

Meeting the Challenges of Growth— Precedents from New York & the Nation

Erie-Niagara Framework for Regional Growth



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INTRODUCTION

As a topic of national concern for more than 30 years, there is by now a substantial experience in policy, planning, and regulatory response to the need to manage patterns of urban development.

The cases described below address a broad range of urban development concerns including farmland protection, infrastructure investment, transportation efficiency, transportation-land use relationships, inner-city disinvestment, urban design and aesthetics, and much more.

These responses to “sprawl” have been tried at state, metropolitan, and municipal levels and run the gamut from “hard” to “soft” and from “authoritative” to “ad hoc.” At the same time, in only a few cases have these policies been in place for long enough to demonstrate their efficacy in any definitive way. Nevertheless, what others have done may help inform possible action in Erie and Niagara Counties.

These cases have been suggested, in part, for their relevance to the legal, regulatory, and institutional framework of planning in New York State, including the continuing strength of traditions of municipal home rule; the crucial role of inter-municipal agreements may play in growth management efforts; the guiding role of county governments in organizing effective strategies; and the importance of support from the State legislature.

More broadly, case studies have been suggested because they encompass a range of approaches to a variety of key threats and opportunities presented by the phenomenon of urban growth. These include concerns for natural resource protection; the potential for conserving energy and developing new sources of energy; demands for central city revitalization and “brownfields” redevelopment; the need to preserve and develop affordable housing; and the need to preserve agricultural lands. We have suggested additional case studies from across the nation especially when the approaches taken seem appropriate to the New York State context.

These are presented as whole cases, rather than as individual policy tools, because the processes by which policies are developed, approved, and implemented are at least as important as the policies themselves. A short section at the end of this report provides a catalogue of those tools. The paper ends with some more general lessons from the growth management experience.

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CASE STUDIES FROM NEW YORK

The Infrastructure Lever: Genesee County *Smart Growth Plan*

Although little urbanized and containing only one significant urban center, Genesee County shares with many Upstate New York regions the phenomenon of “thinning” – stagnant population accompanied by rapid expansion of development into rural areas. Facing the combined threats of farmland conversion, central city disinvestment, and costly infrastructure investments, Genesee County responded with its *Smart Growth Plan*.

The plan is simple in concept, relatively non-coercive in implementation, and focused on local needs. It identifies by clear and compelling criteria areas that ought to be developed, uses the County’s primary relevant authority – infrastructure investment and management – to implement the plan, and depends on strong ongoing participation to monitor and support the plan.

The Smart Growth Plan was an outgrowth of a larger Comprehensive Plan process. As in many other communities, Genesee County required several attempts before they “got it right.” Initial work on a plan to be named *Genesee 2000* began in 1988. An “update” of the *Genesee 2000* plan in 1994 produced a proposal to create a full-fledged comprehensive plan. Two years later the County Legislature agreed, and two years after that – in 1998 – the Genesee County Comprehensive Plan was approved.

One of the hallmarks of the process throughout these years was a strong commitment to broad but well-structured participation. The initial effort was based on the work of 85 individuals serving on a steering committee and task groups on infrastructure, economic development, and housing. The follow-up effort involved 150 people working on a total of ten “focus groups” led by a volunteer steering committee. The effort has been further supported by full and balanced coverage by the local newspaper.

Additional topics addressed by the groups included government administration, health and human services, law enforcement and emergency management, parks, recreation and culture, technology, transportation, utilities, and land use. Each of the focus groups included a mixture of county and municipal officials, business people, relevant professionals, and citizens. Each was equipped with a liaison to the legislature.

The broad goal of the plan was to increase coordination and communication toward economies to be gained from shared services and facilities, computerization, technical assistance to local government and schools, training for public officials, efficient provision of infrastructure, especially water, protection of the agricultural land base, and marketing and promotion of Genesee County.

Genesee County	
Situation:	Small rural county facing “thinning” population and rising infrastructure costs.
Platform:	Comp Plan produced, monitored by broad stakeholder group; Water hook ups decided by administrative review committee.
Jurisdictions:	One city, six villages, 13 towns, one Indian reservation.
2000 pop: Change 90-00	60,370 + 0.52%

The Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1998. Its implementation has been accompanied by an ongoing process of monitoring and follow-up by the steering committee and focus groups. Each working group provides a “community report card” on a bi-annual basis, noting progress on specific goals and action items.

The Comprehensive Plan process laid the groundwork for *the Smart Growth Plan*. It provided experience and organization for collaboration, and the Comprehensive Plan outlined some of the key issues for smart growth: infrastructure, land use, economic development, and farmland protection.

The general motivations for growth management planning included not only the need to economize on utility investments, but also to get the most out of those investments in terms of economic development, to revitalize city and village centers, and to limit conversion of farmland at the same time.

More immediately, the thrust for *the Smart Growth Plan* originated with an effort to extend water supply throughout Genesee County from neighboring systems in Erie and Monroe counties. What the planners quickly understood, however, was that providing too extensive water service would put agricultural areas of the county under new pressure for non-farm development. They needed a way to put the water where it was needed – for economic development – and keep it out of areas where it was not needed.

The Smart Growth Plan identifies targeted “development areas” within which development or redevelopment is encouraged and where connections to the County’s water system will be provided as a matter of right.

These areas are characterized by their potential for economic development; the density of proposed residential, commercial or industrial development; their access to all modes of transportation; feasibility of extension of public water service; and their serviceability by other forms of public infrastructure. Excluded from development areas are lands within state regulated wetlands, flood hazard areas, and County Agricultural Districts.

Development areas already designated include places in and around the City of Batavia, the Village of Leroy, the Village of Bergen and other villages and hamlets in the County; at interchanges on the Interstate highway system; and in and around Darien Lakes Six Flags theme park.

Proposals for development outside of these areas are considered on a case-by-case basis by a review committee composed of representatives from the County Planning Department, Soil and Water Management Conservation District, Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, and the Water Resources Agency.

Proposals are reviewed in terms of their impacts on agriculture, consistency with County economic development initiatives, consistency with other available infrastructure, consistency with local plans and overall ability to meet the needs of some public health or community need. Applicants who are denied in this process may appeal to the County Planning Board, whose subsequent decision is then final.

The Genesee County *Smart Growth Plan* also sets as an objective the protection of farmland and the rural character of the countryside, and maintenance of the viability of agriculture. There are already twelve Agricultural Districts within Genesee County in which land is assessed at its value for agricultural production, protected from restrictive local regulations, protected from public acquisition, and protected from

nuisance suits. *The Smart Growth Plan* is coordinated with the Agricultural District Program by omitting land within those districts from any of its designated development areas.

The County is preparing a more detailed Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan, and when this is complete it, too, will be coordinated with the *Smart Growth Plan*. Other farmland protection measures under consideration include conservation of high-quality farmland through conservation easements, agricultural protection zoning, transfer of development rights, incentive zoning, agricultural protection zoning, and density averaging or cluster zoning. Given the limits of local resources, however, it seems unlikely that Genesee County will rely as heavily on purchases as have other localities throughout New York State.

The redevelopment goal of the plan is being implemented at the municipal level, in the case of Batavia, through a recently developed Economic Development Action Plan. The plan takes a multi-faceted approach to business attraction and development, including a public-private partnership for downtown redevelopment through façade improvements, infrastructure investments, and marketing programs. Administrative changes in the city and city-town competition for sales-tax generating developments have hampered these efforts.

