

# A Typology of Regional Growth Management Systems

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**A**cross the United States, regional land use patterns are shaping the local quality of life. The challenge many regions face is to help local governments work together to address growth issues effectively while respecting political traditions that favor local control. Regional growth management frameworks in the U. S. exist along a continuum, with differing levels of authority vested at the regional level. This article describes a typology for classifying these systems as *ad hoc*, *advisory*, *supervisory*, or *authoritative*. Brief case histories from selected regions across the country illustrate the continuum.

The most significant advances in recent years are the continued evolution of the Metropolitan Service District in Portland, Oregon and the emergence of moderate alternatives in San Diego and Seattle that combine regional oversight with local responsibility for implementing a regional growth strategy.

As local governments seek to mitigate the downsides of the low-density post-World War II suburban growth, those jurisdictions that establish land use controls in isolation risk simply deflecting new development to outlying jurisdictions (Downs 1994) that often have fewer resources to manage it. In so doing, they risk accelerating the degradation of important regional systems such as watersheds, airsheds, and transportation networks. In the search for new mechanisms to shape regional development patterns and advance common regional interests, metropolitan areas can learn much from existing efforts. By classifying the range of regional growth management systems in the U. S., this article seeks

to clarify the present alternatives and spark future innovations.

## **A Continuum of Approaches**

Regional cooperation can take many different forms, including joint services delivery by local governments, cooperative research and development by private firms, and infrastructure development initiatives sponsored by nonprofits (Nunn and Rosentraub 1997). However, both managing growth and shaping land use patterns on a regional level must involve government since the rules that govern the land development process are drafted and implemented through government.

A number of states and/or local governments cede varying degrees of land use planning and deci-

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**Figure 1. A Typology of Regional Growth Systems in the United States**

<i>Classification</i>	<i>Examples</i>
Ad Hoc	Research Triangle, North Carolina Many other regions
Advisory	Denver, Colorado Atlanta, Georgia
Supervisory	San Diego, California Seattle, Washington
Authoritative	Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota Portland, Oregon

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**Figure 2a. Key Features of Selected Regional Growth Systems: Deciding Factors in Classification**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Has Current Regional Plan</b>	<b>Administers Regional Implementation Strategy</b>	<b>Can Require Changes in Local Plans or Other Codes</b>
<i>Ad Hoc</i>			
Research Triangle, N.C.			
Many other regions			
<i>Advisory</i>			
Denver, Colo.	✗		
Atlanta, Ga.	✗		
<i>Supervisory</i>			
San Diego, Calif.	✗	✗	
Seattle, Wash.	✗	✗	
<i>Authoritative</i>			
Twin Cities, Minn.	✗	✗	✗
Portland, Ore.	✗	✗	✗

sion-making authority to the regional level to help local communities pursue their common interest in the physical development of their region. The resulting systems for managing development at a regional scale exist along a continuum, with differing amounts of power vested in the regional body.

At one end of the continuum are communities that take an *ad hoc* approach to addressing regional growth issues. In this arrangement, local governments may work together to confront specific land use issues such as protecting water supply watersheds or siting a regional airport, but they have no updated written plan in place for coordinating the future physical development of the region as a whole. These places may have a voluntary council of governments that provides a forum for discussing issues of regional concern but has insufficient resources or authority to draft a current regional plan or require regional coordination (Figure 1).

The next group of regions is categorized as having an *advisory* system of growth management. These

metropolitan areas have drafted regional plans, but have little or no means for implementing them. As a result, they must rely on voluntary action by local governments to realize the regional vision.

Next in the continuum are regional bodies with supervisory powers that administer a regional growth strategy developed with the local jurisdictions. Responsibility for implementing the strategy lies with local communities, while the regional body oversees compliance and tracks the progress made toward realizing the goals of the regional plan. This explicit implementation responsibility distinguishes the supervisory framework from the advisory one.

The other end of the continuum is marked by regions that have statutory authority to develop a regional growth strategy and oversee its implementation. In such *authoritative* systems, the regional body can require changes in the plans and development codes of local communities to ensure that these documents are consistent with the regional strategy.

**Figure 2b. Key Features of Selected Regional Growth Management Systems: Supporting Factors<sup>1</sup> in Classification**

Region	Plan Review Authority		Regional Revenue Sharing	Selection of Governing Board	Financial Investment in Reg. Planning
	Local Plans	Dev. of Reg. Impact			
<i>Ad Hoc</i>					
Research Triangle, N.C. Many other regions				Locally delegated	Low
<i>Advisory</i>					
Denver, Colo.				Locally delegated	Low
Atlanta, Ga.	✗	✗		Locally delegated	Medium-low
<i>Supervisory</i>					
San Diego, Calif.				Locally delegated	Medium
Seattle, Wash.	✗			Locally delegated	Medium
<i>Authoritative</i>					
Twin Cities, Minn.	✗	✗	✗	Appointed	Medium-high
Portland, Ore.	✗			Directly elected	High

1. The fifth supporting factor of regional infrastructure control applies limitedly to Twin Cities, Minn. and Portland, Ore.

