planning is often minimal or non-existent below the county level, and often even at the county level [emphasis added].<sup>30</sup>

Some local governments, however, have taken steps to insure cooperation among several municipalities that are contiguous with one another. There has been city-county consolidation with Nashville, Tennessee, and Davidson County; formation of the Urban County as was done with Miami and Dade County, Florida; and the Federation Approach as in Toronto, Canada.<sup>31</sup> More common, however,

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>31</sup>Joan B. Aron, The Quest for Regional Cooperation (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p. 4.

have been partial or expedient measures. These include enlarged government strength for county governments as was done in Westchester and Nassau Counties, New York; the establishment of a single-purpose agency to administer one or more functions in a metropolitan area such as the Port of New York Authority for transportation in the New York area; intergovernmental relations (when one unit of government contracts for performance of certain functions with another governmental unit) as is done in the Los Angeles area; and varying types of voluntary and informal cooperative arrangements between two or more governmental units.<sup>32</sup> The volunteer-cooperative approach, of course, does not insure participation or attendance, and has absolutely no power over its individual members. Nevertheless, local planning has made vital contributions to the development of effective regional plans. The city planner's specialized knowledge of local situations and his ability to arouse local support for planning has proved very valuable to state efforts in local areas. In fact, much of the stimulus for regional planning has come from the city planners, who are very much aware of their inability to deal with regional forces that definitely affect their own jurisdictions.

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

## REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCIES

Regional planning agencies seem to be the most promising organizational forms for transportation planning. However, their potentialities have not been realized to date.

General regional planning can be undertaken by a city-, county-, or state-planning agency, or by a regional agency established specially for the purpose. The latter device is gaining popularity, and since 1965 some 90 regional-planning agencies [had] been created in the United States. Thirty of the country's 53 standard metropolitan statistical areas (SMSA) with populations over 500,000 now have such agencies [emphasis added].<sup>33</sup>

Creation of these regional-planning agencies for interstate urban regions also is becoming prevalent. This has been facilitated by the 1961 amendment to the Housing Act of 1954. This amendment grants to the states Congressional consent to enter into agreements for cooperative planning. The amendment is as follows:

The consent of the Congress is hereby given to any two or more States to enter into agreements or compacts . . . for cooperative efforts and mutual assistance in the comprehensive planning for the physical growth and development of interstate, metropolitan, or other urban areas, and to establish such agencies, joint or otherwise, as they may seem desirable for making effective such agreements and compacts.<sup>34</sup>

After this amendment was passed, several interstate transportation-planning agencies came into being. Among

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<sup>33</sup>Fitch, op. cit., p. 76.

<sup>34</sup>Section 301 (a) (4) Housing Act of 1961, 73 Stat. 678, 40th United States Codes, Section 461.

them were the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Commission; the National Capital Transportation Agency; the New York-New Jersey Transportation Agency; and the Tri-State Transportation Committee, which includes representatives from the states of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut.

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Commission, which includes representatives from the District of Columbia, the State of Maryland, and the State of Virginia, was established to regulate private transit companies operating in the metropolitan area. This duty was formerly held by the two individual state utility commissions and the District of Columbia Utility Commission.

The National Capital Transportation Agency, which also includes representatives from Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia, was established to work on a Washington area mass-transportation study, and to perform other functions, including acquisition of rights-of-way for new transportation routes.

The New York-New Jersey Transportation Agency was established to supervise and integrate the development and execution of plans for maintaining and improving the use of transit facilities between the two states and to achieve a long-term solution for the bi-state problem of mass transportation. It is also authorized to represent the interests of the two states in any federal programs

in transit and transportation planning.<sup>35</sup>

The Tri-State Transportation Committee was created in 1961 by executive action of the governors of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut to serve the New York metropolitan region. It is comprised of representatives of each of the governors and the mayor of New York City. Its function is to make studies that will be concerned both with present problems and with the formulation of plans for the future. Also to make this information available to state, local, and federal officials who are directly responsible for decisions determining the regional transportation system.<sup>36</sup>

This committee also has powers to acquire facilities and administer transportation services with the specific approval of the three state legislatures.

