

SECTION 5

—

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL
COORDINATION
ASSESSMENT**

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

INTRODUCTION

Intergovernmental coordination is the cooperative efforts of governments at different levels moving in similar directions. What would normally seem to be a very straightforward and clearly efficient way to approach decisions is often hampered by the desire of one level of government or another to control the process. If locals control it, it is referred to as "home rule," and decisions, many times uncoordinated, "bubble up" from the bottom. If higher levels of government control it, it is usually termed "centrally controlled decision-making," and decisions, often more integrated, are made from the top.

Growth management efforts in their noblest form attempt to combine the two extremes to achieve more integrated decisions while not forfeiting a sense of local responsibility. This is an espoused objective of the Interim State Development and Redevelopment Plan (IPLAN) as well as its predecessor, the Preliminary State Development and Redevelopment Plan (PSDRP).

In order to view potential intergovernmental coordination changes related to IPLAN and PSDRP, a series of analyses have been undertaken in the area of intergovernmental coordination that compare levels of contact between local governments, local governments and county/State agencies, county governments and county/State agencies, and finally, State agencies themselves.

Three separate questionnaires probe the frequency and quality of contacts before and after inception of the State planning process. They also attempt to ascertain specific land-use or regulatory changes that have been brought about by the State Plan. This information is used to rate the impact of the State Plan in its various forms and collectively referred to as IPLAN versus normal (TREND) intergovernmental exchanges.

PART I
—
**IMPACTS ON
INTERGOVERNMENTAL
COORDINATION**

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION ASSESSMENT: PART I— IMPACTS ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

BACKGROUND

Intergovernmental coordination is the degree to which governments at different levels effectively cooperate. In the State Plan evaluation, cooperation is viewed in terms of government land-use decisions. Typically in the "real world," land use decisions are made by public jurisdictions without regard to each other. Often, these governments may hold similar objectives, but in the absence of communication each pursues a separate course of action that does not foster integration. Even more destructive is when governments hold opposing views and their land-use policies clash.

Intergovernmental coordination is central to the State planning process. Under the State Plan, intergovernmental coordination is the means whereby different levels of government (e.g., State, county, and local) communicate and plan directed efforts in the area of land use. With respect to intergovernmental coordination comprising a fundamental component of IPLAN, Goal 8 enunciates the objective to:

Ensure sound and integrated planning statewide by using the State Plan as a guide to planning and growth-related decisions at all levels of government.
(New Jersey State Planning Commission, 1991, p. 3)

In the State Plan evaluation the subject of intergovernmental coordination is one of the five major substantive sections. The analysis of intergovernmental coordination joins the economic, environmental, infrastructure, and quality of life assessments. The results from the intergovernmental coordination section add to and are integrated with the other findings. Thus, in addition to considering the fiscal, economic, pollution, farmland retention, and other consequences of TREND versus IPLAN, the frequency and quality of intergovernmental contact under these two scenarios are identified as well.

CONCEPTS

Intergovernmental Coordination Measures

Two dimensions to intergovernmental coordination are measured: *quantitative* and *qualitative*.

The quantitative component measures the perceived *frequency* of contact among the State, county, and local governments concerning land use and planning. This frequency can be identified for TREND and then following the intervention of the State planning process (IPLAN).

A second component measures the *quality* of the intergovernmental coordination. There are different aspects to "quality." One is an overall assessment of the quality of the contact with the other units of government in terms of, say, its thoroughness and effectiveness. A question in this regard can be posed both with respect to TREND and following the inception of the State planning process to ascertain whether the quality of intergovernmental contact has improved under IPLAN.

In addition to this assessment of the overall quality of contact, specific influences of IPLAN can be determined with respect to land use and government functions. For instance, did IPLAN influence local communities to change their zoning or master plans? Did it affect planning by counties? Did it change the way State agencies conducted their capital budgeting?

In short, intergovernmental coordination is measured by both quantitative and qualitative components. The quantitative identifies the frequency of contact by one unit of government with others concerning land use and planning matters. The qualitative includes both an overall assessment of the nature of the intergovernmental contact as well as consideration of the specific influences of IPLAN on land use and government functions. The research strategy incorporates a questionnaire to identify the quantity and quality of intergovernmental coordination.

