

PROBLEMS, DEFICIENCIES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF THE PLANNING SYSTEM IN THE TRANSVAAL

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Tekortkominge in die huidige beplannings-raamwerk gee nie net aanleiding tot onnodig omslagtige en tydrowende werk-wyses nie, maar verhinder ook dat effek-

tiewe en deeglike beplanningsaksie betyds plaasvind. Die voorgestelde gedragslyne wat in hierdie artikel geskets word, sal hopelik daartoe bydra om die situasie te

verbeter, en die doeltreffendheid van die beplanningsproses en die meegaande voor-dele vir die gemeenskap, te verhoog.

1. INTRODUCTION

If any new methodology and planning instrument is to be introduced, then the logical starting point is to understand the problems, deficiencies and opportunities that exist in the present planning framework here in the Transvaal.

There are basically five different types of planning document used in the Trans-

vaal, and these encompass both broad and detailed aspects. These are:

- (a) The National Physical Development Plan (N.P.D.P.)
- (b) The Guide Plan
- (c) The Master Plan (sometimes called a development plan)
- (d) The Town Planning Scheme

- (e) The Site Development Plan as defined in the recently revised Town Planning Scheme Clauses.

The table below gives the principal concerns and characteristics of each of these together with some pertinent comment.

N.P.D.P.	Guide Plan	Master Plan	Town Planning Scheme	Site Development Plan
<i>Primary Concern</i>	<i>Primary Concern</i>	<i>Primary Concern</i>	<i>Primary Concern</i>	<i>Primary Concern</i>
°Socio-economic with spatial implications	°Broad land use (Physical)	°Land use (Physical)	°Land use control (zoning and physical)	°Detailed land use (Physical)
<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Characteristics</i>
°Statutory	°Statutory	°Non-Statutory	°Statutory	°Statutory (confined to certain zonings).
°Future Orientated	°Future orientated	°"Blue Print" in Nature	°Not future orientated	°Not related to time & finance.
°Very Broad Scale	°Not related to time & finance	°Rigid and therefore inflexible	°Not related to time & finance	°Very small size.
°Prepared by Central Government.	°No obligatory review	°Future orientated	°Confined to existing developed areas.	°Limited application.
°No compensation	°Difficult to amend	°Not necessarily confined to municipal boundaries.	°No obligatory review	°No compensation.
°Financial incentives.	°Some public participation	°Prepared by Central Government	°Reactionary Public Participation	
	°Prepared by Central Government	°Not necessarily related to time and finance	°Compensation payable	
	°No compensation	°No obligatory review		
	<i>COMMENT:</i> Few have been prepared and it is unlikely that many will be prepared due to practical difficulties.	°Public Participation confined to reaction. °No compensation. <i>COMMENT:</i> Documents of this type do not have to be prepared for a town or city.	<i>COMMENT:</i> All towns are obliged to have a town planning scheme.	

From the above it is clearly evident what problems and deficiencies exist, namely:

- All the planning instruments are confined to the physical component. The socio-economic component is confined to the N.P.D.P.
- No plans are time and finance related.
- No town is obliged to prepare an overall plan for its growth and development.
- Public participation is generally limited to a reaction to proposals put forward by land owners or the Town Council.
- The present planning process is inflexible and therefore insensitive to change.
- Due to the fact that towns are not obliged to prepare overall plans for growth, decision making by the city authorities is generally *ad hoc* and crisis orientated.
- There is no document that clearly articulates the goals and objectives (policy) for growth together with priorities and therefore town management tends to be inefficient and wasteful.
- There are no means of effectively measuring the performance of actions carried out by a local authority because there is little or no review of planning strategies or actions.

- There are wide gaps between any overall plan that may be prepared and actual implementation on the ground.