**A System of Classification**

Previous typologies have tried to classify approaches to regionalism in one of three ways:

- across issues (Seltzer 1995, Robinson and Hodge 1998);
- across sectors (Downs 1994); or
- across both issues and sectors (Walker 1987, Nunn and Rosentraub 1997).

Works by Ndubisi and Dyer (1992) and Downs (1994) both examine the regional role in managing development. The former looks at regional councils in the context of state land-use programs, while the latter pans across sectors in search of the most promising regional approach.

The typology presented in this article takes a different approach, specifically examining the relationship between local governments and the regional

council on the assertion that how this relationship is structured fundamentally influences the chances for success in addressing regional development issues.

This typology classifies regions into four categories based on three factors (Figure 2a):

1. Whether the region has a current regional plan;
2. Whether the regional council has been given the responsibility to oversee local government compliance with the regional plan to help ensure its implementation; and
3. What authority the regional council has to manage land use across the region by requiring changes in local land use plans and development codes to ensure consistency with the regional plan.

These latter tools, more than any others, provide a mechanism for promoting regional coordination.

Local governments can pursue a *de facto* local growth management framework in the absence of an adopted local plan since they have land-use control and taxing and spending authority and therefore can guide growth using their development codes, fiscal policies, and capital improvements programs. This is not generally possible for regional councils, which typically lack land use authority and often are limited in their control over regional infrastructure decisions. As a result, a regional growth management system is generally effective to the extent that it coordinates and enforces the myriad local plans and development codes and guides collective local decisions such as how to spend regional transportation funds.

#### Four Broad Categories

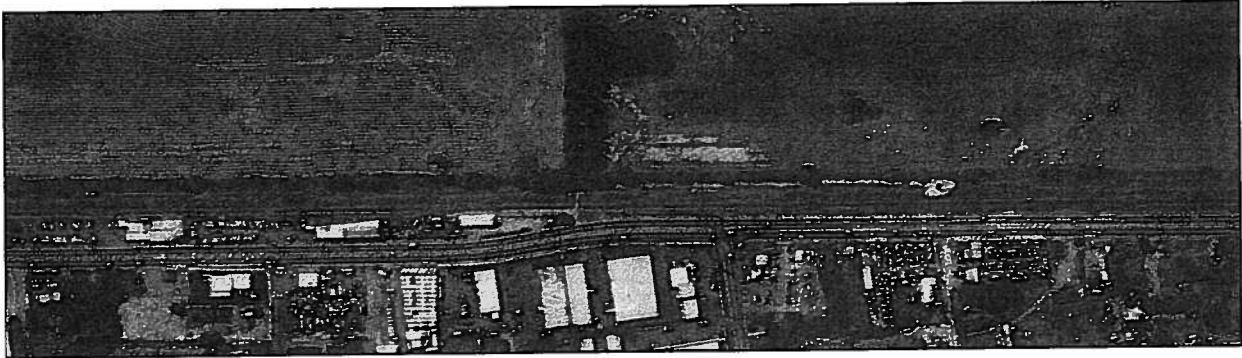
Therefore, this typology classifies a regional growth management system as *ad hoc* if the region does not have a current regional development plan. If it has a plan but no regional oversight authority, it is classified as *advisory*. If it has a plan and administers a regional implementation strategy developed jointly with the local governments, it is categorized as *supervisory*. If it has a plan and the ability to require and enforce modifications in local plans and codes to ensure consistency with the regional plan, it is classified as *authoritative*.

The typology becomes more precise through use of five additional factors to determine where a region falls within each of the four broad categories (Figure 2b). These measures have been selected for their usefulness in implementing a regional development plan, fostering regional cooperation, and building the political will to advance common regional interests. They include:

1. **The regional body's relative control over the development of regional infrastructure systems.** Such influence can be used to guide growth on a regional level and promote local compliance with regional plans. Examples include direct management of infrastructure systems such as wastewater collection and treatment, as well as planning and permitting for these systems. Another source of influence is

whether the regional council serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization responsible for helping local governments prioritize the allocation of federal funds for transportation projects in the region.

