



IN REVIEW

BUREAU OF MUNICIPAL RESEARCH

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October 1977

UPCOMING STUDIES

The following studies are currently under way or under consideration. Comments and suggestions are welcomed during every stage of research.

AN ISLAND AIRPORT FOR TORONTO?

This Civic Affairs will examine the proposals for utilizing the current island Airport location for alternative uses such as housing and parkland. Based on available information, the Bureau will make recommendations as to the desirability of continuing to operate an airport at this location.

THE PLANNING ACT REVIEW

The Bureau will analyse the findings of the Comay Task Force and indicate which recommendations it supports as well as commenting on those which it does not support and thinks should be revised in some manner.

THE TEACHING OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN OUR SCHOOLS

This Civic Affairs will bring together information from seminars and other research compiled over the past two years. The report will recommend ways of improving the current methods of teaching local government and will act as a resource for teachers wishing to improve their ability to relate to this important topic.

MANAGING LIMITED LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESOURCES

The Bureau will examine newly developed ways and means of improving cost effectiveness in the delivery of local government services and suggest ways of improving the distribution of this valuable information.

MUNICIPAL INITIATIVES TO SAVE ENERGY

The current shortage of energy sources will require municipalities to develop plans and deliver services with conservation in mind. This study will look at the many ways of improving the ability of municipal governments to reduce energy consumption.

LONDON URBAN RESOURCE CENTRE

This study will examine the 3-year pilot project of the London Library Board to establish an Urban Resource Centre to serve the various information needs of the citizens of London.

Restraint Without Hardship: How Do We Know? (BMR Comment, November 1976)

This **Comment** is a response to the provincial government's restriction on funding for municipal social services programmes.

The April 1976 Budget held municipal social services transfers to an effective increase of 5.5% over the previous

year. Several months later, claims as to the success of this financial restraint programme were being made.

The **Comment** addresses three questions: Why were social services singled out in the overall provincial restraint programme to receive one of the lowest increases? How was the effective 5.5% limit on transfers to municipalities chosen? What are the impacts? The report reviews the provincial government's rationale for its action in regard to social services and then examines the impacts in one regional municipality, (Hamilton-Wentworth). It discusses in detail the reduction in the municipal welfare caseload.

The argument that restraint has been implemented without causing hardship is criticized on the grounds that it is premature; there is not yet sufficient information that would support this contention. Because the ends of social services programmes are less tangible than other programmes, it takes time to develop indicators of "good" impacts and of "bad" impacts. And, while the visible and immediate consequences of restraint (on budgets or administrative efficiency) might seem benign, or even positive, we must anticipate the possible hidden or future results of financial restraint policies.

The **Comment** concludes by identifying specific types of information that are required inputs for a proper monitoring and evaluation of the costs and benefits of the restraint programme. The report suggests that both the provincial and municipal levels of government have a responsibility in this regard.

Legislative Attempts to Control Urban Growth in Canada (BMR Civic Affairs, November 1976)

This **Civic Affairs** deals exclusively with attempts by Canadian local governments to control urban growth. Based to a large extent on a questionnaire sent to 147 people in Canada's twenty-one metropolitan areas, this report deals with the present and future quality of life in our cities.

This report is the first known attempt to assemble in one place an accurate description of how and why Canadian municipalities have approached the task of bringing urban growth "under control". Included is a summary of the legislation that has been passed, an evaluation of the legislation and a summary of the legal challenges occurring as a result of these growth control laws. Finally, case studies on Vancouver and Toronto are presented.

Our views about what has happened in these cities, as well as impressions about what the future may hold, create a good starting point for examination of the issues surrounding the "urban growth controversy".

Is Metroplan A Gamble Worth Taking? (BMR Comment, February 1977)

This **Comment** is a response to the Metroplan document **Concept and Objectives** which was published in 1976. The document itself is the most recent stage of a programme which began over four years ago to prepare an

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official plan for Metropolitan Toronto. It sets forth a proposed set of goals and policy directions for the future development of Metro.