For the time being, Genesee County seems insulated by any development pressures generated by its metropolitan neighbors to the east and west. This is due in part to the interest shown in the towns of Riga and Churchville in Monroe County, and Newstead in Erie County, although demand remains weak and the distances to Buffalo and Rochester are still relatively great.

Meanwhile, a number of other municipalities are revising local plans in light of County-level efforts. The Town of Alabama and Village of Oakfield are preparing a joint comprehensive plan. The towns of Pavilion and LeRoy and the Village of LeRoy recently adopted new plans. The Town of Darien is working on a strategic economic development plan that will support subsequent comp plan work.

The most striking feature of the Genesee County *Smart Growth Plan* remains its mainly voluntary nature. It is interesting to note, for example, that the plan does not include a land use map. The county-wide review of water hookups notwithstanding, the growth management strategies in the plan are adopted and used only by towns and villages that wish to participate. They do so also with assistance from the county planning department.

It is early in the implementation process to see much in the way of results. So far, however, nearly a thousand businesses and residences have received approval for water hook-ups inside targeted development areas. Only four applications have been received for hook-ups outside of these areas, and all were approved after official review. Property owner resistance to these policies has been muted so far but a “test case” is on the horizon. It remains to be seen whether county leaders will “hold the line” in the face of such opposition.

**County-Municipal Collaboration:
Patterns for Westchester**

As a growing sub-area of the New York City metropolitan region, Westchester County faces a host of serious problems including consumption of rural lands, threats to its watershed and drinking water, violations of federal Clean Air standards, inflated housing prices, loss of manufacturing jobs, and high vacancy rates in corporate office space.

The response of this county, which has a strong tradition of planning at the municipal level, has most recently been a framework document called *Patterns for Westchester: The Land and the People*. The plan is, for the most part, advisory in nature, but outlines a clear vision and program for managing growth within the bounds of New York home rule tradition. It aligns closely with plans at several levels: adopted local plans, “bottom-up” intermunicipal plans, Hudson River Valley Greenway principles, and even the Regional Plan Association plan.

While local planning is strong – many municipalities adopted their first zoning in the 1920s and first comprehensive plans in the 1930s – the County Planning Board is actually less powerful than boards in other counties. Through a quirk in state law, local governments are not required to mount a super-majority to pass land use actions remanded from the county. The tradition in Westchester has developed, however, for the County Planning Board to accompany its recommendations back to municipalities with carefully-crafted opinions pegged to adopted county policies.

Patterns for Westchester now serves this purpose as a “coherent set of standards” for the planning board to follow as it discharges its responsibilities to conduct long-range planning, to advise the County Executive and Legislature on capital spending, infrastructure issues, and land acquisition, and to bring the County’s perspective to bear on local planning and zoning referrals.

As elsewhere, *Patterns for Westchester* is the latest in a series of efforts to plan for growth. Patterns builds on a 1975 effort called *Assumptions, Goals and Urban Form*, and the update of that plan in 1985 known as *Urban Form Refinement*. But while these predecessor plans emphasized planning for particular development densities in specific locations, the current effort focuses on reinforcing the traditional patterns of centers, corridors, and open space.

For Westchester County, the historical pattern is 300 years old, with Hudson River, Bronx River Valley, and Long Island Sound transportation corridors that once carried horse traffic, and later defined by commuter rail service, now filled with automobiles. Local planners say Westchester has had “transit oriented development” since the 1890s. The urban centers of Yonkers, Mount Vernon, White Plains, and Mount Kisco have been long-established. So, too, the open spaces between the corridors and in the highlands.

Westchester County	
Situation:	Diverse issues and environments; strong local planning; development pressure from NYC.
Platform:	Advisory county-wide plan with municipal implementation and Greenway Compact overlay.
Jurisdictions:	Six cities, 15 towns, 22 villages.
2000 pop:	923,459
Change 90-00	+ 5.5%

In general, the *Patterns* plan recommends that, whenever possible, development be channeled where infrastructure can support it. It calls for the adaptation of existing corridors to harbor “attractive multi-use places,” to protect scenic routes, and to reduce congestion through strategic traffic and transit improvements.

Other policies call for nurture of the economic climate through infrastructure improvements and affordable housing programs; the preservation and protection of natural resources and environment; encouragement of a range of housing types; the promotion of transportation alternatives; the expansion of public access to parks and waterfronts; protection of educational, cultural and historical resources; maintenance of environmentally sound waste management systems; and investments in social and public safety.

Such policies, even when highly-detailed, are the boilerplate of contemporary growth management planning. The key to success is always in the implementation. Here *Patterns* makes no false assumptions. It acknowledges that cities, towns and villages have “the last word” on land use regulation.

The county strategy has been to build on local comprehensive plans and some important intermunicipal planning efforts. *Patterns* is not a major departure from what local governments have already done. Rather, it has taken into account local expectations about development, community character, and natural resources, while it builds on strong local controls in many cases, and attempts to put it all into a cohesive vision and broad policy framework.

Westchester has benefited from serendipity, as well, in the way that a collaborative intermunicipal planning effort and the state-sponsored Hudson River Valley Greenway program have each come into alignment with *Patterns*.

The Historic River Towns of Westchester (HRTW) began almost a decade ago as a locally-generated intermunicipal effort to deal with problems of “main street” disinvestment and economic decline in the villages and towns along the Hudson River. Initial work to inventory local resources led to a tourism-based economic development strategy. Then, with help from the county planning department, these 13 municipalities developed guidelines for “Making Livable Downtowns,” and “Growing Smarter Together.”

This work has had impacts both “up” and “down” the planning and policy hierarchy. The HRTW work has become the first detailed element in Westchester’s Greenway Compact plan (see more below). It also set the pattern for the reorganization of sub-area plans within the county and spurred new local planning.

Area planning in Westchester had previously been organized in arbitrary geographic clumps. Now, the river towns define a new functional sub-area for planning where issues, problems, and values are likely to be similar. Four other sub-areas have since been delineated, including the Bronx River Valley, Central County (around White Plains), Long Island Sound, and the Northern Watershed. Plans for these areas will be the basis for additional elements of Westchester’s Greenway Compact plan. Meanwhile, some municipalities have taken this guidance to heart. The village of Croton-on-Hudson is now addressing the task of “putting the toothpaste back in the tube” – finding ways to redevelop and better connect fragmented commercial districts, protect neighborhoods from housing tear-downs, and protect open space.

Investments in “traffic calming,” creation of “gateway overlay districts,” and changes in residential zoning have helped achieve some of this, although battles with franchises like McDonalds and Eckerd are in the offing.

Croton-on-Hudson has also been aggressive in preserving a ring of open space around the village, combining outright purchases of waterfront and other land by the village and the Audubon Society with strategic support for golf course development and preservation of an existing arboretum.

The reality, however, is that implementation of growth management principles and strategies depends heavily on the municipalities. While most endorse the broad plan and many have strong controls on development the key is consistent application of local regulations. Some do a better job than others.

Meanwhile, the County promises to manifest its own plan through all those things within its purview: open space acquisitions, road and transportation projects, high level public transit projects, water and sewer infrastructure, and other public facilities. Similarly, the County will use its role as administrator of federally-funded transportation, housing and community development, infrastructure, and other programs to further the plan.