2. **The extent of the regional body's plan-review authority.** Does the body have the authority to review local comprehensive plans for consistency with a regional plan? Does it review proposed developments of regional impact? Such authorities systematize the process of ensuring local coordination with a regional plan.
3. **The extent of regional revenue sharing.** Do local communities in the region pool sales tax revenues and/or property tax base to reduce competition for new tax base and promote greater regional cooperation? Such a mechanism can make a regional plan widely acceptable even if it calls for an uneven distribution of new development and resource protection areas (Orfield 1997).
4. **The manner in which members of the regional body's governing board are selected.** Are they locally-elected public officials sent as delegates by each community? Representatives directly elected by the voters in the region? Or members appointed by the governor? If a public decision maker is elected or appointed regionally, that person may be more likely to take positions that are in the best interest of the region as a whole, as opposed to a local delegate whose primary responsibility is to his or her local community (Orfield 1997).
5. **The region's annual per capita financial investment in regional land use planning.** More resources per capita should enable a regional body to work more closely with local jurisdictions to develop and implement an effective strategy for managing regional development. In addition, the relative certainty of the funding is important, with more stable sources such as a regional tax base and mandatory annual contributions from local governments improving the ability of regional councils to provide long-term coordination of regional development activities.



This part of the urban growth boundary in Washington County lies on Tualatin-Valley Highway near 219th Avenue.

This level of financial investment has been ranked as *low*, *medium*, or *high* for the purposes of this study based on research conducted by the Greater Triangle Regional Council (1998).

Depending on the situation, the presence of one or several of these factors can justify classifying the growth management framework in a region as "enhanced" within its category. What follows are the results of this analysis for seven regions, including a brief description of each system and a discussion of how it fits into the typology. Together, these examples encompass the range of regional growth management systems presently in use in the U. S.

### Case Studies

#### *Regions with an Ad Hoc Approach*

Perhaps the most common approach to managing growth on a regional scale in the U. S. is the *ad hoc* arrangement. A typical example is the Research Triangle Region of North Carolina.

**Research Triangle, North Carolina:** One of 18 regional councils in North Carolina, the Triangle J Council of Governments (TJCOG) serves as the regional forum for a six-county area that includes 30 municipalities. It conducts planning and research, and provides programs and services to communities throughout the region. Participation by local governments is voluntary, and members pay annual dues based on population (TJCOG 1997).

The organization is governed by a board composed of one local elected official from each member jurisdiction. It has no direct control over regional

infrastructure and no authority to review local plans. Regional transportation planning is carried out by two separate federally-designated Metropolitan Planning Organizations (neither of which is TJCOG), the state Department of Transportation, and a regional transit authority.

No revenues are shared on a regional level, although a portion of sales tax revenues are pooled on a statewide basis and distributed based on population. In comparison with the other regions examined in this study, the Research Triangle's investment in regional planning is *low*, with TJCOG spending an average of 30 cents per capita on regional land use planning in fiscal year 1996-97 (GTRC 1998).

In 1969, TJCOG's predecessor, the Research Triangle Regional Planning Commission, produced a regional development guide that included maps and a discussion of the development issues facing the region (Research Triangle Regional Planning Commission 1969). This document has never been updated and is not current. As a result, efforts to coordinate land use activities throughout the region have taken place strictly on an *ad hoc* basis, as defined in the classification scheme. Communities have worked together to site a regional airport, develop watershed protection measures, and establish a buffer along the Interstate 40 corridor, the region's "Main Street."

Now, a coalition of leaders from the business community, government, academic institutions, and civic organizations called the Greater Triangle Regional Council (GTRC) has sponsored an examination of possible future development patterns in an

effort to build cooperation on regional growth issues. It remains to be seen what form, if any, such cooperation might take, and whether it will be enough to address the issues the Research Triangle Region faces as it grows by a projected 600,000 new residents over the next generation.

**Regions with an Advisory Framework**

Some regions have established an advisory system of regional growth management that includes the development of a regional plan but lacks a binding mechanism for implementing it.

**Denver, Colorado:** With 436,000 new jobs and 770,000 new residents expected by the year 2020, Denver is projected to grow at a pace similar to the Research Triangle Region (Denver Regional Council of Governments 1997). Working through the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG), communities in the metropolitan area are now developing a regional framework for managing this growth.

DRCOG serves an eight-county region with just over 2 million residents. It is the state-designated regional planning commission charged with the task of drafting a plan for the physical development of the region and serves as the federally-designated Metropolitan Planning Organization responsible for regional transportation planning. Participating jurisdictions pay annual dues based on population and tax base. Decisions are made by a board consisting of delegates from each of the member governments (Knight 1997).