The **Comment** addresses itself to the primary concept of the document that the new plan should seek to create a multi-centered urban structure. Specifically, it asks a direct and simple question: what are the prospects for making decentralization as envisaged by Metroplan work?

The Bureau report is critical of the Metroplan document for not explaining how the proposed urban structure can be implemented. It focuses on a number of practical disadvantages of the two proposed mini-downtown locations (North Yonge and Scarborough Town Centre) and sets out the kinds of decisions that will be required if we are to overcome these obstacles.

While the **Comment** raises questions about the feasibility of the proposed urban structure, it states that it is sympathetic to the goals of Metroplan to create a more balanced development pattern. By raising specific questions about transportation, densities and growth projections, the report clarifies the extent of the positive commitment that is needed to make decentralization work as proposed.

Food for the Cities: Disappearing Farmland and Provincial Land Policy (BMR Civic Affairs, June 1977)

This **Civic Affairs** is a result of Bureau studies on both the farmland loss problem in Southern Ontario and the province's decade-long effort to establish regional planning and development policies and of the "Food for the Cities" conference held in Toronto, March 1977. The study contains the two background papers (BMR Comments No. 165, 166) and selected conference proceedings, as well as the Bureau's specific recommendations for a provincial land policy for agriculture.

This study shows that the provincial government's Green Paper guidelines will be of limited use in preserving farmland because they lack legislative status and because they offer no overall framework within which municipalities can make their planning decisions. The study recommends a land policy for agriculture which contains three key elements:

- a requirement that all municipalities with farmland resources make permanent agricultural designations within a two-year period;
- a commitment by the provincial government to impose tougher restrictions on land use changes or the creation of lots through severances so that the main objective of saving the remaining farmland is not undermined while the planning is being done;
- the application of a joint provincial-municipal planning process to support and equip municipalities in developing plans and carrying them out in day-to-day decisions.

Be It Ever So Humble: The Need for Rental Housing in The City of Toronto (BMR Civic Affairs, March 1977)

This **Civic Affairs** examines the short-term need for adequate and affordable rental housing in the City of Toronto. It was undertaken as part of a broader housing needs study co-ordinated by the City's Housing Department and is concerned mainly with identifying, in a systematic way, the client groups for assisted rental housing.

The report draws together and analyzes existing information rather than generating new data. The analysis is based on three questions: Who is housed in the private rental sector now? How has this changed and is it likely to change over the next two to three years? What evidence of need is there and whom does it affect?

Because this study has a technical focus, it will likely be of primary interest to planners, students and municipal decision-makers who are interested in developing a housing policy for their area.

This **Civic Affairs** estimates that about 8,200 out of 137,000 tenant households in the City of Toronto live in housing that is physically inadequate, and that between 25,000 and 30,000 households currently spend too much of their income on housing. For the most part this need group is comprised of households on fixed incomes or on low incomes with little prospect of future improvement. The need group includes older households, and family households, particularly single parent. The study indicates that the opportunities for these tenants to improve their housing situations within the private rental market are narrowing.

School Vandalism: An Emerging Concern? (BMR Topic, September 1977)

How serious and significant a problem is vandalism in Ontario schools? How is vandalism defined and how are acts of vandalism in the schools currently identified? Who is responsible for handling vandalism when it occurs against school property? What are the existing policies and methods, and are they appropriate and effective?

After discussing the above questions, this **Topic** summarizes the problems which arise in any attempt to reduce school vandalism. These problems include:

- the absence of a single agreed upon definition of vandalism
- the lack of a uniformly adopted, comprehensive reporting method
- a lack of impetus for good record-keeping by school boards and principals
- school boards and principals do not always give full support to the police
- many communities do not actively support efforts to reduce vandalism in their areas
- and with the exception of the City of Mississauga Task Force, efforts to reduce vandalism in the areas studied have been piecemeal

This **Topic** sets out five steps which should be taken in order to avoid the possibility of a future vandalism crisis.

BMR in Review is published every 3-4 months and summarizes reports completed during that period. Copies of these reports may be obtained by writing or calling the Bureau. The cost of reports is \$1. for Comments/Topics and \$3. for Civic Affairs.

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