

The Master Plan - Its Importance and Its Implementation

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I wondered why I was asked to talk about so obvious a subject as the one assigned to me - The Master Plan - Its Importance and Its Implementation. That I was asked to do so prompted me to make an inquiry as to the status of master planning in a random sample of municipalities represented at this conference. First, let us take the county seats of the four counties in the Philadelphia area. Incidentally, each of these counties has a county planning commission, with a staff.

Bucks County:

does Doylestown have a master plan? - No

Montgomery County:

does Norristown have a master plan? - No

Delaware County:

does Media have a master plan? - No

Chester County:

does Westchester have a master plan? - No

Now for some other cities of medium size throughout the state. Please note that I selected these more or less at random, with no idea of "loading" the inquiry.

Does Clairton have a master plan? - Yes

Does Lancaster have a master plan? - Yes, one of ten years ago.

Does Harrisburg have a master plan? - Yes

Does Warren have a master plan? - No

Does Uniontown have a master plan? - Yes

Does Wilkes Barre have a master plan? - No

To those of you who do not, I can only ask "How on earth can you do any planning without a plan as a guide?"

The people of this state, represented in its Legislature, have empowered the local governmental jurisdictions of the state, of every class, to guide their physical development by means of prescribed methods and procedures of planning - legislation applying to counties, to cities of every class, to boroughs, and to both first and second class townships. Under all this legislation, the focal advisory agency to the municipal legislative body (which is the ultimately responsible planning agency) is a planning board, and under all this legislation it is made the function and the duty of the planning board to prepare a master plan for the physical development of the municipality. What can be said of the quality of governmental responsibility of a municipality that ignores the key legislative mandate that is at the very heart of the legislative grant of power to engage in planning?

This mandate is basic in the planning enabling legislation of every state in the Union. Lest it be argued that this concept of planning took its form back in the Twenties, when the dynamics of community development were considerably simpler and were considerably different in important aspects than they are now, let it be pointed out that every major revision of planning enabling legislation since the Twenties, including the most forward-looking of all - the 1953 Municipal Planning Act of New Jersey - has reaffirmed the key responsibility of the planning agency to prepare plans as the basis for the planning of the municipality.

It was most significant that Mr. Oppermann's* account last evening of the work of the six-county planning agency in the Chicago area of which he is the Director listed as the first responsibility of that agency the preparation of a comprehensive plan for the area within its jurisdiction. With all the great importance, in that new regional undertaking, of organization, of coordination of developmental

* Paul Oppermann, Director, Northeastern Illinois Metropolitan Area Regional Planning Commission.

activity, of reconciliation of various and diverse local viewpoints, of information and education, Mr. Oppermann's account still put the preparation of a comprehensive plan as the primary responsibility of his agency and, by implication, as the essential undertaking without which all other activities that might be engaged in would be aimless.

Last August, in Stockholm, I went over some of the work of the regional planning agency of the Stockholm area, covering 30-some (as I recall) local governmental jurisdictions. The basic job that has been undertaken by that agency, as the key to all its other activities, is the preparation of a regional land use plan, providing the framework for the other elements of a regional plan.

Characteristically, the cities of the free democracies of Western Europe give guidance to the patterns of their physical development with a recognition of public responsibility more or less in keeping with the concepts set forth in Dr. Wheaton's* masterly address of yesterday noon. In every case, the basis for the exercise of the guidance is a master plan. In Europe the devices of guidance, in which the various elements of urban development are handled as a coordinated composite, permit considerably greater adaptability in detail than do ours in this country (in which we deal separately with zoning, subdivision regulation, the official map, and building controls and then try to pull them together) and the whole process is given a framework within which to operate by means of basic master plans.

Yesterday I had a phone call from an official in our New York State Department of Public Works in Albany for the purpose of getting the view of our County Department of Planning on a rather important modification of plans by the State for a thoroughfare improvement of great magnitude. One of the most significant features

* Dr. William L. C. Wheaton, Director, Institute for Urban Studies, University of Pennsylvania: "Future Challenge in Subdivision Planning."

of his inquiry was his statement that the proposed modification appeared to be in harmony with certain essential elements of the Northern Westchester Major Thoroughfare Plan of our Department.