DRCOG has no authority to review local plans and does not oversee any mechanism for sharing revenues on a regional level. Its spending on regional land use planning amounted to 32 cents per capita in fiscal year 1996, giving it a *low* ranking on financial investment compared with the other metropolitan areas in this study (GTRC 1998).

The Metro Vision 2020 Plan approved by the DRCOG Board of Directors in the spring of 1997 sets policy objectives for six core elements related to growth and quality of life in the region, providing the basis for more detailed plans for regional development, regional transportation, and clean water

(DRCOG 1997). A key goal seeks to contain the region's growth to a 700-square-mile area. This provision helps phase growth outward instead of allowing it to leapfrog to distant rural areas (DRCOG 1997). DRCOG worked closely with local governments and recently drafted an interim growth map covering 731 square miles (DRCOG 1998). This is out of a 5,075 square mile region.

Other Metro Vision 2020 implementation efforts include: encouraging local communities to develop comprehensive plans that are consistent with the regional plan; identifying regional centers for mixed-use development; and integrating the Metro Vision 2020 Plan with the regional transportation, water quality, and air quality plans (DRCOG 1997).

In addition, DRCOG has created a new point system for prioritizing transportation projects for federal funding. Under the proposed arrangement, five percent of the total points would go to projects that support urban centers and the voluntary urban growth boundaries. The new formula is scheduled to be implemented in two years (Broderick 1998).

Local governments are responsible for carrying out the Metro Vision 2020 Plan, since the document establishes that all implementation strategies be voluntary (DRCOG 1997). It is not clear how far they will progress toward realizing their common vision, however, in the absence of any mutually binding agreement (see Wallis, p. 21 of this issue).

**Atlanta, Georgia:** Local governments are responsible for implementing the Atlanta area regional plan. However, as a result of several state laws, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) is authorized to conduct a number of functions that help promote regional coordination.

The ARC provides regional planning and inter-governmental coordination to a 10-county region containing three million people. Strictly an advisory agency, the ARC plans for job training, transportation, and aging needs in the region, as well as for land use, environmental protection, and economic development. The organization is governed by a board composed of 23 local public officials and 15 private citizens. Local government membership in the ARC

is mandatory, and each jurisdiction pays annual dues of 80 cents per capita (Georgia 1989).

The ARC has no direct control over regional infrastructure, and no system of regional revenue sharing has been established. Its per capita spending on regional land use planning amounted to 63 cents in fiscal year 1997, giving it a *medium-low* ranking (GTRC 1998).

One major function the ARC undertakes is drafting a regional plan (West 1995). Phase I of this plan, VISION 2020, generated a shared vision for the region and set regional benchmarks. Phase II of the process, titled "Detailing the Vision," involves producing a development plan, a transportation plan, and a water supply plan for the region. Phase II includes analyzing different future regional development options.

The need to comply with federal air quality standards may spur implementation of the regional plan. The region has been downgraded to severe non-attainment for ground-level ozone pollution and must develop a regional transportation plan by 2005 that will bring it into compliance. As part of this process, the federal government has frozen federal funding for many new road projects (Goldberg 1998).

The ARC performs other planning functions. Under the provisions of the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, it reviews Developments of Regional Impact (DRIs) based on a range of factors, makes non-binding rulings on whether the DRI projects are in the best interest of the state, and reviews local comprehensive plans for compliance with state planning standards established under the Act (ARC 1987). In addition, the ARC exercises planning and project review authority for proposed developments along the Chattahoochee River, which provides more than 65 percent of the region's drinking water, to ensure compliance with development restrictions in the corridor (ARC 1987).

Together, the regional plan, the DRI process, the consistency review, and the project review responsibilities along the Chattahoochee River give the ARC significant ability to coordinate planning efforts throughout the region. These measures are no substitute for the authority to require local consistency

with the regional plan, and the Atlanta regional growth management framework still falls into the *advisory* category. Because of these added planning responsibilities and its significant financial commitment to regional planning, the Atlanta approach represents an enhanced *advisory* system.

#### *Regions with a Supervisory Framework*

Two regions in the U. S. are helping to define a new middle ground in the regional growth management continuum. Local governments in both San Diego, California, and Seattle, Washington, have worked in their regions to develop regional growth strategies. In addition, they have given their regional planning bodies some authority to administer their strategies and encourage local communities to implement them, creating a *supervisory* system of regional growth management. Each region, however, is taking a slightly different approach to this task.

**San Diego, California:** To help protect the quality of life as the region grows, the 18 cities within the County of San Diego all voluntarily participate in the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG). Formed in 1980, this association conducts regional planning for transportation, growth management, environmental management, and criminal justice. Member governments pay annual dues and receive votes on the governing board based on a weighted formula.