Basic Inputs and Outputs— The Intergovernmental Coordination Questionnaire

Intergovernmental coordination is measured by contacting officials at the State, county, and local levels of government. These individuals are asked to identify the quantity of contact as well as the quality of contact they have experienced with the same and other levels of government concerning land use and planning. Thus, municipal officials are asked to describe and comment upon intergovernmental relationships (encompassing the quantity and quality components) with State and county governments as well as sister municipalities. County officials are asked to identify intergovernmental coordination with State and local governments as well as other counties. In a parallel fashion, State officials are asked to assess intergovernmental coordination with counties and localities, and other State agencies.

The local, county, and State questionnaires are described in detail in *Report I: Research Strategy—Research Design, Model Descriptions, Case Study Profiles, Variable Selection* at Section 5, Part I. In brief, each of the questionnaires deals with intergovernmental coordination (quantity and quality) under existing conditions as well as after the State planning process had begun (i.e., TREND versus IPLAN). The queries are posed

in the form of questions containing precoded answers, typically on a 1 to 4 scale. For instance, with respect to the *quantity* of contact with other government agencies concerning land use, the responses range from 1 to 4 as follows:

4. Very frequent
3. Frequent
2. Infrequent
1. No contact

With respect to the *quality* of contact concerning land use with other government agencies, the precoded responses again encompass the following 1 to 4 scale:

4. Very positive
3. Fairly positive
2. Fairly negative
1. Very negative

Parallel questions are posed to respondents to enable them to reflect upon conditions before the State planning process (TREND) and after the State planning process had begun (IPLAN). The responses are then tabulated. As noted, each of the queries in the local, county, and State questionnaires has precoded responses, typically on a 1 to 4 scale. Dividing the sum of the precoded replies by the number of respondents gives an average raw score for each question. These scores can then be compared for TREND versus IPLAN with reference to the frequency of intergovernmental contact and the overall assessment of the quality of that contact.

Expected Differences Between TREND and IPLAN

From prior research (Anglin, 1990) there is a strong likelihood that

- there is a quantifiable difference between intergovernmental coordination for TREND versus IPLAN as reflected by changes in the nature and frequency of contact between and among levels of government.
- the nature of change is probably more positive for counties than other levels of government; it is probably less positive for municipalities than other levels of government.
- the level of substantive contact between and among State agencies and other levels of government is still infrequent but possibly improving the most.

The research analyzes these anticipated differences by considering the results from the local, county, and State surveys. First, however, the sampling approach of the questionnaires is summarized in the next section.

CRITICAL ASSUMPTIONS AND DATA PARAMETERS

There are 567 municipalities in New Jersey. These are first stratified into six size (population) groups (see Exhibit 1) and a large sample—20 percent of all of the local governments within each size category—is contacted for the analysis. In all cases, to ensure against bias, the selection of municipalities is accomplished randomly by computer.

In total, 122 local surveys were completed, comprising one-fifth of the 567 municipalities in New Jersey. A check upon regional bias in the sample was conducted. Exhibit 2 confirms that the proportion of municipalities surveyed from each region (North, Central and South) relates closely to the actual number of municipalities located therein.

For each of the communities selected, local representatives in the State Plan Cross-acceptance process are contacted. It is believed that such individuals are knowledgeable about their respective municipalities as well as being conversant concerning IPLAN. In a small number of instances where municipalities do not have a Cross-acceptance representative, an alternate, typically a planning board member familiar with the State planning process, is chosen.

Exhibit 3 provides an occupational breakdown of the local respondents. It shows that the majority are not professional planners in the strictest sense; rather, they are ordinary citizens with an interest in local planning issues. It is not surprising that everyday citizens form the core representation to the State planning process as the citizen planner is a strong tradition in local land use in New Jersey (Klinghoffer, 1989). City administrators and municipal planners are the next largest group represented in the sample, followed by outside planning consultants and miscellaneous others such as mayors (Exhibit 3).