Let me refer to that plan for a moment. We have been in business for some years. We first spent considerable time in laying a foundation of consultation and discussion with local officials and of public information on planning in general. During the course of this we frequently discussed traffic problems, thoroughfare needs, and actual thoroughfare proposals. Nobody got very much excited about our ideas. Then, about two and a half years ago we presented to the sixteen municipalities in the northerly part of the county a proposed major thoroughfare plan. (We could deal with the north county area separately because there are just three major channels of highway communication between southerly and northerly Westchester - along the Hudson, through the Hawthorne Circle area, and east of Kensico Reservoir - as if there were three faucets to which to connect hoses for streams of traffic to the north.) The reaction was almost spectacular. It may best be expressed in a banner headline in a leading northern Westchester newspaper: "First Barrage Hits Road Plan". One of the most vigorous expressions of dissent, in the form of a letter to the editor, ended up by suggesting that I be given a one-way ticket to Lapland, to straighten out the traffic problems of the reindeer in that far land. One municipality, by a resolution adopted by its governing body, demanded that the plan be withdrawn, so that people - and property values - would not be disturbed by plans the realization of which could not be guaranteed within the immediate future.

But something very interesting has been happening in the time since then. We are witnessing the strong influence of a definite, decisive plan. A striking example is recognition of the plan by the State, at least as a basis of consultation and negotiation. Several municipalities have now formally approved the plan. A number of the northern municipalities are now engaged in master planning, with

competent technical advice. In every one of these, elements of the northern Westchester thoroughfare plan, in some cases modified as the result of consultation, have become a part of the local master plan. The very existence of the thoroughfare plan makes it impossible to do any municipal master planning without taking it into account. The important lesson to be drawn from this recital is that these results could not possibly have been achieved without a plan. The State could not be expected to recognize our planning if that planning were not expressed in plans. Certainly highways must be planned in accordance with sound principles of planning, but highways can not be built in the airy passages of dissertations on planning; they have to be built on the ground, in specific locations. Again, a municipality could not be expected to include in its master plan one of our thoroughfare routes the traffic significance of which is largely extraneous to that municipality, except in accordance with definite plans for the intercommunity complex of which that municipality is a part.

The importance of a master plan? How else than by means of a master plan can a municipality decide on a course of action with respect to a question of physical development in terms of the future results of that course of action? — in terms of the relation of that particular issue to related questions that will also affect physical development?

Planners are sometimes accused of being visionary and impractical - frequently by the guy to whom "practicality" means to "let me get mine" (or, at least, "let me get mine first") through land exploitation at the expense of the community or to its detriment, sometimes by the old-line municipal official who doesn't want the ideas of any young planning theorist to give rise to any question as to his - the official's - practical judgment. Well, it seems to me that the chap who is really impractical, whose feet are really planted somewhere up in the air, is the person - be he public official, business man, or whoever - who thinks that it is

possible to make a decision about some aspect of community development without any good way of knowing what the long-term results will be and without taking into account other matters related to the question at issue.

Without a master plan, it is the immediately urgent community needs that will always receive attention, ignoring longer range needs for which it may be possible that adequate provision can be made only before there is any evident urgency. This is strikingly so with respect to many of the things that contribute to long-range community stability and that are essential to achieving community quality. A community should be more than merely safe and antiseptic: it should also nourish the heart and soul of man. The need for a particular street improvement may be urgent, but the interest of the municipality may be better served by deferring for a time the expenditure for it if this is necessary in order not to lose forever the opportunity to acquire park land or other open space that will serve the long-range interest of the community.