SANDAG does not have direct control over any regional infrastructure systems and, to date, no system of regional revenue sharing has been established. Its financial investment in regional planning is ranked as *medium*, based on spending of 93 cents per capita on regional land use planning in fiscal year 1997. However, thanks to voters, it possesses an unusual tool for coordinating land use planning in the region.

Concerned about the increasing impacts of growth on the region, citizens passed their own ballot initiative in 1988 requiring the formulation of a plan to manage development on a regional level. All 18 municipalities and San Diego County were required to participate in the plan development process and comply with the resulting growth manage-

ment framework, known as the Regional Growth Management Strategy (Detwiler 1992). This document includes measurable standards and objectives for nine quality of life factors including air quality, open space protection, housing, and economic prosperity (SANDAG 1993). SANDAG is responsible for overseeing compliance with the Regional Growth Strategy.

Under the procedure developed jointly by the local governments in the region, every two years each jurisdiction must conduct a *self-certification* review process using a SANDAG checklist to determine whether its general plan is consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy. The major inducement to comply with the Regional Growth Strategy provisions is peer pressure. One jurisdiction can challenge the compliance claims of another, triggering an examination by the Review Board and possible mediation through SANDAG's conflict resolution process.

At present, SANDAG has no authority to review and verify the self-certification findings submitted or offer incentives for compliance. Instead, it simply performs an administrative function, issuing a compilation of the local government findings (Baldwin 1997). Researchers Judith Gruber and Michael Neuman note that the resulting system of regional growth management "sets standards that each community has to meet, but decisions about how to meet them remain local." (Gruber and Neuman 1993, 96)

Do local governments follow through on their commitment? So far, local communities have undergone three cycles of self-certification and a number are still working to achieve consistency with the Regional Growth Strategy (SANDAG 1996). To date, no jurisdiction has challenged the self-certification findings of another. The local review process has received little public attention, with minimal debate at the public meeting that each community must hold before it can certify that its general plan and ordinances are consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy. Since its inception, though, the strategy has helped focus the attention of public officials on regional growth issues.

To date, the overall success is mixed. By requiring local jurisdictions systematically to compare their

plans and codes to the shared regional goals on a regular basis, the self-certification process has improved regional coordination. However, so far, the mechanisms created to promote implementation of the strategy have had a minimal impact on the land use plans and policies of the local jurisdictions.

In addition, no monitoring system has been established to measure the region's progress toward achieving the quality-of-life improvements called for in the strategy (Baldwin 1997). The region has moved slowly toward greater consistency in its policies and does not yet know what the impact of this movement has been.

**Seattle, Washington:** Seattle has crafted a regional growth management framework largely through consensus-building with local governments. But unlike San Diego, Seattle has the ability to impose financial sanctions if local jurisdictions do not develop plans that are consistent with the regional transportation plan. The organization that administers this system is the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC).

The PSRC has no service provision responsibilities and instead functions strictly as a planning body. In addition, it has no direct control over regional infrastructure systems and administers no form of regional revenue sharing. However, it does have significant regional plan development and local plan review authority. It derives much of its authority from an Interlocal Agreement signed by its member governments. This document created the organization and outlined its major functions, including maintaining an updated regional growth strategy, developing a regional database, and providing technical assistance to local governments (PSRC 1991).

In addition, the PSRC ensures local compliance with the state Growth Management Act and serves as the federally-designated agency in charge of regional transportation planning. Membership in the PSRC presently includes four counties and 64 municipalities, as well as three port authorities and two state agencies. The organization is governed by its Executive Board and its General Assembly. Representatives from member governments, seated in numbers approximately proportional to member jurisdic-

tions' populations, constitute the General Assembly. A per capita spending rate of 97 cents on regional land use planning in fiscal year 1997 gives it a *medium* ranking (GTRC 1998).

In an effort to shape growth in the region over the next generation, the PSRC's predecessor and local governments developed a strategy in 1990 for growth management, economic development, and transportation in the four-county area. This VISION 2020 document was updated in 1995 with extensive public input and calls for locating new development in urban growth areas that can be more efficiently furnished with public services (PSRC 1995). PSRC staff are now developing a performance monitoring program to gauge progress toward implementing the plan.

Another major function of the PSRC is to review local comprehensive plans throughout the region. The agency does so in three ways, including providing consultation on local comprehensive plans, upon request, to strengthen coordination with regional plans; systematically examining countywide and multicounty planning policies to ensure compliance with state law; and systematically reviewing local comprehensive plans and countywide planning policies to ensure consistency with the Regional Transportation Plan and compliance with the State Growth Management Act (PSRC 1996).