It will also carry out its core responsibilities for long-range planning, conduct of county-wide and area-wide planning studies, the encouragement of citizen participation, as well as to play an informal role as conduit, facilitator, and spokesman for municipalities in the county in their dealings with other metropolitan jurisdictions, the Regional Plan Association, the Hudson River Valley Greenway, and others.

Given the sophistication of local governments and the established inter-dependencies of municipal and county governments, it is not unreasonable to expect that this sort of federated planning, with vision and framework at the county level, and detailed regulation at the municipal level, might just work. At this point, however, county planners consider their control over land use actions to be too loose to justify the establishment and use of specific benchmarks for housing, density, transit-use and other variables.

**State Leadership:
Hudson River Valley Greenway**

The Hudson River Valley Greenway is an important example of a regional planning initiative that combines the strength of State sponsorship and support with the traditions of home rule and local sovereignty over land use regulation. While the name of the initiative honors the trails project that is its organizing framework, the HRVG was created to pursue a broader agenda of natural and cultural resource protection, regional planning, economic development, public access, and heritage and environmental education.

Established by act of the State legislature in 1991, the Greenway now includes 198 participating municipalities in 13 counties from Saratoga County to Manhattan. The program is administered by the Greenway Communities Council, a state agency, whose mission is to guide and support cooperative voluntary regional planning in the Greenway. It also includes the Greenway Heritage Conservancy, a not-for-profit public benefit corporation, whose role is to provide technical support and assistance to local governments in planning and implementation.

What sets the Greenway apart from many other intermunicipal agreements in New York State are the incentives and preferences offered to its participants. The Greenway depends not so much on wielding “sticks” as it does on offering “carrots” to counties and municipalities for participating in the regional planning process. Counties, cities, towns, and villages are not required to join in – but they must if they want the benefits of technical assistance and access to small grants programs.

The Greenway was founded on a long history of concern for protection of the great natural and cultural assets of the Hudson River Valley. A predecessor organization, the Hudson River Valley Commission, was created in 1966, but dissolved only five years later. In 1979 the State Department of Environmental Conservation commissioned a Heritage Task Force of the Hudson River Valley to catalogue the natural and cultural resources of the valley and evaluate needs for their protection. The Task Force was re-commissioned in 1988 as the Hudson River Valley Greenway Communities Council then restructured under the 1991 Greenway legislation, sponsored by then-Assembly Member Maurice Hinchey and State Senator George Pataki.

The program is intended to bring local governments into strong regional alliance; advance their ability to achieve appropriate economic development in relation to conservation aims; provide technical assistance on a regional perspective, relating to agriculture, development trends, and open space protection; preserve natural, cultural and architectural assets; preserve open space by encouraging new development in existing areas and by encouraging development where infrastructure already exists; interweave recreation,

Hudson River Valley Greenway	
Situation	Diverse region; many values to protect and enhance; various planning traditions.
Platform:	Voluntary regional planning program with state leadership and incentives.
Jurisdictions:	All or part of 13 counties along the Hudson River. Of 259 eligible municipalities, 198 participate.
2000 pop: Change 90-00	2,672,157* + 6%

* Including towns in Greene and Ulster counties not in the Greenway and not including Bronx and Manhattan LWRP zones.

access and travel corridors; and promote an appreciation of the Hudson River.

The Greenway Communities Council consists of 27 voting members, two of which, including the chair, are appointed by the governor. The remaining members are appointed on the recommendation of local officials from counties and municipalities, by members of the state legislature, and as representatives of heads of state agencies. They are supported by a full-time staff of eleven people based in Albany.

The Council was established to work with county and municipal governments in the development of a voluntary regional planning process and to coordinate the involvement of state government in support of that process. As such the Council is empowered to review and comment on the capital and long-range plans of state agencies as they affect the Greenway and to participate as interested agency in environmental review processes. They may also designate multi-county planning districts or sub-regions within the Greenway, and review plans of those regions or their constituent municipalities. But the emphasis is always on promoting collaboration, not on regulation or formal oversight.

The Greenway program has two distinct tiers of membership. Municipalities may become “Greenway Communities” with relative ease, mainly as a signal from local communities of their interest in working with the Greenway program. Communities become “Greenway Compact” members as they engage in sub-regional comprehensive planning efforts that embrace Greenway goals.

A municipality may qualify as a Greenway Community, and hence become eligible for Council or Conservancy assistance, by passing a simple local resolution endorsing Greenway goals or criteria. These goals include: natural and cultural resource protection; regional planning; economic development; public access; and heritage and environmental education. No sweeping changes in local plans or codes are necessary as part of this resolution. Governments must only agree to work with neighboring communities and other Greenway members to implement projects that are compatible with greenway criteria

Counties become Greenway Compact members by entering into an agreement with neighboring municipalities and with their county government to undertake coordinated regional planning efforts consistent with Greenway goals. When plans are complete, municipalities amend local zoning and subdivision regulations with a short cross-reference, stating that subsequent planning review interpretations and discretionary actions should be guided by greenway criteria; and agree that, whenever appropriate, any new or amended land use regulation should be consistent with the Greenway program.

The Council has designated each county as a “sub-region” for such purposes. A few counties are well along in their work, others are just getting started. But participation in the Greenway has mushroomed in the past three years since the Council expanded its focus from riverfront towns to all the municipalities in the Greenway area.

Dutchess County is by far the most advanced in its work, with 24 of 30 municipalities signed on to an elaborate set of goals, policies, and guidelines called *Greenway Connections*. The guidelines cover a wide range of recommendations for protecting the countryside, strengthening urban centers, improving suburban development, creating greenway connections, and site design. Some members have adopted the guidelines by cross-reference, others by specific amendment to local codes. Both the county and individual municipalities have invested heavily in purchase of open space.

Greenway Connections also includes an insightful analysis of the common policy framework implied by at least eight state, regional, county, and local planning efforts. It shows how broadly endorsed are policies in support of local and regional planning partnerships, creation of interconnected systems of open space, the preservation of natural and cultural resources, the role of tourism and local “main streets” in economic development, protection of public waterfront access, and heritage and environmental education as a tool of regional development.

Planners in Dutchess County credit the specific design of the Greenway program for stimulating their success. The Greenway offered a compelling physical or geographic vision of connections, didn't threaten new regulatory involvement by the state, and provided lots of incentives for localities to participate. Significantly, the Greenway program also offered municipal participants indemnification against legal action prompted by their implementation of program principles. It has never been used, but it has provided reassurance.

Westchester County is probably in “second place” in developing its Greenway planning program. Putnam and Rockland counties are also at work developing sub-region plans. Albany and Orange counties are ready to get started. Communities in Greene, Ulster, and Rockland counties are focusing initial work at the local level.

State incentives are an important tool for leadership. All Greenway Communities are eligible for planning assistance from the Greenway Council and for matching grants for community planning. Compact members are also eligible for a 5 percent rating advantage on competitive infrastructure grants and access to streamlined environmental reviews when activities are consistent with Greenway plans. State agencies are also required to provide assistance to and coordinate activities with Greenway communities “to the fullest extent practicable” in the regular conduct of their operations.

