

Chapter 1

Introduction

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The 1985 Growth Management Act¹ (GMA) fundamentally changed planning in Florida and, we would argue, more generally in the United States. While several states have growth management systems that are older than Florida's, with the most well-known being Oregon, the Florida growth management approach in many ways represents a near perfect version of the planning profession's "comprehensive planning" model. Every local government, without exception, must undertake the comprehensive planning process and prepare comprehensive plans to guide development. Further, plans are to be implemented by local governments through local development regulations that must reflect the long-term vision laid out in these plans. Comprehensive plans are also to be "living documents," with biannual revisions through the amendment process and major updates to plans are required every 5–7 years. Over the years Florida's courts have upheld the fundamental role of local comprehensive plans in shaping development patterns and these plans are now a routine part of the development review process.

While comprehensive planning was in itself not new, what made the Florida approach unique at its inception was a strong role for the state government in reviewing and commenting on the comprehensive plans developed by local governments. The Legislature provided oversight responsibility for these local comprehensive plans to the state's Department of Community Affairs (DCA). DCA also was tasked with establishing the minimum criteria for these plans. These requirements improved the quality of the plans produced by local governments and ensured that a common set of key issues were addressed by them.

Beyond placing the comprehensive plan at the center of local land use decisions and ensuring that all local governments addressed a core set of issues in their plans, the 1985 legislation also required some degree of inter-jurisdictional dialogue and cooperation. Local comprehensive plans were not to be created in a vacuum; the state's "consistency" requirement ensured that local governments and DCA had

1 Throughout this book, the 1985 Growth Management Act (GMA) refers to the cluster of growth management bills adopted by the Florida legislature in 1984, 1985, and 1986 that enacted the state's 20-plus year approach to growth management. Chief among this legislation was the Omnibus Growth Management Act of 1985, but the Florida legislature also adopted the 1984 Florida State and Regional Planning Act, which required the preparation of a state plan and the 1986 Glitch Bill which further clarified the 1985 bill.

opportunities to raise objections to plans that ignored or overlooked regional extra-jurisdictional planning issues.

For advocates of linking planning and budgeting, the Florida Legislature also provided specific direction that local comprehensive plans were to shape the capital budgets of jurisdictions. This tenet, that planning and budgeting were to be closely linked, was reinforced by recent changes to the state's comprehensive planning regulations (see Nicholas and Chapin, Chapter 4). In Florida, then, the local comprehensive plan was established as *the* guiding document for local land use regulations, local infrastructure planning, and government capital project expenditures.

Other major elements of the Florida growth management approach (as initially designed) include requirements for concurrency, the establishment of a state comprehensive plan, the creation and empowerment of regional planning councils, and major funding commitments by the state for infrastructure and technical support for comprehensive planning efforts. The Florida approach is generally acknowledged as the most aggressive and far-reaching growth management approach this nation has yet seen. Elements of the Florida approach have been adopted in other states, most notably Georgia and Washington, and planners throughout the nation have learned from the Florida experience.

In many ways, then, the 1985 Growth Management Act represents the high water mark for the profession of planning, as Florida's approach cemented comprehensive planning and the planning process at the core of all local, regional, and state land use decisions. While individual elements of Florida's system have been implemented elsewhere, what distinguishes the Florida approach is the broad commitment to the "good planning" model; detailed, rigorous, regionally coordinated comprehensive plans supported by state funding and linked directly to the local government capital budgeting process. Unlike other states that have undertaken much more specific and targeted approaches for managing growth (such as Maryland, Tennessee, and even Oregon), Florida's 1985 legislation represents the foremost attempt to implement the comprehensive planning model long advocated by the planning profession.

Given this context, the central purpose of this book is to document and evaluate the impacts of this innovative state-level growth management approach. While much has been written about the form and content of the Florida growth management system, few studies have attempted to assess the impacts of this legislation. In this volume we have endeavored to undertake a detailed appraisal of the Florida approach, one that evaluates the state's system, and the impacts of this system, on its merits, rather than on broad perceptions about the successes and failures of the system.

The Organization of the Book

The book's first section addresses the history and foundations of growth management in Florida. Chapter 2 features an historical overview of growth management in Florida as viewed by Thomas Pelham, who served as secretary of Florida's Department of Community Affairs in growth management's formative years, 1987–1991, and was again appointed as DCA secretary in December, 2006. The chapter highlights

the promises of growth management and contains a sobering assessment of the difficulty in realizing those promises. In Chapter 3, Efraim Ben-Zadok details the changing thematic emphases of growth management in Florida from consistency, to concurrency, and most recently to compact development, while also highlighting the role that local discretion has played in growth management's implementation.