An appeals process is available if local governments disagree with the results of this latter consistency review. In some states, such a review is conducted for the entire comprehensive plan. In this case, however, it only applies to the transportation component of the plan (PSRC 1996). Under state law, if the PSRC deems that local plans are not consistent with the regional transportation plan, it can withhold federal transportation funds. However, it prefers to work cooperatively with local governments, giving them a chance to review PSRC's findings and revise their plans and codes before any money is withheld. Planners feel the program has been very successful from a policy perspective, with local policies largely consistent with regional policies (Piro 1998). Now the challenge is to implement these measures.

One factor that has strengthened the PSRC's ability to coordinate planning throughout the region

is the growth management framework established by the state. Passed in 1990, the Growth Management Act requires communities in larger and faster-growing counties to develop comprehensive plans that are consistent with thirteen state planning goals.

Spurred by the state growth management law and a desire to promote their common interest, local governments in the Seattle region have created a system that verges on authoritative, with the regional council empowered by the state to withhold federal transportation funds. Yet, through careful negotiation, the PSRC has succeeded in promoting consistency in a nonconfrontational manner. This could provide a new model for regions that are hesitant to develop a system that is truly authoritative.

#### *Regions with an Authoritative Framework*

Two regional bodies in the United States have statutory authority to require changes in local plans if these documents contradict regional goals.

**Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota:** First created to address the problem of failing septic tanks, the Metropolitan Council has developed into one of the most influential regional councils in the country. Directed by a 17-member board chosen by the governor, the Met Council serves 7 counties and 186 cities and townships with a combined population of 2.4 million people. Its primary function is to draft plans for the different regional infrastructure systems, including transportation facilities, sewers, parks, and airports. In addition, it operates the regional wastewater treatment system and the regional transit system. In fiscal year 1997, it spent 2.08 dollars per capita on regional land use planning, giving it a *medium-high* ranking (GTRC 1998).

Thanks to a law passed in 1971, the Met Council also administers a system of regional tax-base sharing that pools 40 percent of the commercial and industrial tax-base growth above the 1971 base from each jurisdiction and reallocates it to local jurisdictions through a formula based on population and assessed value. A 1995 analysis of the program by the Met Council found that the program had narrowed the disparity between the communities with the highest and lowest commercial and industrial tax

base per capita from 17 to 1 down to 4 to 1 (Metropolitan Council 1995).

A 1976 state law requires all communities in the Twin Cities area to draft comprehensive plans and submit them to the Met Council for review. The Met Council then makes sure they are consistent with its metropolitan system plans and other adopted plans, as well as with the plans of other jurisdictions (Metropolitan Council, Jan./Feb. 1997). It can require a local government to "modify any comprehensive plan or part thereof which may have a substantial impact on or contain a substantial departure from metropolitan systems plans." (Minnesota Statutes 1997) This provision gives the Met Council authoritative power. It constitutes a more comprehensive mandate than Seattle's authorization to review local plans for consistency with the regional transportation plan and one that is completely absent from the San Diego system of self-certification.

However, as Minnesota state legislator Myron Orfield notes, "Under a system of self-imposed restraint, the council will require a plan amendment only when the local comprehensive plan imposes a burden on a metropolitan system that 'threatens its capacity'—a fairly cataclysmic event." (Orfield 1997, 177) As a result, the regional growth management framework in the Twin Cities could be termed nominally *authoritative*.

While the Met Council is cautious about using its legislated authority to require revisions in local plans, it is not shy about using its control over sewer permits and transportation investments to pressure local jurisdictions to comply with the regional plan. As a result of these measures, 93 percent of the development in the region between 1980 and 1990 took place in areas where it was planned to go, saving an estimated \$1 billion in infrastructure costs in the process (Met Council, Jan./Feb. 1997).

More growth is anticipated in the future, with the region projected to add an additional 650,000 people by the year 2020. To discuss this challenge, the Met Council sponsored public debates on the region's future during the mid-1990s. The resulting regional growth strategy, Metro 2040, calls for the efficient provision of regional services, reinvestment

in the urban core, protection of rural areas and agricultural lands, and an adequate supply of affordable housing. To accomplish these goals, the strategy seeks to guide growth to a municipal urban service area and rural growth centers, while establishing a permanent rural area with an average density of 1 unit per 10 acres and a permanent agricultural area with a minimum lot size of 1 unit per 40 acres (Metropolitan Council 1996).