These efforts are also supported by a Greenway Heritage Conservancy – a not-for-profit public benefit corporation created to provide technical assistance to communities that choose to participate in the Greenway program. The Conservancy helps landowners and county and local officials identify and implement protective measures for critical areas. The Conservancy is conducting an inventory and analysis of resources in the valley. They also assist in the development and implementation of comprehensive plans for resource protection at the local, county or regional level.

Of course, one of the initial motivations for the Greenway and the geographic framework for the program is also one of its primary achievements – trails. The ultimate goal is to establish, wherever possible, a continuous riverside trail the length of the Hudson. Related objectives include providing direct access to the river itself, to establish pedestrian-friendly links among cities, towns, and villages, and to connect the rich historic, cultural, and natural resources of the valley.

So far, more than 180 miles of riverside community trails have been established – some in eleven of the 13 member counties. Another 147 miles of bike route on NY Route 9 have also been established, as well as 32 miles of countryside corridors and connector trails. A total of 360 miles of trail are now in existence, financed in large part through a hotel occupancy tax that applies to all hotels, motels and guesthouses with 26 or more rooms.

The Council and the Conservancy also jointly manage the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, a 10-county, 250-community area bordering the river for 154 miles of tidal estuary. The National Heritage Area also works in concert with the Hudson Valley Tourism Development Council. Together, these agencies share responsibility to plan, protect, and promote the natural and cultural resources of the valley.

The strength of the Hudson River Valley Greenway approach is that it respects traditions of local autonomy, acknowledges the right of municipalities to define their own interests, and works to build regional planning collaboratively and through the offer of attractive incentives. The weakness of the approach however is that implementation remains in the hands of individual municipalities who may be more or less conscientious in their application of Greenway principles. Moreover, because it is a voluntary “compact,” participants may even opt out if it suits their interests.

**New Urbanist Model:
Onondaga County Settlement Plan**

Metropolitan Syracuse and Onondaga County share with other Upstate New York regions the troublesome combination of rapid expansion of urbanized area and the stagnation of economy and population. In the 30 years prior to 2000, Syracuse experienced a doubling of its built-up area yet suffered a net decline in population of 16,000.

One of the major responses of the community, through the Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency, has been to adopt nearly in total the prescriptions of “The New Urbanism” as a regional and local framework for dealing with sprawl. The result was the *Onondaga County Settlement Plan*, created under the leadership of the renowned architecture and planning firm of Duany Plater-Zyberk.

Work on the *Settlement Plan*, however, was preceded by several years’ effort toward the creation of a *2010 Development Guide*. Building on the participation of county department heads, the county Environmental Management Council, a regional infrastructure commission, elected municipal officials, planning board members, and the public, the planning process constructed a consensus around an infrastructure-based approach to growth management.

The *2010 Development Guide* laid out a policy by which the county would use its responsibilities for the provision of roads, water supply, wastewater transportation, and wastewater treatment as a means to direct growth to existing urban areas and community centers and to avoid unnecessary new infrastructure costs. Specifically, the *Guide* made it county policy not to extend trunk water and sewer lines to serve new residential development.

Initially adopted in 1991, revised and re-adopted in 1996, the *2010 Development Guide*, nevertheless, lacked a more detailed vision of the possible future and better regulatory tools to help local municipalities achieve that vision. Indeed, the planners complained, better development was effectively illegal under the development codes in force in Syracuse at that time.

A response to the problem was to be supplied by the firm of Andres Duany, who came to Syracuse for a lecture series in 1996. As a leading proponent of The New Urbanism, Duany and his partner, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, offer a well-distilled critique of current patterns of suburban development and an equally refined prescription for their improvement.

In general, the New Urbanists contrast the segregated land uses of contemporary suburbs with the mixed-uses of traditional neighborhood centers, the auto-dependency of suburban areas versus the pedestrian-scale of traditional neighborhoods, and the general “placelessness” of the suburbs against the clear place identity of older areas.

Syracuse/ Onondaga County	
Situation:	Rapid geographic expansion; stagnant population; inner city disinvestment.
Platform:	Advisory county-wide plan with municipal implementation
Jurisdictions:	One city, 15 villages, and 19 towns.
2000 pop: Change 90-00	458,336 - 2.27%

With support from the County Legislature, the Industrial Development Agency, and the Onondaga Water Authority, DPZ was hired to do a plan. The planning process included a broad-based steering committee and plenty of public engagement. But it also featured public meetings and lectures in which Duany explained his approach, and a charrette in which the professional team developed the plan.

The Onondaga County Settlement Plan consists of four elements: a regional plan; pilot projects; Traditional Neighborhood Development Codes; and Traditional Neighborhood Development Guidelines. If the plan is followed, Duany promised, “The area could become a model for the nation.”

The regional plan outlines the structure of the urbanized area in terms of an array of central places, an open space system and transportation facilities. It calls for the preservation of those central places, the elaboration of a continuous system of open space reserves, and a transportation system geared toward multi-modal service and pedestrian use.

The pilot projects included in the plan are intended to provide models for addressing typical problems of traditional centers damaged by contemporary development trends. As the plan states: communities “face a variety of planning dilemmas: how to preserve farmland; how to revitalize struggling urban neighborhoods; how to redevelop abandoned industrial sites; how to reclaim a neighborhood from high-speed traffic; how to replace a dying mall; how to humanize a commercial strip; how to grow a village or a hamlet in a way that strengthens its character.”

More than 20 municipalities volunteered their sites for treatment as pilot projects. The plan provides detailed analyses and proposals for seven specific sites: the Butternut section of Syracuse; the Harbor West brownfield; the Village of Liverpool; Fayetteville Mall; Bayberry Plaza; Baldwinsville and Jamesville; and the Town of Camillus.

The Traditional Neighborhood Development Codes and Guidelines are offered as practical implementing devices for willing municipalities. The codes provide general but detailed guidance for the design of many elements of the urban form including streets, sidewalks, driveways, parking lots, street trees, alleyways, and a wide range of housing and commercial types. But since the codes are technical documents designed for direct application, the plan also includes guidelines that explain the principles behind the codes.

Also by way of explaining New Urbanist philosophy, as well as emphasizing that a diversity of places are allowed, the plan includes a concept known as the “urban-rural transect.” The transect places on a continuum a series of development types ranging from the most intensive, the urban “core” and high-density “central” neighborhoods; through moderate density patterns, “general” and “edge”; to least intensive patterns, “rural reserve” and “rural preserve.”

For all of the prescriptive power of the plan, its implementation still relies on the traditional prerogatives of municipalities in a home rule system. Towns and villages have been urged to adopt the Traditional Neighborhood Development Code for their own. Otherwise, the planning agency relies on the *2010 Development Guide* policy on infrastructure extensions and the planning board’s advisory role on re-zonings and major subdivision applications.

So far, only the Town of Tully, in the hills south of Syracuse, has moved to adopt the TND codes, largely in an effort to protect the township from the kind of sprawling development experienced in the suburbs north of

the city. County planning officials, however, report continued interest by municipalities in the TND work and expect other towns to follow suit as they update municipal planning documents.

Several of the pilot projects have also moved forward on these terms: the redevelopment of the derelict Fayetteville Mall as a new “Towne Center,” although its adherence to New Urbanist principles is loose at best; the Lakefront Area Master Plan, which includes the mixed uses, high densities, and traditional street grid favored by the TND codes; and Annesgrove, a new residential project in the Town of Camillus by Pioneer Development Company, one of the early supporters of the *Onondaga County Settlement Plan* process.

