

Project title

Development of Minimum State Requirements for Local Growth Policies

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Project description

In Louisiana, growth in and around many urban areas is not planned or managed. State and local government agencies simply react to what has occurred and attempt to catch up with the necessary infrastructure. In other words, government is left with the unenviable task of cleaning up the mess created by uncontrolled development. For example, if building setbacks are not required, the state may be required to purchase and demolish new homes and commercial buildings in order to acquire the right-of-way necessary to comply with a new state law that mandates a complete streets approach to infrastructure provision of state roads and highways. This includes providing space for future transportation demands generated by growth in that area. Transportation infrastructure includes travel lanes, turning lanes, bicycle infrastructure, sidewalks and bus stops.

On a smaller scale, if a left-turn lane is not installed at the entrance to a new development, traffic in one direction can be impeded by vehicles stopped in the main travel lane waiting for a gap in oncoming traffic. Further, if residential or other sensitive land uses are allowed adjacent to major transportation corridors such as Interstate highways, complaints about noise and requests for noise walls will begin almost immediately. When sidewalks and crosswalks are not built, pedestrians generated from development can end up conflicting with automobile traffic. Growth management is not intended to be anti-growth; rather, it is intended as a mechanism for coordinating infrastructure investment with development to encourage a safe, efficient, sustainable and multimodal transportation system.

The proposed research entails the development of minimum requirements for local growth management policies for use in Louisiana. The first phase of this research will be limited to defining minimum requirements with respect to transportation with a focus on understanding how it relates to the new complete streets policy. Future phases can address flood control and other infrastructure issues. The approach entails a literature search and a survey of other states and a cross-section of municipalities to gain an understanding of state-of-the-practice concerning growth management as it relates to transportation infrastructure. This will include a statewide poll of transportation planners, engineers and policy makers, a series of consensus-building meetings with a task force comprised of representatives from metropolitan planning organizations, municipal and parish public works engineers, municipal and parish planning officials, and DOTD engineers and planners. Different approaches will address different contexts regarding rural and urban areas.