There is some regional variation in the respondents by area, but not a significant amount. Central and southern New Jersey communities, for example, tend to designate municipal planners to represent them in the process, while northern communities tend to use the city administrator. As shown in Exhibit 3, however, these differences are not significant.

The respondents to the county and State surveys include the following. All 21 counties in New Jersey have been contacted. Of the 21 county surveys, eight are answered by directors or assistant directors of the county planning department. The remaining

EXHIBIT 1
NEW JERSEY MUNICIPALITIES SAMPLED IN
THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION SURVEY

| Municipal Size Group (population) | Total Number of Communities | Number of Communities Surveyed |
|--|--|---|
| 1. Less than 1,000 | 28 | 6 |
| 2. 1,000 to 4,999 | 177 | 39 |
| 3. 5,000 to 9,999 | 139 | 29 |
| 4. 10,000 to 24,999 | 144 | 30 |
| 5. 25,000 to 99,999 | 75 | 16 |
| 6. 100,000 | 4 | 2 |
| Total | 567 | 122 |

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *U.S. Census of Population and Housing, New Jersey, 1990*; CUPR, Intergovernmental Coordination Survey, 1991

EXHIBIT 2
REGIONAL REPRESENTATION OF
MUNICIPAL SURVEY RESPONDENTS

| | NORTH | CENTRAL | SOUTH |
|--|-------|---------|-------|
| Location of New Jersey Municipalities (percent) | 40.04 | 30.16 | 29.81 |
| Location of Survey Respondents (percent) | 39.16 | 31.67 | 29.16 |

Source: CUPR, Intergovernmental Coordination Survey, 1991

EXHIBIT 3
COMPOSITION OF MUNICIPAL SAMPLE BY REGION

| | North | Central | South |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Private Citizen | 45.7% | 44.7% | 47.1% |
| City Administrator | 23.9% | 15.9% | 14.6% |
| Municipal Planner | 15.2% | 34.2% | 26.5% |
| Consultant | 8.7% | 2.6% | - |
| Planning Board Member | 4.3% | - | 5.9% |
| Mayor | <u>2.2%</u> | <u>2.6%</u> | <u>5.9%</u> |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

Source: CUPR, Intergovernmental Coordination Survey, 1991

respondents are planners directly responsible for overseeing the State Plan process in the county. At the State level, seven State departments are surveyed. The respondents to the State questionnaire are typically assistant commissioners or directors of planning entities within each of the State agencies that in some way or another have functions that affect or are affected by land use. Thus, the State and county questionnaires are typically responded to by professional governmental administrators and planners. The municipal respondents are composed, for the most part, of "citizen planners," professional planners, and municipal administrators. All of these individuals are conversant with planning and land use in New Jersey.

Using comparison-of-means tests, the central aim of the analysis tests for differences in the ways respondents to all three surveys (municipal, county, and State) answer questions on the frequency and quality of contact under IPLAN* and TREND. The results are reported below.

TREND VERSUS IPLAN FINDINGS

Exhibit 4 presents the statewide findings from the local, county, and State surveys. Responses by region of the State are reported on later.

Statewide Results

MUNICIPAL SURVEY (EXHIBIT 4A)

Municipal to Municipal

In the municipal survey, respondents judge the number of contacts between their municipality and sister municipalities under TREND to be "infrequent." Under IPLAN the respondents report some movement toward more frequent contact. The difference in contact is statistically significant at the .05 level. (The .05 level of significance is used given the exploratory nature of the analysis.)

In terms of the quality of contact with other municipalities, respondents rate TREND conditions as "positive." The presence of IPLAN does not change this relationship. It appears that the process of Cross-acceptance is generating a higher level of contact between municipalities. As of yet, however, it has not resulted in an improvement in the quality of local-to-local contact from TREND to IPLAN.

* IPLAN is used here to be consistent with terminology found throughout this report. In reality, those responding in the questionnaire are reporting perceptions that have come about since the Preliminary State Development and Redevelopment Plan (PSDRP), which predated IPLAN.