**Monroe County:
“Green Space Initiative”**

Like other regions in Upstate New York, Monroe County experienced rapid conversion of farmland for residential development during the 1990s. This loss of agriculturally important land combined with threats to environmentally sensitive lands and scenic resources prompted leaders in metropolitan Rochester to create the one-time Monroe County Green Space Initiative, with the first of two rounds of funding provided in 2001.

Round one provided \$2 million from the County’s Tobacco Securitization program to help local governments preserve open space and farmland. County grants were allowed to fund up to 25 percent of the total cost of acquiring open space or purchasing development rights to land identified as being of ecological, agricultural or community importance. Twelve projects encompassing a total of 1,300 acres were funded.

The program was structured to make efficient use of county funds and to encourage the formation of partnerships among county and municipal governments, not-for-profit land trusts, and other citizen groups. So far, the county’s contribution has been matched by \$8.3 million in grants from federal, state, local and private sources. Only municipal governments and not-for-profit land trusts working with a local municipal sponsor were eligible to receive the funds.

The Monroe County Department of Planning and Development coordinated the application process, evaluating information about the property, its value as open space, compliance with local plans and reasons why acquisition of that land was necessary for preservation. Applications were reviewed by a selection committee appointed by the County Executive. The committee’s recommendations were given to the County Executive who provided a final recommendation to the County Legislature.

A second round of grants was made in 2002, using \$500,000 not awarded in the first round, and providing significantly easier terms to grantees. County grants in round two were allowed to cover fully half of project costs, although the maximum amount allowed per project was reduced from \$500,000 to \$250,000.

The program is limited to fee simple acquisitions and purchase of development rights to encourage permanent open space or agricultural usage. Land intended for use in active recreation was not deemed eligible, but acquisition of open space as a buffer or complement to parks and active recreational areas was allowed.

Planning requirements appeared stringent, but of 17 applications, 16 were granted. Property eligible for funding includes those identified in the Preservation of Environmentally Sensitive Areas report (Monroe County Environmental Management Commission, 1996); those identified in municipal master plans or other inventories of open space, environmentally sensitive, or agriculturally significant lands; farmland with USDA prime soils or land identified in Monroe County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan as vulnerable to conversion.

Monroe County	
Situation:	Ongoing loss of agricultural land and scenic resources.
Platform:	One time county-wide program; county-municipal partnerships; additional municipal programs.
Jurisdictions:	One city, ten villages, 19 towns.
2000 pop:	735,343
Change 90-00	+ 2.99%

Selection criteria favor projects that will protect environmental resources that will enhance air, water, or soil quality; safeguard or buffer important fish or wildlife habitats; preserve viable agricultural land; and are located near or next to existing open spaces.

Otherwise, program sponsors hoped to share the money as widely as possible across the county. Five towns – Greece, Pittsford, Webster, Penfield and Parma – got three-fourths of the money. Nine towns got none, although none of those applied.

The program puts the onus for application squarely on the backs of the municipalities or not-for-profit sponsors. It is up to towns, or groups like the Trust for Public Lands to nominate a property, make the case for its protection, appraise the property, negotiate the acquisition agreement, and work out a plan and budget for maintenance and administration.

If there has been a problem in the program – they have yet to spend \$400,000 of the \$2 million earmarked for open space – it has been in closing out the deals. A few of the grants have been turned back because of failure to strike a bargain with property owners. Many of the remainder are yet to close, although program managers hope to tie these up by mid 2004. While some of the projects were well developed when first proposed, others came forward with preliminary work done. In other cases, project sponsors were delayed by funding cycles in state, federal, or philanthropic programs.

Most of the sites purchased have some sort of unique quality and some represent real victories for heritage preservation. Thirty acres on Lake Ontario in the Town of Parma were purchased just ahead of a proposed single family subdivision. Nearly 400 acres of farmland in Webster were preserved by a purchase of development rights.

More generally, however, the impact of the program has not been measured, in either economic or environmental terms. No sort of cost-benefit analysis has been attempted. However, it can be said that the Monroe County program has been dwarfed by open space acquisitions in a single town.

The Town of Pittsford passed a \$9.9 million bond act several years ago to purchase development rights on about 1,200 acres of open land. Another 800 to 1,200 acres are expected to be preserved under Pittsford's "fifty-fifty" zoning ordinance which requires that new developments set aside half of all land for preservation. Expenditures under the program were subsequently reduced by \$3 million because of offsets by county, state, federal, and private matches. But the program promises to make a visible impact on the development of the town.

Municipal leaders credit thorough planning for their achievements in resource protection, beginning with a 1995 comprehensive plan that helped identify agricultural, ecological, and cultural values in the 3,600 acres of land that then remained undeveloped. Using these criteria to set priorities for acquisition, Pittsford created its "Greenprint" for the town.

Supervisor Bill Carpenter recalls there were many who said that Pittsford was too suburbanized to save any farmland. But their inventory showed they had viable farms with productive soils as well as important lands bordering the Erie Canal.

An extensive citizen participation process – more than a hundred public meetings in all – helped develop the strong consensus that was needed to support such an expensive program. The fact that Pittsford is a relatively affluent community made it easier to fund such an aggressive effort. The investment, in any context, however, was a big one.

“I think people love what we’ve done,” Carpenter said. “And when this town is done developing, people are going to appreciate it even more.”

CASE STUDIES FROM THE NATION

Carrots and Sticks in Twin Cities: The Minnesota Metropolitan Council

The “Twin Cities” metropolitan region centered in Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota, is a rapidly growing region facing severe problems of traffic congestion, housing price escalation, central city disinvestment, threats to natural resources and habitats, and the need to accommodate one million more residents over the next three decades. The Minnesota Metropolitan Council is the state-created entity charged with planning for the seven-county region.

In contrast with more purely regulatory growth management programs, the Met Council has developed a mixed approach that combines central regulation and planning with incentives, advice, technical assistance, targeted capital budgeting, and operational responsibility for regional infrastructure systems – all with the aim of shaping regional growth.

In the view of former Met Council chair, Ted Mondale, the Twin Cities have taken a “third way” that lies somewhere between a *laissez faire* approach to regional growth management and the rigid bureaucratic regime of a regional government like Portland Metro. Adherents of the “third way” reject *laissez faire* approaches that misunderstand patterns of urban development as simple reflections of consumer choices to be accommodated by public investments in infrastructure. At the same time, they know that a heavy-handed bureaucratic approach to land use control is likely to generate political resistance.

In reality, the Met Council structure and program far more closely resemble what Portland does than, for example, what Houston does. Its statutory foundations, governing structure, core values, leading policies – even the basic concept behind its regional comprehensive plan – are different from more rigorous programs mostly in the details. Still, the Met Council pays close attention to managing the tension between regional goals and local values.

The Metropolitan Council was created by the Minnesota state legislature in 1967 as a novel response to the problems of rapid suburbanization. Household wells in large-lot developments were being polluted by septic systems and the FHA was threatening to refuse mortgages to any house not connected to sanitary sewers. Something had to be done.

