The Transportation – Land Use Link

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Agenda

- The Traditional Relationship
- Thoughts on Sprawl
- New Learning
- The Smart Growth Perspective
- An Indiana Agenda

Traditional Views

- What community planners want from transportation planners
 - Certainty regarding future transportation systems
 - Conformance to comprehensive plan

Traditional (2)

- What transportation planners want from community planners
 - Certainty about future land uses
 - Accurate projections of future density or intensity of land use to allow generating traffic projections
 - Conformance to whatever plan was used to provide the first two (may be zoning map rather than comp plan)

Traditional (3)

- What community planners and transportation planners get from each other

What Happens

1. Real estate market improves, new homes are built
2. Roads and schools become more congested
3. Citizens become upset
4. Politicians demand action on roads

Happens (2)

5. City, County, INDot or all three begin planning for road expansion
6. Citizen concern leads to demands for better planning
7. Governing body budgets for comprehensive plan update
8. Community hires consultant to do plan

Happens (3)

9. Work on plan guided by "blue ribbon" or steering committee of interested citizens
10. Steering committee and consultants take road system as part of environment and plan around it OR
11. They include proposed roads as part of environment and plan as though all were built

Happens (4)

12. After two years, new plan adopted
13. Greatest strength in plan:
 - ∞ Reinforcement of character of established neighborhoods
14. Greatest weakness in plan:
 - ∞ Uncertainty about land-use in undeveloped areas or those with redevelopment potential

Happens (5)

15. Undeveloped areas mostly designated "estate" or "low density" because those are non-controversial
16. Locally, everyone is exhausted from planning, lack energy (or budget) to do implementation plan
17. Meanwhile, at INDot, planners proceed with road proposals, to meet growing demand, in uncertain land-use context

Happens (6)

18. Major new roads will go through undeveloped areas, because
 - ∞ Right-of-way is cheaper there
 - ∞ Future demand will be there
19. New roads change dynamic of market place and developers seek up-zoning in undeveloped areas

Happens (7)

20. Local officials (we hope) look to plan for guidance, decide that "estate" is not realistic future land-use along major new roads, thus find no guidance in plan and proceed to make decisions with NO planning context
21. Approved densities ultimately exceed those on which road plans were made

Why?

- Q Why is the impact of road construction so significant?

Why (2)

- Q Remember the old rule of real estate?
 - The three most important things to consider when investing in real estate of any kind are
 1. Location
 2. Location
 3. Location

Why (3)

- Q The geography of commuting is based more on iso-time lines, representing commuting time, than on latitude and longitude

Why (4)

- Q Thus, a new road that reduces commuting time effectively "moves" real estate along the road closer to the urban core

Now the BIG Question(s)

- Q Do highways cause sprawl?
- AND
- Q Is sprawl necessarily bad?

SECRET ANSWER KEY:

Yes and No
Yes and No

Why Two Answers?

- Two kinds of sprawl:
 - Good sprawl
 - Bad sprawl

Sprawl

- GOOD (necessary) Sprawl
 - 200 years of history
 - Increase in land area proportional to increase in households
 - Increase in urban land area for desired new industry
 - Increase in urban land area for planned educational, recreational uses

Sprawl

- BAD (unnecessary) Sprawl
 - 50 years of history, esp. last 35
 - Scattered development
 - Large developments on septic tanks
 - Development that reduces average density of region

Why is "Bad Sprawl" Bad?

- Unnecessarily consumes agricultural land
- Increases costs of service
 - ex: school busing
- Reduces community identity
- Increases housing costs

Historic Causes of Sprawl

- Causes of Good Sprawl
 - Real growth in population
 - Shrinking household sizes
 - Needs driven
 - Can be defined as market driven
 - Some "urban flight"

Historic Causes of Sprawl (2)

- Causes of Bad Sprawl
 - State and federal highways facilitate commuting
 - Multiple local governments and other entities provide sewer and water to scattered sites
 - State and local government subsidize sprawl, before and after the fact

Historic Causes of Sprawl (3)

⌚ MORE Causes of Bad Sprawl

- Lack of large development sites "in town"
- Neighborhood opposition to large projects, reasonable densities
- Disincentives to redevelop/rehab in many areas
- Lower cost of land AND DEVELOPMENT in many rural areas

The "Smart Growth" Perspective

⌚ Maryland study examined capital costs of two alternatives to serve the SAME future population:

- "Current trends," scattered and sprawling development
- Development concentrated in and around existing communities (small and large)