EXHIBIT 4

AVERAGE SCORES FOR MUNICIPAL, COUNTY AND STATE RESPONDENTS

4A: MUNICIPAL SURVEY

Frequency Where 1 = no contact; 2 = infrequent; 3 = frequent; 4 = very frequent
 Quality Where 1 = very negative; 2 = negative; 3 = positive; 4 = very positive

| | MUNICIPALITY TO MUNICIPALITY | MUNICIPALITY TO COUNTY | MUNICIPALITY TO STATE | |
|--|---------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------|
| Frequency of Contact <i>before</i> State Planning Process | 2.1 | 2.5 | 1.9 | TREND |
| Frequency of Contact <i>after</i> State Planning Process | 2.2 | 2.7 | 2.0 | IPLAN |
| Significance | 0.045 | 0.018 | 0.128 | |
| Quality of Contact <i>before</i> State Planning Process | 3.0 | 3.1 | 2.4 | TREND |
| Quality of Contact <i>after</i> State Planning Process | 3.0 | 3.4 | 2.5 | IPLAN |
| Significance | 0.421 | 0.000 | 0.254 | |

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, U.S. Census of Population and Housing, New Jersey, 1990; CUPR, Intergovernmental Coordination Survey, 1991.

Note: Significance = .05
 Significant relationships are highlighted in bold type.

EXHIBIT 4 (continued)

AVERAGE SCORES FOR MUNICIPAL, COUNTY AND STATE RESPONDENTS

4B: COUNTY SURVEY

Frequency Where 1 = no contact; 2 = infrequent; 3 = frequent; 4 = very frequent
 Quality Where 1 = very negative; 2 = negative; 3 = positive; 4 = very positive

| | COUNTY TO MUNICIPALITY | COUNTY TO COUNTY | COUNTY TO STATE | |
|--|---------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------|
| Frequency of Contact <i>before</i> State Planning Process | 2.4 | 2.7 | 2.6 | TREND |
| Frequency of Contact <i>after</i> State Planning Process | 2.8 | 3.2 | 3.0 | IPLAN |
| Significance | 0.005 | 0.001 | 0.007 | |
| Quality of Contact <i>before</i> State Planning Process | 2.9 | 3.0 | 2.4 | TREND |
| Quality of Contact <i>after</i> State Planning Process | 3.3 | 3.3 | 2.7 | IPLAN |
| Significance | 0.038 | 0.041 | 0.0038 | |

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, U.S. Census of Population and Housing, New Jersey, 1990; CUPR, Intergovernmental Coordination Survey, 1991.

Note: Significance = .05
 Significant relationships are highlighted in bold type.

EXHIBIT 4 (continued)
AVERAGE SCORES FOR MUNICIPAL, COUNTY AND STATE RESPONDENTS

4C: STATE SURVEY

Frequency Where 1 = no contact; 2 = infrequent; 3 = frequent; 4 = very frequent
Quality Where 1 = very negative; 2 = negative; 3 = positive; 4 = very positive

| | STATE TO MUNICIPALITY | STATE TO COUNTY | STATE TO STATE | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------|
| Frequency of Contact <i>before</i> State Planning Process | 2.2 | 2.2 | 2.6 | TREND |
| Frequency of Contact <i>after</i> State Planning Process | 2.8 | 2.8 | 3.1 | IPLAN |
| Quality of Contact <i>before</i> State Planning Process | 3.0 | 2.0 | 2.8 | TREND |
| Quality of Contact <i>after</i> State Planning Process | 3.0 | 3.2 | 3.2 | IPLAN |

Source: CUPR, Intergovernmental Coordination Survey, 1991.

Municipal to County

Local respondents have a different experience with county government. Under TREND, municipalities report relatively "frequent" contact between local and county governments. Under IPLAN this contact increases significantly. The quality of contact between municipalities and the county branches of government, rated as "positive" under TREND, improves to a rating approaching "very positive" under IPLAN. As with the frequency of municipal-to-county contact, the improvement in the quality of municipal-to-county interaction from TREND to IPLAN is statistically significant. In short, the municipal-to-county intergovernmental experience is up markedly under IPLAN.