Creation of the Met Council, however, reflected a broader understanding among political, business, and community leaders that the metropolitan area faced problems that could not be solved within the boundaries of any of the nearly 200 governmental jurisdictions then in existence.

Minnesota Metropolitan Council	
Situation:	Rapidly growing metropolitan region with pressure on transportation, housing, farming.
Platform:	Strong regional planning entity with authority over local policy; operates sewer, transit, parks, and aviation.
Jurisdiction:	Seven counties with 193 units of government, including Minneapolis and St. Paul.
2000 pop:	2,642,056
Change 90-00	+ 15.44%

The legislature created a 17-member council, the members of which (since 1995) are appointed and serve at the pleasure of the Governor. They directed the agency to “coordinate the planning and development of the metropolitan area.” Unfortunately, the legislature failed the first time around to provide the Met Council with adequate means to do the job it gave them and the agency’s history has been one of gradually expanding powers and responsibilities.

In 1974 the legislature voted the Met Council the authority to coordinate infrastructure investments made through the Metropolitan Transit Commission and the Metropolitan Sewer Board. Two years later the legislature expanded these powers to include oversight of transportation, wastewater, airports, parks, and open space. They also gave the council power to review local land use plans for consistency with broader metropolitan plans.

Much more recently – in 1994 – the legislature merged the functions of the Metropolitan Transit Commission, the Regional Transit Board, and the Metropolitan Waste Control Commission with the Met Council, giving the latter operational responsibility for – and therefore more effective control over – these key infrastructure agencies.

One of the key responsibilities – and significant powers – of the Met Council is to create a comprehensive land use plan or “development guide” for the entire seven-county region. Each municipality, in turn, is required to prepare a local plan and submit it for review every ten years. Local plans are expected to be consistent with the regional plan but the system leaves some room for negotiation.

When the Council deems that local plans are not in “conformance” with plans for regional systems – transportation, parks, and wastewater – they may require municipalities to revise their plans. But when local plans are not “consistent” with regional land use policies, the Council can only comment, not compel. The same goes for local plans that are not compatible with the plans of neighboring municipalities.

One of the Met Council’s primary growth management tools is the Metropolitan Urban Services Area (MUSA) which defines where the region will and won’t invest in key urban infrastructure. Within the MUSA boundary the Met Council is willing to connect land to the regional wastewater treatment system. Outside the boundary, they won’t. The MUSA is supposed to contain enough land to accommodate projected development for the next twenty years. Not surprisingly, the MUSA has been a subject of much controversy.

The legislature added two important new tools to the Met Council’s growth management kit in the mid-1990s. The Land Recycling Act resolved the thorny legal and financial issues that have hampered the redevelopment of “brownfields” land everywhere, and they passed a Livable Communities Act that provided financial incentives for municipalities to clean up polluted land, allow mixed-use transit-oriented developments, build affordable housing, and plan for other mixed-use projects.

With these new tools, and with new interest in comprehensive planning by Republican Governor Arne Carlson, and his successor, independent Jesse Ventura, the Met Council pursued a new plan to be called *Blueprint 2030*. With strong participation by elected officials and general public, planners shifted the focus from where to put the MUSA boundary to what kind of development to create within it.

The “Blueprint,” approved by the Met Council in 2002, moved beyond “concentric rings” development and called, instead, for a growth pattern focused around “nodes and corridors.” The plan called for growth to be

concentrated in existing mixed-use urban centers and rural villages and along multi-modal transportation corridors.

The plan also put new emphasis on protecting natural resources such as watersheds and farmlands, and focused more on linking transportation and land use and less on whether potential development sites were inside or outside the MUSA boundary. Likewise, it put much more emphasis – thanks in part to the Land Recycling Act – on placing new development in older established areas of the region.

The seven-county region grew by more than 15 percent in the 1990s – an increase of more than 350,000 people. The plan projects additional growth of 35 percent, or about 930,000 people, by the year 2030, roughly the same number of residents the area added in the previous thirty years. More than a third of that growth is planned to occur in the core urban counties of Hennepin (Minneapolis) and Ramsey (St. Paul). At the same time, some established rural villages are projected to double or triple in population while the townships that surround them grow only modestly.

The convergence of popular involvement, political support, legislative action, and institutional development that has made it possible to make such projections and generate such strong policies has also sparked at least a mild backlash. Governor Tim Pawlenty, a Republican, was elected in 2002 and appointed his own Met Council members when he took office with the intention of tempering the central administration of planning in the region.

The newly seated council recently released its revision of *Blueprint 2030*, renamed the *Regional Development Framework*. It is intended as a shorter, simpler, more flexible document to be implemented in a way that shifts the balance somewhat from central authority to local autonomy. Planners hope that the new process will be less prescriptive and more cooperative between Met Council and municipalities.

Still, the thrust of the revised plan is not much changed from the original. It still includes prodigious goals for housing production, redevelopment of existing areas, and expansion of transit capacity and ridership. For example, they propose to spend \$1.4 billion on new transit capacity, doubling both available seat miles and riders over the next thirty years. They project construction of ten new lane miles of highway per year while stemming the long-term increase in per capita vehicle miles traveled.

Targets for housing production are similarly gargantuan – nearly half a million new units over the three decades of the plan – about 17,000 units per year. Nearly a third of that growth is projected for already developed areas, much of it in redeveloped central city sites. Meanwhile, they hope to hold the line on expansion of land with urban services with less than 36,000 acres added.

Achieving these benchmarks will be shaped by different guidelines for different parts of the region. Developing communities will use one set of approaches, already developed communities another. Four other categories of place – rural centers, rural growth centers, rural residential areas, and diversified rural communities – will also proceed by their own guidelines.

At this point, the recent changes seem more cultural or attitudinal than substantive. The current Met Council seeks to transform the organization it oversees from one of bureaucratic regulators to performance based entrepreneurs. While a traditional bureaucracy focuses on enforcing rules, the new Met Council works to

uphold the motto “ask, don’t tell.” What remains, however, is a powerful organization with substantive authority for regulation, control, and coordination.

**Aligning Diverse Initiatives:
Metropolitan St. Louis, Missouri**

St. Louis, as much as any region in the nation, resembles Erie and Niagara Counties. Its region has grown in geographic extent much faster than it has in population or jobs while its urban core has been hollowed out – they archetypal “thinning” pattern shared by Upstate New York metropolitan areas.

Metropolitan St. Louis, likewise, is a region of extraordinary political and institutional fragmentation, encompassing two states, six counties, more than 200 municipalities, and nearly 800 governmental entities of all kinds (school boards, fire districts, utility authorities, library boards, etc.) St. Louis, if anything, is far more fragmented than Buffalo-Niagara, but as political scientist Terrence Jones suggests, the “fragmentation (is) by design.”

Traditions of municipal home rule in St. Louis are as strong as anywhere. Voters have resisted all attempts to create formal centralized institutions of regional governance. Yet, according to some observers, “St. Louis area officials have built a different and less visible form of regionalism – a network of regional specialized agencies, quasi-public agencies, contracted services and formal and informal arrangements.”

The experience of metropolitan St. Louis suggests the possibility that a variety of planning and development initiatives could come together and have a positive impact even though they are generated and directed by different organizations operating at different scales. These include a multi-faceted program for central city redevelopment; fundamental governmental reform for the city of St. Louis; creation of a new multi-county park district; construction of a bi-state rail transit system; and development of a bi-state comprehensive regional plan.