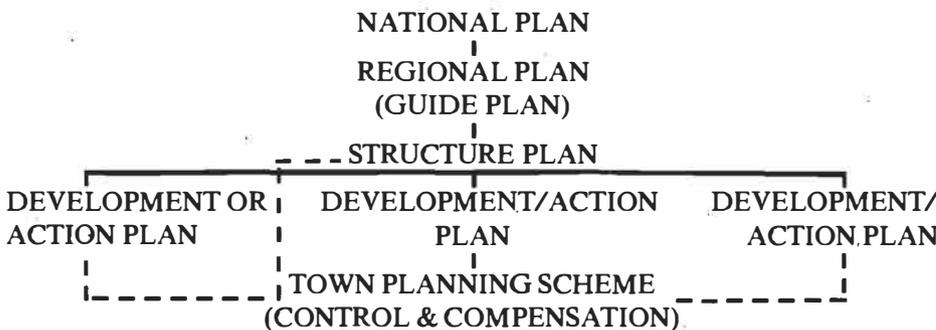
Overseas experience has clearly shown that these deficiencies can be overcome if the profession recognises the following:

- The need for a more comprehensive and rational planning procedure.
- The need for participation by residents of a town or city in the planning process.
- The need for more effective city management and economic and efficient use of limited resources.
- The need for a procedure which is more flexible and robust.
- The need for review and constant reassessment of the direction of growth and development and of the performance of actions carried out to attain the desired ends.
- The need for experimentation and innovation.
- The need for an appropriate ordering

of planning documents from the overall strategy to actual implementation.

- The need for effective and meaningful control to provide stability and assurance to land owners as well as provide the means to the local authority to direct growth and development.
- The need to work closely with other disciplines, communities and authorities and to realise that we, as planners, do not have all the answers to our problems.

An immediate issue is that relating to the ordering of planning documents from an overall strategy to actual implementation. At the present time most towns only have a town planning scheme which is only a control instrument and not a future orientated document at all. We have a situation where all that exists is a National plan, some guide plans and town planning schemes. This means that there are large gaps in the planning framework and this cannot be regarded as conducive to good planning. What is required is a restructuring of the system so that the following occurs:



The above is a logical progression from the very broad national context through the various levels of planning to actual implementation. Each level should be concerned with socio-economic and physical issues and the responsibility for their preparation should fall on all three levels of government, depending on the scale of the plan and each should be prepared within the framework of the higher order plan.

It should be noted that the action plans need not only deal with areas but may also deal with specific subjects, e.g. social and/or economic aspects.

The linkages between the various levels of planning document must be two-way

because any action taken will affect the policy above, by either reinforcing it or rendering it ineffective. The principal thrust of this article is to examine the first major gap in our planning system and to demonstrate that this gap can be filled and at the same time overcome many of the deficiencies and problems described earlier.

2. THE STRUCTURE PLAN AND THE RATIONAL-COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO PLANNING: A DESIRABLE PLANNING INSTRUMENT AND PROCESS

The shortfalls in both the planning tools, and planning procedures listed

above were realised in the late 1960's and early 1970's in other parts of the world and consequently gave rise to the development of what has become known as the Structure Plan, with the U.K. being the predominant force in its development. The Structure Plan in its simplest form is made up of six basic components, all of which are highly interrelated and none can precede the other.

These six components or basic steps are as follows:

- (i) Analysis
- (ii) Policy Statement
- (iii) Generation of alternatives and evaluation
- (iv) Selection of preferred alternative
- (v) Implementation
- (vi) Monitoring and Feedback

From the above it is clear that each step is deliberate and commences from a logical starting point and proceeds in a rational manner towards the formulation of a plan and its subsequent implementation. It is however very important to realise that the planning process does not stop with implementation. The process is cyclical. This aspect will be discussed in more detail later. The term "comprehensive" is used because the process aims at being as comprehensive as possible, given such limitations as time and lack of information. To be truly comprehensive, the approach would mean perfect knowledge and this, unfortunately, is not humanly possible; yet by being as comprehensive as possible, a sound solution can be achieved.

2.1 Analysis

The analysis is principally concerned with examining four different, yet inter-related aspects. These are:

- (a) National level
- (b) Regional level
- (c) Sub-regional level; and
- (d) Local level.

In respect of the first three, the principal concern is to examine the context within which the town or city is situated. The aim is to establish which major external factors influence the town's development, e.g. the national motorway system, the proximity to the PWV complex, Government policies, etc. It is at this point that the Guide Plan recom-

mentations, if any, must be carefully examined, as the Structure Plan must reflect Guide Plan proposals.

The local analysis is centred on the town itself. Here the aim is to gain a sound understanding of what is actually happening in the town in respect of each of the components, e.g. transportation, retail, recreation, etc. and to identify the major problems and opportunities. Some existing situations will provide opportunities for development and, if followed up, will result in an improvement, while the identification of problems should produce proposals to attempt to overcome them. In effect, the plan must strive to maximize the benefits and minimize the costs (the term 'costs' meaning not only financial, but also social costs).