Regional planning agencies have been organized under a variety of arrangements.

Thirty-five states have general enabling acts providing for the creation by cooperation of local jurisdictions of regional-planning agencies with the power to engage in transportation planning. Most agencies have been set up under such acts. In Maryland the authority to create regional-planning agencies is vested in the State Planning Department. Delaware's constitution authorizes a regional-planning agency with jurisdiction in the unincorporated portion of New Castle County. The Dade County (metropolitan Miami) Planning Commission was organized pursuant to

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<sup>35</sup>Council on State Governments, op. cit., p. 141.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.



the metropolitan county charter. Regional-planning agencies have also been created by special acts of the state legislature and by agreement among cooperating local governments.<sup>37</sup>

The jurisdiction of many regional agencies is usually at least roughly contiguous with a standard metropolitan statistical area. However, half the agencies serving the larger SMSA's of over 500,000 people do not have jurisdiction over the entire SMSA's. This is true in Buffalo, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Denver, Hartford, Los Angeles, Portland, St. Louis, San Diego, and Syracuse.<sup>38</sup> In other cases, where the agency covers an entire SMSA, the urban area appropriate for transportation planning is broader than the SMSA as defined for census purposes. For example, the Dade County regional-planning agency has jurisdiction over the Miami SMSA, but the urban region extends into the newer metropolitan areas of Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach immediately to the north.<sup>39</sup> A similar situation, but of an inter-regional nature, also exists in the Baltimore-Washington area. To surmount this, the Baltimore Regional Planning Commission has joined forces with the regional-planning agencies in the Washington, D.C., area to study their inter-regional highway requirements. This concern with inter-regional problems

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<sup>37</sup>Fitch, op. cit., p. 77.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

will undoubtedly grow as the present regions grow into each other.

A major problem of many regional-planning agencies is that they are limited as to authority. They have mainly been established to furnish guidance, not to make policy decisions. The following statement from the Twin Cities Metropolitan Planning Commission illuminates this point:

The Twin Cities Metropolitan Planning Commission hopes that it can be of direct service to the government officials of this Area and to the private interests which are shaping the environment by furnishing research concerning future growth, and advice and plans concerning Area-wide problems. The Commission's role is to supplement rather than supplant the efforts of the existing institutions and agencies which have the basic responsibility for governing and building the community. To carry out this advisory role, the Commission needs the active support and cooperation of all the interests involved [emphasis added].<sup>40</sup>

So the problem here, as with many other regional-planning agencies, is that they are outside the regular structure of government. Most of them usually have only limited success in getting their plans adopted much less implemented. And even when a plan is adopted, it does not commit the community to a line of action or an expenditure of funds. This is because many states have provided that only a municipal council or another legislative body can exercise the option of adoption. However, many people do

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<sup>40</sup>Twin Cities Metropolitan Planning Commission, Challenge of Metropolitan Growth, Report No. 1, December, 1958.

not see this as necessarily being a bad situation. They would argue that it would be dictatorial and consequently very unfair to allow a planning agency to have the power to make the final decisions. They see a danger in that the planning agency may become politically controlled and therefore plan in the interests of only a select group. They would prefer therefore that the planning agency remain in an advisory capacity and that the final decision-making process be decentralized among various municipal councils and legislative bodies. An exception to this general pattern is the Marion County (home county of Indianapolis, Indiana) Metropolitan Planning Commission, which is authorized by state law to adopt comprehensive plans to guide the actions of all "governmental units and public bodies, boards and officials within the county." The law states that:

Any action of any unit of government or public body, board or official in the county inconsistent with the comprehensive plan shall be presumed to be not in the public interest.<sup>41</sup>

Many of the regional planning agencies do, however, have the power to undertake general transportation planning that is subject to limitations of personnel and funds. But in many of the large cities these regional-planning agencies are restricted to the highway aspects of transportation planning. These agencies may sometimes undertake

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<sup>41</sup>Indiana Statutes, Annotated 53-936.

land-use plans in conjunction with regional-transportation studies under the sponsorship of the state highway commission. But there has been very little coordination between regional planning and transportation planning as a whole.