In November 2000 voters in five counties in both Missouri and Illinois approved a ballot measure creating the Metropolitan Park and Recreation District (in Missouri) and the Metro East Park and Recreation District (in Illinois) and providing one-tenth of one percent sales tax to fund acquisition and development of a web of trails and greenways to redefine the region as “clean, green, and connected.” Over twenty years, that revenue stream will make available about \$400 million for investments in open space.

Since renamed the “Great Rivers Greenway,” the new district has devoted most of its energies to getting organized and to developing a “citizen-driven” regional plan for the full system. Nevertheless, work has begun on the work of negotiating – the organization lacks powers of eminent domain – purchase or easements of lands that will become part of the greenway. In June 2001 the district committed \$36 million to help create the Confluence Greenway including 200 acres at the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers.

Voters have also been supportive of dedicated funding for transit development, passing a one-

Metropolitan St. Louis	
Platform:	Informally coordination among regional, county, and municipal efforts including MPO/ COG; regional parks district; bi-state transit agency; local initiatives.
Jurisdictions:	Five Missouri counties including the City of St. Louis and three Illinois counties.
2000 pop: Change 90-00	2,482,935 + 3.9 %

quarter of one percent sales tax increase in 1994 to pay for a capital and operating expenses for a growing bi-state light rail system. In 1996 the sales tax set-aside generated \$37 million for the system, which is operated by the Bi-State Development Authority.

The first segment of MetroLink opened in Missouri in 1993. A second line extends into Illinois. And a third “cross-county” extension in St. Louis County is under construction, expanding the system to a total of more than 42 miles. Ridership on the initial segment far exceeded projections and the transit system continues to be an important element in shaping metropolitan growth.

Meanwhile, at a more local scale, the St. Louis 2004 program has produced an array of central city-focused projects and programs while pursuing the parallel agenda of creating an inclusive decision-making structure and action-oriented collaboration. The organization was founded in 1996 in anticipation of the centennial of the St. Louis world’s fair. It brings together a broad array of public, private, and philanthropic interests and is supported by major corporations (e.g. Anheuser Busch, Boeing, Ralston Purina, Monsanto) and foundations (e.g. Robert Wood Johnson, Kemper, Danforth, Pershing).

Projects in the St. Louis 2004 portfolio included the regional greenway as well as initiatives for downtown development, sustainable neighborhoods, reducing gun violence, expanding minority employment opportunities, fighting hate crimes, expanding educational opportunities for young children and parents, providing health insurance for low income families, stimulating women and minority owned business development, assembling and preparing land for large scale redevelopment, and several others.

The Great Rivers Greenway is widely regarded in St. Louis as an unqualified success. Project sponsors also claim significant progress in the Downtown Now! program which has focused on participatory planning and implementation of projects such as redevelopment of St. Louis’ old Post Office and the creation of a highway “lid” to connect downtown with the Mississippi River waterfront.

Other success have been enjoyed in the creation of a Regional Health Commission to focus on providing access to health care for lower income citizens and the St. Louis Business Diversity Initiative to create opportunities and relationships for a more diverse regional workforce. A Sustainable Neighborhoods Development Office is up and running, as well.

St. Louis 2004 was created with a “sunset” provision. It will go out of business after centennial celebrations next year. But it has already found organizational “homes” for all of its initiatives.

In a similar vein, another public, private, and not-for-profit partnership has launched the St. Louis Inner City Competitive Assessment Strategy Project. Its purpose is to devise market-based approaches to inner-city revitalization including facilitation of land assembly, rationalizing business assistance programs, supporting existing business clusters through workforce development, supplier linkages development, and a host of other strategies.

Not unlike Buffalo, citizens in St. Louis have also worked to reform what is widely considered an antiquated and unwieldy structure of municipal government. St. Louis has a 28-member board of aldermen and a raft of independently elected offices (e.g. recorder of deeds, license collector, etc.) “It’s as if we sat down and tried to design an organization that wouldn’t work,” said urban governance expert Alan Artibise.

Worse yet, St. Louis was restricted by state constitution from changing its own charter. In 2002, voters approved a home rule amendment that will allow St. Louis at least to begin a process of reform. Nearly a year later, the more difficult work of how to design a new municipal government is just getting started, but at least it has begun.

What is remarkable about St. Louis is how a region that doesn't think it is working regionally can bring a host of initiatives into "alignment." That is, they are not directed by a single organization, but they are compatible and complementary in their aims and outcomes. How did this happen?

The answer might be found in the bi-state metropolitan planning organization, the East-West Gateway Coordinating Council. It is simultaneously the St. Louis metro area's designated Metropolitan Planning Organization and the regional Council of Governments. As such, it maintains the official plan for transportation improvements in eight counties. It also serves as the convener of all manner of inter-jurisdictional cooperative initiatives.

Beyond that, Gateway lacks the powers of a Met Council. Its comprehensive regional plan, *Gateway Blueprint*, is a high-level conceptual and strategic plan for the region with no authoritative control over land use decisions at the county or municipal level. It provides a general vision for the region and offers "a framework for public officials and citizens to evaluate how we make public decisions."

The only "teeth" in planning at the bi-state level are contained in the 20-year transportation plan. Regional leaders have used it to achieve a gradual shift in capital investment priorities. While St. Louis used to "chase congestion" more money is now being spent to expand access for inner city residents and maintain the existing system with less spent to expand capacity.

One of the clouds on the horizon is that the St. Louis region may be outgrowing even this lightweight planning structure. While East West Gateway encompasses eight counties, the federal census definition for the metropolitan area now comprises 17 counties in Illinois and Missouri. People in those counties might not yet identify themselves as residents of a Greater St. Louis, and St. Louisans might not recognize those counties as part of their region. But, clearly, the region continues to spread out.

At the heart of the region, it seems possible that the coordination and "alignment" among diverse initiatives has been achieved through a more diffuse process of community conversation and consensus-building in which a shared understanding of regional problems and opportunities is created. This seems to have been achieved through a combination of strong political and business leadership, commitment to citizen participation in all initiatives, and mutual awareness among elected and appointed executives at all levels.

Maybe such a model deserves the term "ad hoc." Terrence Jones prefers the term "organic." The system has grown to suit the region and it is nourished by the social networks of the citizens there.

"People know one another," Jones said. "People talk to one another. And there is more coordination that meets the eye."

A CATALOG OF TOOLS

While each of the case studies outlined above contains a unique story about a particular metropolitan community and its specific approaches to meeting the challenges of growth, these stories also offer a cross-section of typical policy, design, and regulatory tools that may be combined in still other ways to solve our problems. They are described here with some suggestions about what might work best for Erie and Niagara counties.

Comprehensive planning. Nearly all of the cases reviewed involve some kind of broad-based, if not wholly comprehensive, land use plan. In jurisdictions where land use plans have the simple force of law their value may need no explanation. But even where effective legal control of land use actions lies outside the hands of the planners, plans can have value and impact. Even when they are advisory, the vision, policies, and project recommendations of comprehensive plans have power to influence the actions of others. Westchester County's use of an advisory planning framework created in concert with municipalities and reinforced by other authorities may provide a way to proceed here.