2.2 Policy Statement

The policy statement consists of two interrelated sections, the first being that of goal formulation and the second the preparation of a series of objectives. The goals are long term and are by nature, generally broad, and these arise out of the analysis, i.e. the town must attempt to solve its problems and maximize its opportunities, and therefore these goals set the general direction towards which the town will move. (The goals will be formulated or decided upon by both the Council and the public, i.e. interested individuals, organisations, race groups, etc.) It must be stressed however that the goals can only be properly formulated once there is a sound understanding of the issues and forces at play in and around the town and not before. This step in the planning process is critical. Goals based upon scant information are very likely to result in a poor plan or perhaps, even an inappropriate one. The goals then give purpose and direction, and these constitute the foundation for decision making purposes.

The second section of formulation of objectives is concerned with formulating ways of attaining the goals. For example, a goal might be "to stimulate economic growth". This is only a broad statement of intent and the concern then is to formulate objectives which are statements of how this goal is to be achieved.

2.3 Alternatives and Evaluation

Clearly there are a number of different

ways that any particular goal can be achieved. The aim is to formulate a number of different alternatives and to evaluate these against the goals in order to arrive at the solution which maximizes the benefits and minimizes the costs. Evaluation may involve one or more of the various techniques, e.g. Goal Achievement Matrix, Cost Benefit Analysis, Social Accounts.

Each alternative will have a series of strengths and weaknesses and the evaluation will determine the best possible solution or even result of a new alternative.

2.4 The Structure Plan and Implementation

The final concept then, becomes the Structure Plan. Clearly, with limited resources and various degrees of urgency, not all of the plan can be implemented at once. It is therefore imperative that an implementation programme be developed. This entails allocating priorities to the actions which have to be taken, bearing in mind firstly that there will probably be certain key elements upon which others will depend, and secondly, that some of the actions proposed will have greater importance for the town, or for certain sections of the community, than others.

When the priorities have been determined, the next step is to prepare development plans and programmes which can be tackled within the limitations of availability of finance and time.

2.5 Monitoring and Feedback

Once the policies have been decided upon and the Structure Plan, and perhaps some of the development plans have been prepared, planning as a deliberate activity does not cease.

The implementation procedure is initiated by the development plans and the programmes. Information and results derived from this part of the process must be fed back into the Structure Plan process in order to monitor the validity of the policies and goals.

The transformation from policy and plan to reality is a delicate part of the process because the plan was prepared under conditions of imperfect knowledge and a degree of uncertainty. As a result, there is likely to be conflict between reality and goals.

This is particularly applicable when new information comes to light from the results of the implementation process and also when some unforeseen event happens. Unless new knowledge and the results of implementation are fed back and the plan continuously monitored, there is danger that the plan may become outdated and thus a hindrance rather than a help.

With feedback and monitoring however, the quality of the plan and its validity will be kept continuously under review, and, when necessary, amended and improved.

The Structure Plan and its formulation process goes a considerable way towards correcting the weaknesses of the present system listed earlier. It follows a rational procedure and is comprehensive in content, while at the same time being flexible and robust because the process recognizes the most important certainty, that change will always be with us, and, in the modern context, is accelerating. The city building process is not static, but rather dynamic. The present system does not recognize this fact and if for no other reason, to continue along the present path will almost certainly mean that a gap between the immediate needs and wants of the residents of a town and what is provided, will always exist. This last point leads up to the next issue to be discussed, and that is public participation.

2.6 Public Participation

One of the most serious omissions identified earlier was that of the inadequate understanding on the part of Councillors, Council officials and planners of the needs and wants of the public they serve. This is primarily due to the narrow approach of being concerned only with the physical environment. Overseas development in planning practice and theory has clearly shown that the social, economic and physical components are totally interrelated and it is impossible to produce effective plans for city development if any of these is omitted. The inclusion of social and economic inputs implies a greater involvement of the public in the planning process. After all, any plan and related policy must, of necessity, reflect the needs and wants of the population, otherwise there will always be considerable dissatisfaction. The rational-compre-

hensive approach calls for the involvement of the public. In addition to this, one of the greatest assets a town has is the community. Local authorities only have the power to carry out specific actions and anything more than these renders it ineffective. The community can be motivated to carry out specific tasks and this can only be done with their direct involvement at the outset.