Regional-planning organizations have obtained their financial support for general staff activities and for specific projects mainly from general planning funds and transportation funds under Section 701 of the Housing Act of 1954, from state governments, and from contributions from participating local governments.

A good example of a successful regional-planning agency is the Toronto Planning Board of Toronto, Canada. Its jurisdiction does not only extend over the city of Toronto and its 12 adjoining municipalities, which in themselves make up the Metropolitan Toronto Federation, but also over 13 more adjoining suburbs. The board is composed of 24 members; nine of these are private citizens and the remainder are public officials.<sup>42</sup>

The board is in law an advisory body serving the Metropolitan Council. It is required to prepare a plan for public transportation as part of an official plan.

The board

. . . must recommend the adoption of an official plan to the Metropolitan Council; the Council must approve

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<sup>42</sup>John C. Bollens, Henry J. Schmandt, The Metropolis (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), p. 340.

the plan, and it must also be approved by the Provincial Minister of Municipal Affairs before it assumes any legal status. No municipality covered by the plan may take any action that contravenes the plan, and existing official plans of local municipalities must be amended to conform to the metropolitan official plan. All subdivision plans within the planning area and all local official plan amendments are processed by the Board, which makes recommendations to the Minister, who usually accepts the Board's advice.<sup>43</sup>

In conclusion we can say that if transportation planning is to be a continuous process, and if it is to be integrated with land-use and development planning, then its most logical place is in the regional-planning agencies. In these regional-planning agencies, representation can also be given to state, federal, and other interests due to the fact that they provide a large portion of the funds for transportation improvement. The planning agency must be responsive to their requirements and interests, while at the same time insisting on the right to undertake an objective analysis of the situation and develop unbiased conclusions. Only through a close association of all the levels of government in the planning process can a consensus about what is needed be achieved. The planning process should also afford an opportunity for the expression of viewpoints by private and civic groups through appropriate committees and other similar means.

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<sup>43</sup>Fitch, op. cit., p. 80.

## Chapter 4

### SOME PROPOSALS FOR URBAN-REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Organizing for effective regional-transportation planning can take several forms. And, in fact, several forms or alternative choices may be necessary due to the fact that regions differ from each other, both physically and politically. Therefore, what may be workable in one region may be unworkable for another. Some of the alternatives that have been used and will undoubtedly be used more frequently in the future are as follows:

(1) a metropolitan regional-review agency with advisory powers to the local municipalities involved; (2) a metropolitan-regional government with strong governing and planning powers; (3) an enlarged planning function within the office of the state governor; and (4) improved coordination and funding by federal agencies with metropolitan governments and/or local governments.

In our nation today many forms of regional-transportation planning agencies are being created. One of the main reasons for this is the fact that the federal government requires them as a prerequisite for public

transportation grants, among other benefits.<sup>44</sup>

THE METROPOLITAN REGIONAL-  
REVIEW AGENCY

This agency is a coordinating body responsible for land-use, transportation, and other regional planning. On its policy-making board there are representatives from the highway department, the transit departments, and the local municipalities. It attempts through persuasion to knit together separate agencies and localities that may or may not have varying objectives. Its only real lever of power to achieve this is to remind the agencies and localities involved that the federal government will not give them any money unless they agree on a metropolitan plan. Aside from this, there is nothing to prevent these agencies or localities from ignoring the Metropolitan Review Agency and going their own way. This type of body does not seem very effective because it is not a governing body. It merely reviews, comments, and makes suggestions to the various municipal governments and the various agencies involved with transportation that are on the board. Therefore, the prospects of achieving effective metropolitan transportation planning by means of a review agency that does not have its own solid power base are

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<sup>44</sup>Melvin R. Levin, Community and Regional Planning (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969), p. 127.

definitely not promising.