The Met Council is implementing the growth strategy by means of its regional transportation and water resources management plans, which direct public investments in sewer and transportation facilities. Local communities help this effort when they revise their local comprehensive plans (Met Council, Jan./Feb. 1997). This effort is enhanced by a 1995 amendment to the Metropolitan Land Planning Act, which obligates local governments to include an implementation plan in their local comprehensive plans and requires them to adopt local land use regulations, fiscal measures, or capital improvements programs that are consistent with the plan (Minnesota Statutes 1997). Other initiatives also support the strategy. The Livable Communities Act passed by the state legislature in 1996 provides funds for affordable housing, the development of mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly communities, and the cleanup and redevelopment of contaminated lands (Metropolitan Council 1998).

A shift from its present policy regarding the use of its statutory authority to require changes in local plans might well require a change in the manner in which the council is selected. The present system of gubernatorial appointment makes the council beholden to the governor, and according to critics such as Myron Orfield, prevents it from developing the political will to fully use its legislated power (Orfield 1997). Until it does, the Twin Cities system of regional growth management will remain classified as nominally *authoritative*.

**Portland, Oregon:** In contrast with the Twin Cities, the regional growth management framework in the Portland region is functionally *authoritative*. Here, the Metropolitan Service District (METRO) combines regional planning, regional service provi-

sion, and land use management authority to maintain the environmental quality of life in the region. METRO is the only directly-elected regional body in the country, composed of an executive officer and a seven-member council. It is augmented by an advisory board of local officials called the METRO Policy Advisory Committee (MPAC).

METRO's primary function is regional land use and transportation planning. In addition, it manages regional parks and green spaces, solid waste disposal, and a number of civic facilities including the METRO Zoo and the Oregon Convention Center. It also oversees the region's urban growth area sized to accommodate new development in the region over the next 20 years and protect rural land uses outside the line. The urban growth area represents 363 square miles out of the region's 3,069. In fiscal year 1996-97, it spent three dollars per capita on regional land use planning, giving it a *high* ranking (GTRC 1998).

In 1992, voters passed a home rule charter for METRO giving it new financing powers and requiring a Regional Framework Plan, completed in December 1997, to accommodate growth in the region over the next 50 years. To implement the new plan, METRO has the power to draft specific standards which must be followed by the three counties and 24 cities in the region. Examples include minimum development densities, floodplain protection measures, affordable housing objectives, and transportation performance standards. In addition, each community is responsible for accommodating a portion of the regional population and job growth over the next 20 years (Metropolitan Council 1996).

Local governments must amend their comprehensive plans and development codes to comply with these standards, and then submit them to METRO for verification. Those that fail to do so are subject to a conflict resolution process, followed by possible legal action and a reduction in regional transportation funding, among other measures (METRO 1996). In contrast to San Diego's dispute resolution process, METRO makes the final decision in disputed cases on whether to require a local government to change its comprehensive plan (METRO 1995). This gives METRO a level of authority over

land use issues that is unique in the United States.

One key to the Portland system is that, like Seattle, it operates within a state growth management framework. Passed in 1973, the Oregon Land Use Act requires every city and county in the state to draft a comprehensive plan for its community. Each plan is then reviewed by the state for consistency with 19 state planning goals. Furthermore, communities must ensure that their development codes are consistent with their plans (Oregon 1990).

These measures, combined with substantial investments in public transit, have succeeded in minimizing leapfrog development and providing greater certainty about where and when development can occur. A regional approach to regional problems and an authoritative growth management framework are the basis for this success.

### Conclusion

As regions across the U. S. grapple with growth and explore ways to manage it, a fundamental measure of success will be whether their growth management systems succeed in shaping regional development patterns. The categories presented in this article provide differing prospects for achieving this objective. The *ad hoc* approach affords the possibility of cooperating on certain mutually agreeable regional problems, but provides no framework for addressing regional development issues in a comprehensive, coordinated, and ongoing manner.

The advisory framework can generate a common vision for the future physical development of a region, but does not provide the means to pursue this vision in a systematic and sustained way.

The evidence provided by the regions studied in this article suggests that only when regions develop a *supervisory* or an *authoritative* framework and maintain it over a significant period of time can they truly begin to shape development patterns on a regional scale, not just in particular corridors or sectors as might be possible with major regional infrastructure investments.

Portland is one region which has achieved some success at this endeavor. Here, a regional growth management system has been in place long enough

and with the requisite authority to curtail leapfrog development and spur redevelopment in downtown Portland. Considerable efforts are now underway to promote more compact development within the urban growth area.

Minneapolis-St. Paul has had more limited success molding growth. The region has managed to expand urban services in an orderly manner, hold down the cost of public sewer service, and maintain a relatively vital urban core (Davis 1998). Yet low-density development continues to spread at a rapid pace outside of the urban services area and the density of new residential development inside the boundary is about two-thirds that of new projects in the Portland region, leading to escalating automobile travel and traffic congestion (Metropolitan Council, Sept./Oct. 1997). While the Metropolitan Council appears to have the legislative authority to take stronger measures, an ongoing challenge has been finding the political basis to do so.