3. THE STRUCTURE PLAN AND EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT

The structure plan facilitates better management because it clearly articulates the direction for growth as well as the broad actions that are required. The local authority is in a position to define its priorities within the broad context and has the opportunity to examine the validity of an action against other actions before it commits itself in terms of finance and time, e.g. a local authority may have formulated a number of action/development plans which it would like to implement but cannot do so because of finance. This being the case, the local authority can make a choice because the structure plan policy has set out the more important goals and objectives. In addition to providing the local authority with the broad view and their implications before a commitment to action, the local authority also has the opportunity, once it has committed itself to an action programme to measure the effectiveness of its actions by being able to evaluate its actions and expenditure against the goals that it defined in the first instance. This aspect is important because given the imperfect environment within which we operate, e.g. imperfect knowledge, the local authority can continue the programme or cease it altogether depending on the outcome of such an evaluation. One method for evaluation may be a derivative of the cost/benefit analysis system. This means that the local authority is in a position to use its limited resources more effectively and consequently is in a position to be less wasteful.

A further feature is that if the outcome of an action proves undesirable then the local authority is in a position to revise its objectives and even possibly its initial goals. Should either be the case, the implications of such an exclusion can be ascertained for the town as a whole. Rational modifications can then be

made. Another aspect is that the local authorities are better equipped to justify expenditure when budgets are submitted to the Administrator for approval.

4. EXPERIMENTATION AND INNOVATION

The process facilitates experimentation and innovation. The process outlined thus far, will, upon implementation, highlight the existence of a plurality of communities: an aspect which poses a number of problems for planning agencies, the most important of which is in respect of their ability to identify all possible needs, courses of action, outcomes and their desirability "... neither planners nor anyone else in government ... is likely to be smart enough or inventive enough to think up all the game plans that would be required" (M. Webber; R. Mayer; R. Moroney and R. Morris (Eds) 1974). We do not live in a world of consensus and therefore it is imperative that the planning process is able to accommodate diversity and conflicting interests. As there are many participants in this process, with many aspirations, it is important to be flexible in outlook. Webber suggests the use of what he terms "a mode of search" and that mode is experimentation. "Betterment (an improved quality of life) comes from experimentation and ... the effective way to get experimentation in the city building process is by encouraging the many individual participants in the city building process to try out their ideas. Reliance on old ways is not likely to be good enough in a society that is changing ... rapidly. A permissive posture ... and exploratory behaviour is likely to lead to discovery or invention of new ways that could not be deliberately uncovered". (Webber, Planning the Urban Environment 1974)

The Structure Plan is a document that ideally lends itself to this "mode of search" either by way of policy or in any subsequent development plan or implementation programme. The very fact that there are many actors involved in its preparation will necessitate a broader and more open minded approach to the formulation of solutions and directions of growth. The master plan does not provide for this all-important facet.

5. THE STRUCTURE PLAN AND TOWNSHIP ESTABLISHMENT

One of the major problems of the provincial and local authorities in the present township establishment process is that time is taken up deciding whether or not there is a need for a particular township and whether or not it is appropriately located. (Other questions relating to densities, transport routes, open spaces, etc. merely serve to compound the problem.) This is primarily due to the fact that neither of these authorities have a clearly articulated document at hand to aid them in respect of these directions and this in turn leads to inconsistencies in the decision making arena. Furthermore, it becomes very difficult for a local authority to determine whether or not it can provide the necessary services to these townships within the time constraints imposed by the Ordinance.

There is considerable uncertainty as to how the local authority's finances should be spent and whether or not the path that it has chosen for expenditure is the most appropriate. A local authority cannot even begin to know this without an overall planning document setting out its overall aims and objectives.

Serious consideration is being given at the moment to the decentralisation of aspects of the township establishment process to the local authorities, but this can only be done if the local authorities themselves are geared to accepting this responsibility. Without an overall framework such as that contained in a structure plan, the local authorities have little chance of carrying out this responsibility effectively and professionally because they have no comprehensive guide regarding the overall picture.