In addition to these longer range aspects of master planning, there is a more immediate economic advantage. It is only by means of a master plan that takes account of all the needs of the community that there can be formulated a realistic capital program by which it is possible to achieve a fairly predictable tax rate. I do not need to tell you how important this is to every segment of the community - the home owner, the owner of business property, the established or the prospective industrialist, the investor in real estate. We had a striking example of this in Westchester County several years ago, when we had the opportunity of presenting to the top officials of a large concern that was about to move into its national office headquarters in the county a description of the planning being done by the County government, particularly the work of the County Department of Planning and the capital programming procedure of the County. At the conclusion of the presentation and subsequent discussion, one of the company officials said to me "You can't

possibly know how reassuring it is to us to know that we are coming into a county that is doing this kind of planning."

Why should I belabor the question of the importance of a master plan any further? - especially before this audience, who must have heard the same story over and over again. But, still, the record stands of many planless planning commissions throughout the Commonwealth. Look, Ma, no plans. No plans? - Hell, no handlebars.

Having said all this about the importance of master plans, I now say that there is no magic in mere plans. Some years ago I discussed planning in an important city in New England, against a background of serious problems relating to the future of that city. In that talk I referred to a series of city plans that had been prepared for the city and observed that through the years the city had had plenty of plans but had had no planning.

That's the way we started out half a century ago - back before there were any planning commissions. Interestingly, the first city planning commission in the United States was known as the Commission on the City Plan. Even more interestingly, just a few days ago I read in a current planning publication a serious suggestion that that's what all our planning commissions should be called. I will certainly agree that a "commission on the city plan" is far better than a planless planning commission. But I am also convinced that there is a real danger in the concept of custodianship of the master plan by the planning commission. I don't like the idea of self-anointed custodians of the sacred fire - troglodytic guardians of the mystic symbols. The real custodian of the master plan should be the city council, the borough council, the township commissioners or board of supervisors. It should be their working guide. It should not be so fragile that it can not be entrusted to the political processes of democracy; it should be so strong and so rugged that it becomes a potent force in the working operations of municipal government.

All that I am going to say about the implementation of the master plan is that (1) in the field of direct municipal action it should (a) be a continuous, working guide to all current municipal operations that affect the physical form and character of the community and (b) be the basis for a continuing capital program; and that (2) in the field of municipal regulation of private development it should be the basis for and should be implemented by (a) zoning, (b) the official map, (c) subdivision regulation, and (d) other regulatory measures affecting the physical form and character of the community.

If the master plan is used in this manner - really effectively used - you will never have to worry about keeping it up to date. You'll have to keep it up to date - currently. If any sure proof were sought that a master plan had not been effectively used, it would be found in the necessity of scrapping it and starting all over again in order to bring it up to date.

What do I mean by keeping a master plan up to date? Without going into an extensive dissertation - and such would be necessary in order to describe the why and the how of doing so, in the context of the nature of planning in a democracy - I shall simply say, rather vaguely, that a master plan must be continually adapted to changing conditions, to unforeseen circumstances, and to results of the "feedback" of its own effectuation, including variations in scheduling the effectuating measures.

Do I mean that a master plan must be kept flexible? I do not. Do glib advocates of flexibility in planning mean flexibility with respect to those of its elements for which the municipality is to expend capital funds for public improvements? If so, let it be realized that such improvements ought to be useful at least during the time that they are being paid for, without having the plans on which they were based "flexed" out from under them in the meantime. How long should a bridge be good for, or a major public building, or an expressway, or a sewer plant, or a school? Do they mean flexibility in a plan according to which families are expected

to establish their homes, with supposed reliance on neighborhood character? - according to which private enterprise is expected to invest undoubtedly large sums in housing, the returns on which investment depend on the stability and the character of the neighborhood? - or in a shopping center development, for example, the economic validity of which should be dependent on more than the "flexibility" of some bureaucrat's mental processes? Consider "flexibility" for a moment in terms of major thoroughfare planning, which may profoundly affect patterns of development, perhaps the location of major industries, and certainly the character of residential neighborhoods.

I am convinced that the easy assertion that master plans should be "flexible" proceeds from immaturity of understanding of the planning process and from downright ineptitude or lack of competence. The advocates of flexibility in master planning just don't know what they are talking about. I should like, here and now, to declare war on the concept of flexibility in planning as the term is generally used. I should like to exorcise the term itself until its advocacy is rejected as decisively as is the practice of that "naughty-naughty" abuse known as spot zoning.