Perhaps the most promising approach for regions reluctant or unable to establish an *authoritative* system is to develop a *supervisory* framework. Seattle has made substantial progress toward building such a system of regional coordination. Thanks to diplomatic enforcement of state law and a commitment on the part of local governments, the Puget Sound Regional Council has been successful in coordinating regional transportation planning and associated land use planning on a policy level. Time will tell if this system is able to influence regional development patterns.

Although it was initiated earlier than Seattle's, the system in San Diego has been slower to develop. While substantial investments in transit and a region-wide effort to protect endangered species habitat are helping to implement the regional growth strategy, the region is still working to coordinate local and regional growth policies. San Diego's experience suggests that once a mutually agreed-upon regional plan has been developed, a binding agreement among local jurisdictions is needed for the system to be successful.

The language of the voter initiative that spawned the regional planning framework calls for the cities

and the county in the region to "participate in the formulation of, and...comply with, the adopted regional growth management plan." (SANDAG 1993) In addition, it says that the "Regional Board [SANDAG] shall have the authority to require that the county and the cities adopt the necessary legislation to implement the regional growth management plan." (SANDAG 1993) Theoretically, then, SANDAG should have the authority to oversee the implementation of the regional growth management plan, but to date, it lacks this power.

The experiences of Seattle and San Diego highlight the fact that the supervisory framework is still evolving. While it holds considerable promise, it is as yet unproven in its ability to shape regional development patterns. A key to realizing this potential is the establishment of a binding mechanism to ensure the long-term group discipline necessary to implement a regional plan.

This feature is absent in both Atlanta and Denver. While Atlanta has a number of legislatively-authorized planning functions vested at the regional level, unabated sprawl in the region indicates that the system to date has not been sufficiently potent to counteract many of the downsides of growth. In Denver, local jurisdictions have recently agreed to an interim urban growth boundary in an effort to minimize leapfrog development and help implement the Metro Vision 2020 plan (see Wallis, p. 21 of this issue).

Key questions remain, however, such as whether local jurisdictions will stay committed to the boundary over the long term, whether the standards associated with the boundary are sufficient to prevent sprawling development outside of it, and how the region develops inside these borders.

Regions that want to move to a supervisory or authoritative system might take note of how regional councils in the past have been empowered to coordinate regional development activities. Generally, this authority has come from either:

- the state, through state legislation;
- local governments, through an interlocal agreement; and/or
- voters, through an initiative or referendum.

Building support for at least one of these actions, then, is a critical task to developing a supervisory or authoritative system. Certain common elements are essential to garnering this support in each case, such as widespread public sentiment that unmanaged growth is compromising the local quality of life. However, additional factors are also important.

At the state level, advocates of state planning legislation might take heed of recent trends in such initiatives and move toward more incentive-based programs to build the necessary support.

A hybrid of the Maryland Smart Growth approach has potential. To receive state funding under the Maryland law for new transportation facilities and certain housing projects, water and wastewater facilities, and economic development projects, jurisdictions must designate growth areas that meet certain standards. Existing municipalities and enterprise zones are automatically eligible. Local governments can identify additional growth areas provided they are developed to specified infrastructure and density standards (Maryland Senate Bill 389).

States that wish to establish a similar system might first require the local governments in a metropolitan region to develop a common regional plan and implementation strategy. Short of this, states might provide regions access to a special infrastructure fund if they can demonstrate a certain level of regional cooperation on land use issues. The Regional Competitiveness Act passed in Virginia in 1996 provides an example of this kind of legislation (Richman and Oliver, Spring 1997).

In the absence of state legislation, local governments may find it difficult to support a regional growth framework without some regional system of revenue sharing to help balance the benefits and burdens of the growth strategy developed. The tax-base sharing program in the Minneapolis-St. Paul region remains the most instructive model in the United States and has been credited with defusing excessive local competition for new commercial and industrial development sufficiently for individual communities to consider regional land use initiatives.

If the politics can't be worked out at the local government level, citizens may try to spur action

directly through the local initiative process, if one has been authorized in the state. Here in particular, a well-developed sense of regional citizenship and an understanding of the regional nature of growth issues are crucial. While regional civic organizations have an important role to play in each approach, they are especially important in this latter case to mobilize widespread support among voters. With a better understanding of the institutional framework needed to develop effective regional growth management systems, metropolitan areas can more readily improve their ability to grow on their own terms. ■

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