6. THE STRUCTURE PLAN AND TOWN PLANNING AMENDMENT SCHEMES

There are considerable delays being experienced in this regard and one idea currently being entertained is to allow the local authorities to carry out these amendments themselves. This is indeed desirable, but, as in the case of township establishment, local authorities must be in a position to accept this responsibility and to this end the local authority must have a clear and comprehensive idea of

its overall growth and development strategy. Should a local authority have such a document in the form described, then where amendments conform to the desired growth strategies and policies, the amendment should be a mere formality, taking little or no time at all. On the other hand should an amendment be contrary to policy, yet is well motivated then the planning policy may well be amended. This must of necessity follow a different procedure because there will be a need to examine the implications and outcomes. Participation/consultation with the public will also be required.

The important aspect here is that the Structure Plan, as well as any action/development plans can expedite the amendment scheme process as well as provide the local authority with the necessary support.

7. THE STRUCTURE PLAN AND THE PROVISIONS OF THE ORDINANCE AND THE TOWN PLANNING SCHEME

The town planning scheme, being a statutory document has an important role to play in respect of the proposed system. This document provides stability to the public through its control mechanisms as well as making provision for compensation, where warranted. Furthermore, the town planning scheme makes provision for putting into effect the "policing" powers of the local authority in respect of town planning matters, e.g. amenity considerations, height, building lines, coverage, etc. The Structure Plan provides the guiding framework for development and this framework consists of social, economic or physical aspects, and at this level of planning there should be no compensation claimed. If any claims were permitted then planning as an activity would be conducted behind "closed" doors or not be carried out at all and both these options could only be regarded as self-defeating and hence not promote the interests of the community, or planning. A parallel may be drawn here between this and a master plan in that the latter with its physical proposals is not subject to any compensation claims.

However once an action plan is formulated and there are specific land use changes to be made, the local authority

should be obliged to amend the scheme within a certain time period, whereby Section 45 of the Ordinance will apply. It is important to note that compensation is only payable in respect of land use and not aspects like the powers to regulate the intensity to which a use may be put, in the interests of the community, e.g. density, building lines, etc. (Floyd, 1966)

8. THE STRUCTURE PLAN AND ENABLING LEGISLATION

The Administrator in terms of the Financial Relations Consolidation and Amendment Act, No. 38 of 1946 has the power to legislate in respect of planning matters and therefore can formulate legislation in respect of this particular planning document. In this regard it would be appropriate for enabling legislation to encompass the following:

- Set out the basic contents of what this document should comprise.
- Set out the basic requirements for effective public participation.
- Enable the Province to vet the contents of these plans.
- Enforce monitoring and review, i.e. facilitate flexibility without lengthy delays.
- Enable the Province to arbitrate between claims and allow the local authority some enforcement power.

The important aspect here is that where legislation is formulated it must be done in such a way as to not destroy the inherent characteristics of this planning document, i.e. flexibility, innovation and experimentation.

9. THE STRUCTURE PLAN AND ACTION PLANS

The structure plan provides a broad, yet comprehensive framework for the town as a whole and at the same time it must articulate priorities for action. For actual implementation purposes however, the process needs to move to a more concentrated level of planning and this comes in the form of an action or local area plan. (It is important to note that these action plans can be subject or place orientated, i.e. an action plan may simply deal with detailed economic or social issues, or it may embody social, economical or physical

aspects.)

The action plan must take into account the policies set out in the structure plan documents as well as be time and finance orientated.

10. THE STRUCTURE PLAN AND THE ROLE OF THE PROVINCIAL AUTHORITIES

The provincial authority has an important role to play and should be involved in at least the following:

ADJUDICATION: where conflicting claims between the various participants occur.

INFORMATION: the Director of Local Government has access to information pertinent to any planning exercise, which cannot be obtained by the local authority or by any practitioner acting on its behalf.

CONTROL: the Director of Local Government needs to be in a situation to ensure that the town's policies are in line with higher order policy and also that policy proposals are appropriate for the town.

GUIDANCE: provide guidance as well as be guided by the policy plan in as much as the township establishment process is concerned, as well as amendment schemes. In addition to this, the Administrator is in a better position to assess the validity of annual budgets when these are submitted for approval.

11. CONCLUSION

There is little doubt that shortcomings in the present planning framework lead not only to unnecessarily cumbersome and time consuming procedures but can seriously inhibit effective and sound planning action being timeously taken. The suggested course of action outlined here will, it is hoped, contribute to improving the situation and increase the efficacy of the planning process and concomitant benefits to the community.

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