Municipal to State

Municipal contact with State government concerning land use has traditionally been sporadic and distant. Not surprisingly, the mean response to the question concerning the frequency of contact by municipalities to the State under TREND is that it had been "infrequent." Although respondents indicate a slight improvement under IPLAN, contact may still be described as "infrequent" and shows no significant difference from TREND conditions. Local respondents believe, on average, that historically the quality of the relationship with the State under TREND has been somewhat negative in character. IPLAN has prompted a small, albeit not significant, shift toward a more positive relationship.

*COUNTY SURVEY (EXHIBIT 4B)**County to Municipal*

County respondents report that the frequency of contact between themselves and the municipalities under IPLAN significantly increased from their experience under TREND; the change is from an "infrequent" level to one of "frequent" contact. The quality of such contact similarly improves significantly in TREND versus IPLAN from a negative to a "positive" rating. Thus the favorable assessment by municipalities of the intergovernmental coordination improvement with counties after IPLAN is mirrored in similar positive perception by county respondents of the local-county relationship.

County to County

The counties' favorable perspective of IPLAN with respect to intergovernmental coordination extends to other levels of government as well. County respondents believe that there has been, on average, a "frequent" level of contact with other counties under TREND conditions. The level of contact increases significantly to an even more frequent level after IPLAN. The quality of county-to-county contact after IPLAN shows a similar statistically significant betterment from the relationship under TREND.

County to State

The counties' positive impression of IPLAN's effects on intergovernmental coordination is repeated in their assessment of their contact with State agencies. Under TREND, about half of the county respondents, on average, describe the level of contact with the State as "infrequent," the other half as "frequent." With IPLAN, the average description of the frequency of the county-to-State interaction rises to "frequent." This improvement is statistically significant. Similarly, the counties' perspective on the quality of their contact with the State improves significantly from TREND to IPLAN.

In short, counties have a very positive impression of the effects of IPLAN (including PSDRP) on intergovernmental coordination with all levels of government—municipalities, sister counties, and State agencies. Across the board they indicate that both the frequency and quality of their contact with other government agencies improves dramatically with IPLAN.

STATE AGENCY SURVEY (EXHIBIT 4C)

Analysis of the State respondent evaluations shown in Exhibit 4C does not and should not indicate statistical significance because there are few State agency questionnaires relative to the other surveys (i.e., 7 State agency surveys versus 122 municipal). Even though they are relatively few, they do represent most of those agencies whose actions impact on or are impacted by land-use decisions. Hence, in speaking of the State agency evaluations, the findings are of their general impressions.

State to All Levels—Quantity of Contact

What are these? Under TREND, State agencies describe their level of contact with municipalities as "infrequent"; under IPLAN, the ranking moves toward "frequent." Similarly, the State respondents report an increase in contact with counties and other State agencies from TREND to IPLAN. Thus, under TREND, the level of State contact with counties concerning land use and planning is described on average as "infrequent"; under IPLAN it moves to "frequent." The State to State agency contact under TREND ranges from "infrequent" to "frequent"; for IPLAN the assessment moves to frequent.

State to All Levels—Quality of Contact

This positive impression of IPLAN generally extends to the State perspective on the *quality* of contact with other levels of government. This is most dramatically evident with respect to the State-to-county relationship. Under TREND, the quality of contact is rated as "negative"; under IPLAN, it is viewed as "positive." The quality of State to State agency

relationships is also viewed as improving under IPLAN, albeit not as dramatically as that of the State-to-county intergovernmental coordination. In a departure from this more sanguine view, however, the State respondents did not view the quality of the State-to-municipal relationship as improving from TREND to IPLAN. Again, this is almost a mirror image of municipal findings.

Thus, assessment of frequency and quality of contact assessments by the three governmental respondents are for the most part parallel. The county coordination nexus, that is, the relationship between the county and other levels of government, is viewed by all respondents as having improved most appreciably with IPLAN—both with respect to frequency and quality. The frequency of contact at the other government levels, i.e., municipal-to-municipal, municipal-to-State, and State-to-State is also generally viewed as having increased with IPLAN. The quality of these intergovernmental relationships, however, is for the most part not viewed as having improved significantly with IPLAN relative to TREND.