Monitoring and measuring. Many of the cases include formal processes for reporting and accountability against stated goals and objectives. The Genesee County Comprehensive Plan and the St. Louis 2004 both adhered to a cycle of progress reporting that made achievements and remaining work visible. The Minnesota Met Council uses a very different set of benchmarking. Their *Regional Framework* sets very specific goals against which progress can be measured in quantifiable terms. Either they stem increases in per capita vehicle miles traveled, for example, or they do not. It makes sense for them to do so because they control the tools that can produce the outcomes. It may not make sense for planners in Westchester or Dutchess counties to do the same. While they may set the planning framework, they don't directly control the implementation processes that can succeed or fail in hitting any target.

Infrastructure investment controls. Across the board, planners and policy-makers understand that roads, sewers, water, and other urban services are a primary determinant of the direction of urban development. By directing development to where urban infrastructure is already in place or by denying public infrastructure investments to places where development is unwanted, government can direct the path and patterns of growth. Variations on the theme would seem to matter only on the margins. Deny infrastructure and you limit growth; provide it and you encourage growth. One must imagine, however, that if Genesee County can do it, so can Erie and Niagara.

Intermunicipal agreements. In New York State it is unnecessary for counties to wait for additional powers from state government. Current law already gives local governments the ability to take action through mutual agreement among units of government. Granted, the inter-municipal agreements enacted in support of the Hudson River Valley Greenway were easier to reach because of the incentives offered by a state agency. But county-municipal relations can be built through mutual dialogue, as the Westchester case attests. These agreements have typically covered simple shared service arrangements, but there seems to be no particular reason why they could not be extended to land use planning matters.

Farmland protection measures. A wide variety of specific tools have been employed in these cases to protect agricultural land – as an important part of a region's economic base and as a key element in the rural character of those regions. These tools include agricultural zoning, agricultural district programs, purchase of development rights, conservation easements, and outright purchase of key scenic or natural

lands. Making a choice among these is a technical matter that depends on the goals and resources of localities involved. Farmland protection programs, however, should be seen as central to overall growth management efforts because they are the direct complement to policies that attempt to direct commercial, industrial, and residential development into already urbanized areas.

Open space investments. Public purchases of land, development rights, or easements to protect public open space are similar to farmland protection measures, but they have a somewhat different set of purposes. When the object of other policies in the growth management program is to concentrate development in existing center or corridors, it is vital to provide new open space for recreational, scenic, and natural resource protection purposes. They keep neighborhoods livable. The creation of networks of open space and recreational trails, as planners in Onondaga County or metropolitan St. Louis have recommended, can also provide part of the framework for both neighborhood redevelopment and alternative transportation. In other cases, major public open spaces can give shape and definition as well as amenity to new development. Protection of public open space must be a key part of any growth management program. Because funds are in short supply, however, choices of land for purchase must be strategic and backed by good planning. Pittsford offers a great example.

Brownfields redevelopment. The specific tools and techniques for reclamation and redevelopment of old industrial lands vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Minnesota's early resolution of the knotty legal, scientific, and financial issues surrounding brownfields has contributed to their ability to direct new development to old sites. Some work remains to be done before similar progress can be made by localities in New York. It is no secret that given the large amount of industrially damaged land in Buffalo Niagara facilitation of brownfields redevelopment is crucial to growth management here. A solution here must be home grown.

Traditional Neighborhood Development. The Onondaga plan, like celebrated plans and programs from elsewhere, includes highly-detailed regulations for the design of new commercial and residential developments. While these are often criticized for being rigid, prescriptive, and perhaps even authoritarian, the application of such codes has produced urban environments that are, at least, several steps better than the archetypal suburban patterns they were created to replace. However formulaic it may be, the work of "neo-traditional" town planners and New Urbanists should be understood as the embodiment of the collected knowledge of generations of urban designers. It may not be necessary to swallow their program whole or adopt their codes in total, but New Urbanist lessons about density, pedestrian scale, mixed uses, and protecting urban environments from the automobile should not be ignored. Similar principles are embodied in plans for Dutchess and Westchester counties, as well as metropolitan Minnesota.

Dedicated funding streams. While more an issue of public administration than planning, the creation and use of reliable and ongoing revenue streams for programs of planning and development is fundamental to the success of those programs. All of the national case studies examined above involved agencies with access to a source of funding not subject to an annual review by local legislatures. In the case of St. Louis these were revenue streams approved by the general electorate for popular and specific purposes. The Metropolitan Council and other programs have enjoyed streams of revenue for planning, development, and annual operations of transit and other infrastructure.

BROADER LESSONS FROM THE PRECEDENTS

Some of the most important lessons to be drawn from these case studies are not technical matters of policy and regulation. Rather, they are part of the art of growth management planning. They are partly general principles, partly elements of the proverbial “big picture.” More importantly, they are part of how other communities have found success in meeting the challenges of growth management

Process is important. Practical people measure success in terms of results. But if you want to get a good product, you need to follow a good process. This includes far more than the intermittent formal engagements of public and stakeholders. It means an ongoing attention to the construction and management of public and political support for growth management programs. This requires the continuous involvement of key stakeholders such as municipal officials, business leaders, and community activists. It also requires fostering a broad understanding on the part of the public of how programs and policies work and why they are necessary. The elements of any growth management program are likely to draw resistance from many corners. Even the strongest programs have powerful foes. The work of organizing support and diffusing opposition must be open, continuous, and purposeful.

Self interest deserves respect. As a corollary to the point above, defining growth management programs and organizing support for them, requires planners and policy makers to respect the expressed self interest of stakeholders. Residents, businesses, municipalities, and others cannot be expected to support the difficult measures involved in growth management out of a sense of altruism. Stakeholders will participate when there are clear benefits to be gained and they will support the program when it is in their interest. In terms of process, this means using public dialogue as a means to identify those interests and to adjust policies and programs accordingly.

Plans are powerful. When plans have a direct connection to regulatory mechanisms or capital budgets they have obvious power. But even when a plan is “merely” advisory or aspirational, it has power to influence what gets done. The language of community visions and goals provides a clear voice for decision-makers to hear as they rule on issues of land use, capital investment, and design. It also provides a tool for citizens to hold decision-makers accountable to the public process. Plans also contain collective descriptions of community problems, knowledge, and intent. Those who skip the planning and go right to the projects reject the durable stamp of legitimacy that public plans can provide.

Ad hoc can add up. The most talked about models of growth management planning are usually the most formal and centralized. It is easy to imagine that the most integrated programs are the most effective. But communities like St. Louis have demonstrated that multiple independent but complementary initiatives can produce results. Just because programs are sponsored by different agencies doesn’t necessarily mean they are uncoordinated. But success through ad hoc approaches requires that agencies, organizations, and individuals be aware of what their colleagues are doing, understand how their respective work may be complementary, and reach out to one another when closer coordination is necessary.

It’s evolutionary. Just as the urban development process is one best understood in terms of decades rather than months or years, the construction of growth management programs is a long term and evolutionary process. All of the cases reviewed above involved a history of public engagement, issue identification, policy formation, legislative development, and institutional construction. Even the most powerful planning institutions and legal controls we can find started out as weak ones. If growth management in Buffalo

Niagara will also be evolutionary we should expect that public understanding, political support, institutional structures, and the state legislative framework will not stay the same. In fact, we should expect them to change.

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