Chapter 4, by James Nicholas and Timothy Chapin, lays out the fiscal foundation for growth management in Florida and details the impacts of the state legislature's decision to defund major portions of the state's commitment to growth management soon after passage of the 1985 GMA. In Chapter 5, Timothy Chapin and Charles Connerly report on survey data they have collected on Florida public attitudes toward growth management in 1985 and 2001. They conclude that while overall public support for growth management remains high the makeup of growth management support has changed over time.

Section 2 of the book focuses on evaluating growth management outcomes in Florida. Chapters 6 and 7 analyze changes in Florida's land use patterns during the post-GMA period. In Chapter 6, Thomas Sanchez and Robert Mandle employ GIS analysis to determine whether the 1985 GMA has had an impact over time on the distribution of urban and rural densities in Florida. They find that while it appears that growth management has had an impact on curbing the low density development that is often associated with sprawl, the level of such development is still higher in Florida than elsewhere. In turn, John Carruthers, Marlon Boarnet, and Ralph McLaughlin employ a spatial adjustment model in Chapter 7 to examine the effectiveness of Florida's growth management policies. They report that the state's growth management system appears to have evened out the mix of regulatory and non-regulatory environments within the state that can produce disequilibrium in land markets.

Chapters 8 through 12 focus on outcomes originally linked to the state's growth management system when it was passed in 1985. These chapters detail the impacts of the state's system on the Florida economy, the desire for more compact urban form, minimization of housing spillovers due to regional coordination of housing production, mitigation of the exposure of people and property to natural hazards, and enhancement of overall quality of life.

In Chapter 8, Timothy Chapin examines the question of the impact of growth management on the economy of Florida and its largest cities. He finds that Florida's economic growth has continued even with aggressive, state-mandated growth management and that the economies of the state's largest cities have done comparatively well during the post-GMA period. In Chapter 9, Gerrit-Jan Knaap and Yan Song compare urban form patterns in Orlando and four other non-Florida metropolitan areas and find that, in comparison to these other areas, compact development in Orlando has "considerable room for improvement."

In Chapter 10, Yan Song reports that even though growth management is a statewide requirement in Florida, differences in regulatory stringency have resulted in housing development being shifted to jurisdictions with less stringent land use regulations. In Chapter 11, Robert Deyle, Timothy Chapin, and Earl J. Baker focus their research on the impacts of growth management on Florida's coastal areas, concluding that while growth continues in these areas, it does so at a slower rate than

prior to the adoption of growth management. In Chapter 12, Arthur C. Nelson, Casey Dawkins, Thomas Sanchez, and Karen Danielsen examine the impact of compact development on perceived neighborhood quality and find that in contrast to the past, compact development in more recent years in Florida has no impact on neighborhood quality, a relationship that could conceivably turn positive in the future.

Section 3 of the book focuses on aspects of the state's growth management system introduced since the 1985 GMA. Several chapters in this section discuss planning innovations that have been developed in the state, while others discuss structural and political limitations that have restricted the implementation of growth management in Florida.

In Chapter 13, Ruth Steiner traces the development of transportation concurrency in Florida and the many varieties of concurrency exemptions that have been devised to make this tool for matching growth with infrastructure more flexible for meeting varying planning needs. In Chapter 14, Randall Holcombe examines which jurisdictions have adopted urban growth boundaries and reports that it is higher per capita income, not growth pressure, that is associated with the adoption of this form of growth management.

Harrison Higgins and Neil Paradise, in Chapter 15, explain how Florida's conservation land purchase programs have only partially complemented the state's growth management approach. Through a review of the Babcock Ranch case study they highlight why this ambitious program has sometimes served as a facilitator of both land preservation and sprawl. In Chapter 16, Charles Connerly describes the relatively limited impact that the growth management legislation has had on encouraging local jurisdictions to develop proactive affordable housing strategies like inclusionary zoning, even though this tool is recommended in the 1985 Growth Management Act. In Chapter 17, Gregory Burge and Keith Ihlanfeldt examine the emergence and use of impact fees to help growth pay for itself in Florida, finding evidence that non-water/sewer impact fees actually increase the construction of affordable housing.

Finally, in the book's conclusion the editors synthesize these chapters and outline the major conclusions from these collected works. Taken as a whole these chapters suggest that while massive population and economic growth have continued in Florida, often taking the form of sprawl, the evidence suggests that state's growth management regime appears to be moving Florida slowly in the direction of better development outcomes (what many commentators currently refer to as "smart growth") and protection of the state's natural areas. However, given the incremental, still ongoing implementation of the 1985 GMA and the lack of state funding for infrastructure, visible and measurable impacts related to this progress are likely still a decade or more away.

While the evidence concerning positive impacts of the system is far from conclusive, real progress has been made in the area of planning practice. Since 1985, Florida has emerged as a national leader in comprehensive planning, concurrency implementation, land purchases for conservation, natural hazards planning, and local approaches to paying for growth. These impacts on planning practice, largely unforeseen by the act's authors, are perhaps the GMA's greatest legacy to date.