Perhaps this is merely semantic war. Perhaps, if there are any advocates of flexibility of plans in this audience, they mean the adaptability that I talked about a while back. If so, well and good; but let's drop the term, anyway; it usually connotes indecisiveness and incompleteness, and it doesn't smell good. I do not admit indecisiveness into the concept of adaptability.

In calling for decisiveness and urging the importance of decisive plans as guides for municipal action, I am not at all suggesting that plans can be infallible. The recognition that both planners and plans are fallible is an essential ingredient of planning wisdom. I have previously set forth my reasons for this belief, in substantially the language of the next 4 paragraphs.

The fallibility is most likely as we attempt to forecast the future and to predict future needs. One of the most important rules in planning should be "Don't

sell the future short". The fallibility of forecasts that consist largely of projections of what has been happening is strikingly illustrated by some of the things that have occurred in my own lifetime, which began a few months back in the last century. Within my lifetime, the trolley car rose to a position of dominance in the intercommunity local transportation pattern and then completely disappeared from the suburban scene. Within my lifetime, the automobile has developed from a rare curiosity to universality of use and almost determinative mastery of the locational dynamics of urbanization. Within my lifetime the airplane was invented, and now spans the world with its lines of communication and is replacing the railroad in an ever shorter range of effective passenger transportation as inexorably as the railroad replaced the canal boat of a century ago. Within less than two-thirds back in my lifetime the radio, and less than one-third back the television, have come into general use, with profound effects on social and cultural habits. A little more than half of my lifetime ago the 12-hour day came to an end in major industry, with far-reaching social effects by reason of increased leisure time, accentuated by rising levels of income. Every major highway built in roughly the first two-thirds of my lifetime is now obsolete; many of them have been replaced - even though we'll be paying off bond issues on some of these for as long as another quarter of a century. Again, the regional shopping center has emerged within the past quarter of my lifetime and is markedly affecting important phases of the economics of land use.

As startling as are these retrospects, what of the prospects? Who, for example, can dare predict the effects of the emerging use of atomic energy?

Perhaps planning adequately means simply planning considerably beyond what at any given time we think we may need in the future. Planners are frequently impractical. But I am not saying that in the sense in which they are sometimes so charged. Planners are really impractical when they try to be too "practical", in the usual thought of that term. The real danger that the planner will be impractical

lies in this possibility of his selling the future short. When it comes to determining how much land will be needed for a public purpose in the future, you can be sure that, if you can find the answer on a slide rule or get it out of a calculating machine, it will not be enough. Statistical projections are subject to so many variables when they get more than a short distance into the future that they are seriously misleading unless judgment begins to condition them not very far out and then to take over not so far beyond that. It is too easy to build calculated shortsightedness into what we do.

Except for some isolated freak situation, have we ever provided too much right of way for our thoroughfares, acquired too much park land, built too many playgrounds, provided too much automobile parking space? In the face of an almost universal record of error on the side of inadequacy and shortsightedness, we should somehow develop enough sense to realize that if we must err - and err we shall, we should do it on the side of amplitude - in other words, in the direction in which we inevitably must go. Any error in that direction will be only temporary.

Now a word as to the extent to which it is possible to be decisive in the formulation of a master plan. The decisiveness, or definiteness, of a master plan should be with respect to the major functional and structural elements of the community that are sufficient to establish a basic pattern for development - or redevelopment. It should certainly include a major land use plan, a plan of major thoroughfares, a plan of major open space areas, and a plan of community appearance.

A land use plan should be more than a mere rationalization of what is going to happen anyway. It should take account of the functional, the economic, and the physical relationships among various land uses - all three. It should be recognized that this can not be done except by considering land use in the particular municipality in relation to the functional composite of the inter-community area of which that municipality is a part, evaluating the developmental forces impinging on the

municipality from the outside as well as those arising in the interaction among land uses within the municipality. This calls for considering more than the obvious.