⌚ Capital cost DIFFERENCE to state alone was BILLIONS of dollars over 20 years

Smart Growth (2)

⌚ That finding led to Maryland Smart Growth program

- Establishes "priority growth areas" statewide
 - All existing communities, including old farm communities
 - PLUS planned growth areas around Washington and Baltimore, esp. along existing roads

Smart Growth (3)

⌚ Maryland (more)

- State funding for roads and major capital projects goes primarily to priority growth areas
- Local governments can still build facilities elsewhere, but without state aid
- New building code facilitates rehab of existing buildings
- Other programs support neighborhood revitalization

Smart Growth

⌚ Some learning from smart growth studies:

- Planning infrastructure differently can limit "bad" sprawl
- Battling sprawl must take place INSIDE cities, as well as outside – every redevelopment project reduces development pressure on greenfields

AND

Smart Growth Learning (2)

- We cannot pave our way out of congestion
 - Congestion is a form of growth management strategy
 - Relieving congestion in one area will encourage further development in that area and beyond
 - BUT the traffic system will rebalance itself and, within a year or two, there will be little net gain from typical road widening projects (obviously some strategic improvements make more difference than that)

An Indiana Agenda

How can we do better?

Solutions -- Planning

LOCALLY

- Planners **MUST** include INDot planners in local comprehensive planning efforts, and INDot should be staffed to participate
- Local comprehensive plans must make more realistic assessments of future development on the fringe, based on accessibility, sewerability and other measurable factors

Solutions – Planning (2)

LOCALLY (more)

- Future land-use plans must include an implementable timing element for each major geographic area

Solutions – Planning (3)

At INDot

- Planners must, as federal law has required since 1991, give serious consideration to local comprehensive plans in developing transportation plans
 - Note that this becomes more realistic if the preceding recommendations are implemented

Solutions – Planning (4)

INDot (more)

- INDot should **HOLD** local governments to plans once they are adopted and refuse to support development approved contrary to plans (or put such projects at bottom of funding priorities)

Solutions -- Other

- Regulatory and
- Fiscal

Targeted infrastructure investments

- Infrastructure Construction/Extension
 - Most powerful of all growth management tools
 - Typically NOT used as planning/GM tool and thus produces undesirable results

Smart Growth Investments

- REINVESTING in developed areas
 - Which HAVE schools, parks.....
- COORDINATING investments in all infrastructure
- NOT building (or improving) some roads

Limits on Infrastructure Expansion

- Corollary of smart growth
- Just because "developer pays" does not make it a good idea
 - Developer builds the road
 - Who pays for schools, parks, sewers, libraries, fire stations??

Right-sizing Infrastructure

- Issue is CAPACITY
- Too much capacity in right location can have same effects as infrastructure in wrong location

Open Space Acquisition

- Shapes growth
- Defines edges
- Provides green space
- Provides linkages
- Preserving open space is not the job of farmers

Establishing Levels of Service

- The starting point is to answer the question, "what is overloaded?"
 - May allow serious congestion during peak commuting hours (or basketball games) for policy reasons
- "Level of service" is the concept used to define existing and desired conditions

Implementing LOS

- Local development regulations should limit projects to those that can be accommodated within current LOS guidelines
 - "Adequate public facilities" regulations
 - Called "concurrency" in Florida

The Final Equation

- Smart Growth =
Planning + Implementation

The Alternative

Why plan?

- "You got to be careful if you don't know where you're going, because you might not get there"
– Yogi Berra

Other Solutions (2)

- REQUIRE capital improvement PLANS (not just project lists) as condition of state aid, bonded debt, other financing
- MANDATE cooperative, bottom-up, regional planning

Who Does the Plan?

- Oregon model is top-down
- Tennessee and Georgia are bottom-up, local government driven
- Maryland and Tennessee provide state \$\$\$ incentives and disincentives to plan
- Which model will work here?

Historical Perspective on Politics

- ⌚ Early growth management efforts driven by environmentalists, citizens fed up with growth
- ⌚ Modern growth management programs driven by legislatures tired of throwing good money after bad to support “dumb growth”

SMART Growth

- ⌚ Involve STATES following PLANS as they do what they already do--spend money and build state facilities
- ⌚ Early programs involved STATE PLANS
- ⌚ In NEW WAVE of states, local governments (and their citizens) play major role in creating those plans

Why Plan for and Manage Growth?

- ⌚ Be cause we cannot **afford** not to plan