#### THE METROPOLITAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

This government would have a strong chief executive with the power to implement the plans that are recommended by the Metropolitan Regional-Review Agency. One or two agencies could not veto a plan that the overwhelming majority of agencies felt to be in the public interest. This government would also have taxing powers in order that the plans may be funded locally in part, while receiving the balance from the federal government.

A problem here, however, is: Should the federal government insist upon the existence of regional governments as a prerequisite to receiving federal aid? And what if the idea is defeated by suburban communities? It is conceivable, however, that the federal government can recommend that, after a suitable cutoff date, future federal grants be contingent upon the existence of a representative elected metropolitan government possessing substantial power over land-use, transportation, and other planning matters diffused among a multitude of separate jurisdictions.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 131.



AN ENLARGED PLANNING FUNCTION WITHIN  
THE OFFICE OF THE STATE GOVERNOR

Many experts in the field of urban and regional affairs believe that state governments should play a much larger role in urban regional planning. They point out the fact that it already has the power to lead, whereas many regional agencies or governments do not, and may have a difficult time establishing that power. The state governments, however, already have the structure and apparatus for decision-making, for settling disputes, and for implementing programs.

It has been proposed that states should be divided into regions or districts, each with an appointed professional planning director as head, who is directly responsible to the governor. In addition, it would be necessary that state highway departments do more than build and administer state and federal highway programs. Simply to provide a facility is not enough. Facilities need to be located and programmed to relate to all other facilities so that the most desirable and efficient metropolitan development patterns result. The complete integration of transportation and land-use planning is required. With this in mind, then, it is proposed that the state highway departments should be changed to state transportation departments and staffed not only with highway experts, but with professional urban planners, urban regional-

transportation planners, and at least one top staff person who would concentrate upon urban highway matters.<sup>46</sup>

The regional directors should also have an ongoing dialogue with the localities about their present and future transportation problems. These regional directors would be responsible for coordinating all state agencies that are working within their regions on any problem that relates even remotely to transportation.

IMPROVED COORDINATION AND FUNDING  
BY FEDERAL AGENCIES WITH  
METROPOLITAN AND/OR  
LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Under this plan the federal government with its specialized agencies should take an active part only on request from the community when it feels that a special problem exists that requires federal intervention. However, the federal government should continually provide a steady flow of funds and a general national policy regarding transportation and related planning matters, but the actual decisions should rest with the local or regional governments, whatever the particular case may be. This proposal is made on the assumption that the state governments are too far removed from local problems to play an effective role in solving them and that all

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<sup>46</sup>Council on State Governments, op. cit., p. 125.

decisions about transportation and development should be determined by the localities in question.

In the last analysis it is difficult to predict with any certainty what institutional changes will occur to facilitate the effectuation of regional planning or to be dogmatic as to what changes should occur. It is clear that changes must occur, but it is likely that there will be no single pattern. A regional planning agency with essentially only advisory powers may do useful work in some areas, metropolitan government may be suited to others, while elsewhere state planning will function effectively, possibly at the expense of metropolitan power. Much will depend upon the federal role in the future, whether it will seek a more solid base of power for planning within cities while continuing a federal-city emphasis, or whether perhaps it may place greater emphasis on the states.<sup>47</sup> In any event, whichever method is chosen there must be a clear division of responsibility among the federal, state, and local governments in order to insure coordination.

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<sup>47</sup>Levin, op. cit., p. 143.

## Chapter 5

### OBSTACLES TO PROPOSALS FOR EFFECTIVE REGIONAL-TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

#### DESIRE FOR HOME RULE--FEAR OF BIG REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

Throughout the history of this country, the traditional approach of local governments has always been based upon the ideas of Thomas Jefferson: prominent local governments were the best guarantee of liberty and protection against arbitrary governments, and they would work efficiently as well.<sup>48</sup>

Suburban governments today have manifested a persistent tendency toward this inherited independence, although the justifications for their long-standing convictions rest on increasingly shaky foundations.<sup>49</sup> Recent studies find no supportive evidence for the widely held claim that small governmental units foster active political participation by their residents. Rather, they raise serious doubts about the validity of the belief that small political units constitute the best means of keeping