I was much interested in the recognition of this fact by the city planning authorities of The Hague and Rotterdam when I visited their offices last August. Each of these cities has an excellent city plan, formulated, among other things, in relation to the regional economy as it is. But there is a full realization of the fact that the operation of the multi-nation European Coal Community may bring about as yet unpredictable changes in the regional economic pattern and that several important elements of these city plans will have to be modified accordingly. Note that these plans are definite and decisive, but that it is recognized that there will probably have to be adaptations of various of their elements to changing economic conditions.

Intercommunity responsibility in planning means more than matching up zoning across political boundaries. This is especially important in a metropolitan area, where all the major developmental forces operating in the composite affect every part of it. Dr. Wheaton talked with real insight (as I would have expected) on this subject yesterday. Philadelphia would undoubtedly still exist if it had no suburbs, even though it would not be the same dynamic, vibrant urban organism that it is. In contrast, the suburbs would not be here at all if Philadelphia were not here. Perhaps the time has come - is there any question about it? - when outlying communities should cease regarding Philadelphia as a sort of municipaphagous monster seeking to devour them. (There is no such word, but you know what it means, anyway.) There should be teamwork, with mutual confidence and respect, in approaching the compelling problems affecting this area as a whole. I offer the work of the Metropolitan Regional Council in the New York area as proof that it can be done - and in a much more complex metropolitan situation.

One parenthetical note on the subject of intercommunity planning: let the exclusive local community that thinks that it can best preserve its quality by going it alone realize that its sense of security may be false. Frequently it can all too easily be outflanked by what it tries to protect itself against.

So much for land use planning. As for thoroughfare planning, the municipalities in this state are blessed beyond those in most states by the recognition of the importance of planning all down the line by the Pennsylvania Department of Highways. Thoroughfare planning below the state level (intimately related to that at the state level, of course) should begin to recognize that the automobile is here to stay (that is, for at least as far as we can see ahead) and should exemplify that recognition in plans (1) that are of adequate scale, (2) that provide adequate terminal facilities, and (3) that embody suitable relationships between traffic routes and adjacent land use.

As to scale, it should be said that any highway that is dimensioned according to statistical projections of traffic volumes will have built into itself the certainty of its own inadequacy and obsolescence. Traffic projections are useful, but only as one element in the broader planning considerations that should determine need and scale.

As to terminal facilities and relation of the thoroughfare to adjacent land use, I must resist the temptation to elaborate, leaving the whole subject to consideration outside the scope of this paper. I shall make one exception, and that relates to one element of the design of land development along traffic routes. Any exercise of subdivision regulation that permits the direct frontage of residential development on a major traffic street is incompetent. I suppose that every municipality represented here has been faced at one time or another by pressure for the extension of more intensive land use classifications along the frontage by eating into residential lots on down the street. Why be suckers for trouble by creating the same vulnerability in new development? The pressure for extension can rarely

arise if residential development is designed on a system of internal streets, with no frontage on the traffic street.

Plans for major open space? That has been the subject of important conference consideration in this state, including a session of this conference this morning. It is attracting increasing attention everywhere. Many of you are aware of the intelligent leadership being given in this field by Holley Whyte*. Suffice it to say here (1) that there is no phase of planning that is more important than this, not only with respect to community quality but in the very basic functioning of our communities, especially in metropolitan areas and (2) that what is planned for must be on a scale far more extensive - vastly more so - than is now capable of ready acceptance. Here planning must step way out ahead.

Finally, a plan for community appearance. I am not offering this as an afterthought in planning, as something that can be added if enough enthusiasts on the subject can make enough noise about it to make it good politics. I am saying that it should be an integral part of a comprehensive plan, one that will importantly affect the other parts of the plan. For guidance on this subject, I refer you to the recent notable report of a joint committee of the New York Area Chapters of the American Institute of Architects and the American Institute of Planners - "Planning for Community Appearance" (obtainable from the Regional Plan Association in New York). This is a reasoned, systematic discussion of the subject, with suggested methods of procedure and legal references.