In reporting these findings it must be emphasized that the analysis is exploratory. Second, the findings are not cast in stone; the fact that municipalities, for instance, did not believe that IPLAN has thus far improved the quality of contact with sister municipalities or the State does not preclude improvements over time—as the State planning process proceeds.

This last perspective has bearing on the respondents' assessment of IPLAN upon specific land-use functions such as long-term strategic planning, capital budgeting, and the placement of infrastructure. The overwhelming response to this section of the questionnaire from each level of government is that IPLAN and its predecessor PSDRP had no effect. This finding should be interpreted within the context of (1) the limited time that PSDRP and IPLAN have been in existence, and (2) the fact that the State Plan has not yet been adopted, and indeed continues to be modified through the Cross-acceptance process. Thus, significant substantive changes in land use have not been realized to date. This does not mean that substantive changes will not proceed in the future.

Regional Analysis of TREND Versus PLAN

Thus far the analysis has reported on the statewide respondents to the intergovernmental coordination questionnaire. Are there differences by region? New Jersey is a State with distinct regions. Culturally, economically, and politically, the State's northern, central, and southern counties are clearly different. With this in mind, the analysis partitions the results to the questionnaire by region.

It might be expected that the regions would show some level of variation in the perspective of intergovernmental coordination. However, the tabulation of results uncovered that these differences are slight and not statistically significant. For example, the mean response of municipalities' evaluation of the quality of their relationship with county government is 3.3 for northern communities, 3.2 for centrally located jurisdictions, and 3.4 for southern municipalities. (These ratings are on a 1 to 4 scale, where 1 = very negative and 4 = very positive.) There are similar very close regional responses to other queries concerning the frequency and quality of contact. In short, at this point in time, there do not appear to be significant regional differences in the assessment of intergovernmental coordination under both TREND and IPLAN.

COMPARISON OF TREND AND IPLAN

An important role of IPLAN/PSDRP is that of an improved coordinative structure for government. The findings of the three surveys certainly indicate measurable improvements in the nature and conduct of land-use planning since the initiation of the State planning process. The primary change is seen in an increase in the frequency of contact between levels of government. There is also a perception that some improvement in the quality of the governmental interchange has occurred. While the latter does not reflect the scale of improvement seen in the frequency of contact, it does, nonetheless, point to an overall positive shift in the character of intergovernmental coordination as a result of IPLAN.

The analysis also provides an important insight into the structure of government under IPLAN. The role of the county in land-use planning proves to be particularly significant. Under IPLAN county respondents document growing contact with other levels of government, which is positive in nature. Municipal and State respondents confirmed this heightened presence of county government in land-use planning. These findings indicate a recognition by State and local government of the new role of the county.

In general, the positive impact of IPLAN over existing TREND conditions is less marked for municipalities than for the other branches of government. A reserved impression of the overall impact of IPLAN is especially reflected in the municipal responses concerning the quality of the intergovernmental relations. Municipalities have particular reservations concerning contact with State agencies. This highlights the necessity to develop confidence between levels of government, especially concerning localities and the State.

These results conform to the anticipated findings reported earlier. Thus, given the strong home-rule tradition in New Jersey, it is not surprising that the local perception of

IPLAN's effect on intergovernmental coordination is one of reserve. At the opposite end of the spectrum is the coming to the fore of the counties. Counties have always had some land-use and planning oversight responsibilities; IPLAN has given a more expansive and influential manifestation to this historical county role.

As a final note, it is important to underscore that the survey of IPLAN is that of a process just begun in Cross-acceptance. Over time, and with more experience, some of the areas rated less favorably, such as State-local contacts, may improve. Already, a solid base has been built around the county as a governmental entity for facilitating intergovernmental coordination in land use and planning. Such improvements in intergovernmental coordination have important implications for the implementation and overall success of the final State Plan.