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<sup>48</sup>Aron, op. cit., p. 45.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

government in control of the people. Nevertheless, the desire for local autonomy and preservation of local values is indeed very pronounced today. Separate competing governments continue to draw back from any joint action which might mean loss of independence or threat to home rule.<sup>50</sup> There is no way to force the integration of the various local governments given our present democratic philosophy. There is no way to free the governmental structure from the decisions of the referendum voter. Therefore, many important problems generated in the metropolitan-regional areas are not solvable within the existing governmental structures. In other words, the political realities preclude shattering the system in order that it may be given a new structure to handle modern-day problems. Scott Greer stated:

Our political culture lags far behind the emerging problems of the metropolitan world in which we live. It is embedded in the folk thought of the citizen and the phrases of the law.<sup>51</sup>

#### CONFLICTING GOALS OF FEDERAL AGENCIES

Many urban and regional planners have been seriously concerned with the tendency of federal agencies to pull in different directions in metropolitan areas. For instance, there may be one agency concerned with highways and another

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>51</sup>Greer, op. cit., p. 56.

concerned with mass transit, and they may not be working in coordination with each other. Also, part of the Department of Housing and Urban Development may be stimulating and encouraging suburban settlement, sprawl, and dispersal of the population, while another part attempts to generate central-city renewal and revival. These goals are very often seen by planners as conflicting federal policies, and have raised basic questions as to who is to coordinate the development programs for the metropolitan-regional areas, and how is this coordination to be achieved.

## Chapter 6

### CONCLUSION

We, as the responsible and progressive citizenry of the United States of America, can no longer ignore the effects and implications of transportation which touch almost every aspect of our lives, both directly and indirectly. Our present system is so congested, so expensive in terms of air pollution, land use, and noise pollution that an alternative will have to be created. The form and extent of our transportation planning will have a dramatic impact on how we live 10, 20, and 100 years from now. Whether or not we take action now, for example, will determine whether our cities continue to grow in a sickly sprawl, or whether the builders and designers will be able to plan healthy new communities with adequate access to work and recreational areas. The price of inaction, by the same token, will be a continuing aggravation of those social and environmental ills with which we are grappling today.<sup>52</sup>

Once we understand all the social, economic, and

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<sup>52</sup>University of Chicago Center for Continuing Education, op. cit., p. 37.

physical implications of transportation planning, however, we cannot simply begin to create new transportation systems. The technology is not lacking, but the political framework is, and perhaps even the political will and ideology is also lacking. Indeed it was an ideology that created our present framework in the first place. So perhaps the real problem is that until people are convinced that comprehensive transportation planning can be beneficial to a community the political framework will remain inadequate in handling our modern transportation problems. As mentioned before, we simply do not have the governmental structures with the necessary authority and scope for planning the types of integrated balanced transportation systems that we will need in order to channel future growth properly. The reason we lack such structures is that transportation problems do not conform to state or local boundaries. Instead, transportation problems and needs follow the pattern of population, and our population lives increasingly in the densely populated corridors that connect many cities and cross several state lines. Within each corridor are several cities and dozens of major suburbs which, by themselves, cannot create a transportation system that meets their own needs very often, and much less the needs of the entire region.

Due to the number and diversity of transportation regions within the United States, the federal government



cannot undertake the specific and detailed planning and testing of different transportation systems that each region would need in order to insure a better future environment.

The consensus on the need for regional-transportation planning is emerging much more rapidly than the governmental framework within which such planning can take place. New transportation policy and new transportation systems are not, as some would have us believe, dependent upon unrealistic advances in technology. The technological problems can be overcome if political institutions can emerge for formulating coherent and coordinated policy.<sup>53</sup>

At the present time, no political unit--city, county, state, or federal--is equipped to formulate a transportation policy that is consistent with local and national needs. The political unit that is most relevant to planning and implementation of transportation needs, that of the region, has no official governing body in existence in any of the United States. Many must be created with the authority, power, and responsibility to plan and implement effective transportation systems in order to insure our country's future welfare.

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 38.

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