I should not need to argue the importance of community appearance. I cite only one of the many reasons for it by referring to the operations of private enterprise. Just read the real estate ads with this in mind. Even the most thoughtless developer who has committed "terricide" in bulldozing down the natural form of the

* William H. Whyte, Assistant Managing Editor, Fortune Magazine.

land and uprooting natural growth will advertise "beautiful homesites" and "beautiful houses". Take it from there - to shopping centers, to modern industrial development, and to most of the other operations of private enterprise in the field of development. And take it beyond there to consideration of the natural setting of the community, of outlook points, of natural and man-made vistas, of groupings of structures, and a host of other aspects of community design, and you will have entered into an entire new dimension of planning - a dimension that can express the soul of the city and engender the feeling that it is truly "good to be here".

Thus far I have been talking about the elements of the master plan that should be given definiteness as having to do with the basic structure of the community. What of the details within the framework? The degree to which detailed definiteness of planning should be undertaken within the basic framework depends very much on the extent of previous development of the area being planned and on the range of choice remaining as to the form of future development, or the range of choice that the municipality is willing to assert for itself with respect to redevelopment.

There is a good illustration of this fact in the planning that is being done in Montgomery County, Maryland. Out in the open territory of the county, well beyond Rockville, the County seat, the Atomic Energy Commission has just located its national headquarters, and in the same general vicinity the National Bureau of Standards is about to do the same. There has been prepared for the County a general plan for this area, comprising about 50 square miles and occupied for the most part by farms. This plan deals with the major elements of land use, thoroughfares, and open space. But it would be completely unrealistic to attempt to lay down detailed patterns of community development for the area in advance, and the plan simply indicates the standards that should be used in guiding such development as it takes place. Significantly, the plan is not called a "master plan" but, rather, a "Guide for Development Policies." In contrast, the Cabin John area, only a few miles away, is at

the very edge of subdivision development pushing out from the District of Columbia. There the community pattern is beginning to take definite form, and to rely only on standards as guides for further development in the area would be as unrealistic as the converse would be out in the open territory previously referred to. Accordingly, the plan for the Cabin John area is detailed in its principal internal elements, including even an indicated location for a designed shopping center.

In considering range of choice we come to an important aspect of master planning - the nature of the plan itself. It was once thought that a master plan could consist only of things that could be delineated on a map. We have since come to realize how sterile that concept usually is. Certainly zoning should express a land use plan. But what should the land use plan express? The 1953 Municipal Planning Act of New Jersey to which I referred earlier recognizes the importance of this consideration in providing that the master plan shall include statements of standards, principles, and objectives. I suggest that, in essence, master planning should be regarded as the formulation of development objectives - determining the kind of community that is desired, within the range of possibilities available to the community. It is important, of course, to ascertain what the limits of that range are. But then let the choices within that range be made - not during the last few days before a master plan report is scheduled to be presented - the choice has already been made, consciously or not, long before that point has been reached - but through deep soul-searching, through long, patient public consultation, through a deliberate process of choice among various alternatives. The resulting master plan, definite and decisive in its major elements, with the detailed way beyond and within those elements to be determined in accordance with principles and standards that are clearly set forth, should veritably express a developmental philosophy for the community. Such a plan will glow with purpose and will be vibrant with vitality. It seems almost to be an afterthought to have to add that, with all that, the vitality is only a

promise - a promise realizable only as the plan is geared into the working operations of municipal government.

I wish that there were time - which there is not - to present an array of actual illustrations of formulated planning objectives. I do wish to refer to two, however. One is found in the Township of Parsippany-Troy Hills, in Somerset County, New Jersey. Part I of the master plan of the Township, formulated in accordance with the broad developmental concept set forth in the New Jersey Municipal Planning Act of 1953, consists of a statement of (a) assumptions as to trends of development and the forces affecting them and (b) some fifteen development objectives. These objectives were not hastily put together in the final rush of a planning "job", but represented a summary of planning purposes that had been evolved over a considerable period of time, with fairly extensive public discussion. As a matter of fact, they carried through, unscathed, two bitter political campaigns, as a result of which the form of government of the Township was changed and a completely new set of Township officials was elected. On the general basis of these planning objectives, the Township amended its zoning ordinance to provide for what were called "Specialized Economic Development" districts, permitting office buildings, laboratories, and any industrial use that could meet exacting non-nuisance performance standards. All residential and business uses were excluded from the classification. The amendment provided for three classes of such districts, with identical use regulations, but with differing permitted intensities of use. A court attack was launched against the most restrictive of the three, as applied to a large tract of land. This classification prescribed a minimum site area of 10 acres, with 20 per cent site coverage by all buildings, building setbacks up to 300 feet (from the boundary of any residential district), requirement of adequate on-site parking, and required site plan approval. The most significant thing about the resulting court decision upholding the regulations was

the extent to which the judge relied on the development objectives set forth in Part I of the Township's master plan. He quoted both the assumptions and the objectives in full, as well as the more specific objectives that prefaced the regulations for the specialized districts.

Development objectives, to have any real significance, must be specific to the particular community. There is an illustration of this in the differences in the policy statements that set forth the purposes of the respective proposed new zoning ordinances for adjoining Arlington and Fairfax Counties, Virginia. Arlington County is already about 90 per cent built up; both its basic land use plan and its statement of zoning purposes can be quite detailed in indicating a development pattern. In contrast, while development in Fairfax County is taking definite form in the easterly part of the county, the remaining two-thirds of the county consists of open country in which the details of development are yet to be determined, in that combination of private initiative and public guidance that is the genius of planning in a democracy. The statement of purposes in the proposed new Fairfax County zoning ordinance reflects this situation and differs materially from that in the proposed Arlington County ordinance.

In a further specialized zoning objective for Arlington County, the proposed new ordinance includes procedure for the formulation and application of design plans covering such subjects as the location and mass of buildings, the provision of appropriate axes of view, and the closing of vistas, these regulations supplementing the regulations for the various zoning districts comprised within areas to be designated on the zoning map as constituting the Virginia part of what is referred to as the "visual environs of the National Capital."

Now for the home stretch. Here I wish to present a broader aspect of the importance of the master plan. The first great battle in planning legislation was to obtain permissive authority for municipalities and counties to plan. That battle has

been substantially won throughout the country. The great bulk of the state legislation is permissive. I think that it is only in Massachusetts that every municipality is required to establish a planning board and only in California that every county is required to do so.

I believe that the time has come, at least in this part of the country, when permissive planning legislation is no longer adequate to serve the public interest. When the concept of having planning done at the option of individual municipalities was developed - back in the Twenties - the automobile had not yet become a major force in the dynamics of urbanization. There were no expressways or turnpikes. Industry was largely centralized. The regional shopping center was distantly in the future. Suburban development took place largely by peripheral accretion or by nodules, themselves peripherally accreting, along rail lines. That day has gone forever. The metropolis is exploding, as Dr. Wheaton said yesterday. No longer is the periphery reached by threading one's way through developed areas out from the center. The intervening areas are virtually bridged by expressways, and there is no permanently secure open territory beyond.

The developmental problems arising from what is happening are stupendous. To meet them some beginning is being made in regional planning, such as in the Detroit area and in the undertaking described by Mr. Oppermann last night. The beginnings are meager, set against the vastness of the problem throughout the country. The meagerness of present activity is only a part of the problem. Even where capable regional planning is being done, it relates only to the major elements of a regional plan. The final result, developmentally speaking, is still subject to the option of a multiplicity of local units of government to plan or not to plan, to establish controls over land development through zoning, subdivision regulation, and other measures or not to do so. I submit that the compelling nature of the problem is so vast and so critically important that it is no longer possible, in the public interest, to

indulge in the wasteful, destructive luxury of leaving the proper regulation of land development to the option of local jurisdictions. I propose that the local jurisdiction should still have the option. But I further propose that in the absence of its exercise, the obligation for doing what must be done in the public interest be made the responsibility of a higher level of government, perhaps the county, perhaps the state itself. There is no longer any room for any vacuums in the pattern of proper regulation of land development in our exploding metropolitan areas - or, indeed, anywhere in this Commonwealth.