



BMR ^{In} Review

FORTHCOMING STUDIES

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

Utilization of User Charges

The Bureau has examined the current utilization of user charges in a number of cities across Ontario. Our study will analyse the rationale behind the use of existing user charges as well as the potential for increasing their use as a means of producing much needed local revenue.

Cost Saving Innovations in Local Government

The first phase of the Bureau's Federally-funded report will list many cost saving innovations currently in place in municipalities across Canada. The report will also review foreign innovation experience, methodology for productivity measurement, and factors leading to the successful implementation of municipal innovations.

Conference Proceedings

The Bureau will be publishing the proceedings of three recently sponsored conferences:

- * **Governmental Research Association:** This North American association of research agencies held their Annual Conference in Toronto in August, 1978. Subjects covered included: Metropolitan Reform; Public Apathy; Urban Growth; Ethics in Government; Cost of Education; and Cost Saving Innovations.
- * **BMR Annual Luncheon and Seminar:** The theme of the BMR Annual Luncheon and Seminar was "Management By Crisis: A Course of Self-Destruction For Our Cities". The proceedings will include two panel discussions as well as a very stimulating address by George Schrader, City Manager of Dallas, Texas.

- * **Windsor Conference:** In co-operation with the Institute of Public Administration of Canada, the Bureau hosted a one-day seminar in Windsor on "Freedom of Information". Current practices were critiqued and some new ideas for the future are considered.

STUDIES COMPLETED

Teaching Local Government: A Responsibility of The Educational System

(BMR Civic Affairs, May 1978, 80 pages)

After nearly three years of research the Bureau has concluded "that local government can and should become an integral part of the secondary school curriculum in Ontario". Working in co-operation with the Ontario Conference on Local Government, the Bureau tested students in various school districts, questioned community leaders, and received input from interested teachers in an effort to document whether local government was being adequately taught in most schools. The results indicated that this was not the case. Armed with these facts, the Bureau then helped organize two seminars in Sudbury and Peterborough in an effort to identify acceptable methods of attacking this problem. The solutions suggested were aimed at problems such as poor teacher training, public apathy, lack of teaching materials, and low educational priority for local government.

The educational priority question was partially solved by strong public sentiment for a return to basics in education and a need for more Canadian content in history courses.

This Civic Affairs is offered as a temporary solution to the lack of adequate teaching materials. In addition to documenting the need to improve the ability of schools to teach local government, we offer an outline of a mini unit for use by teachers. Complete with a day by day guide and suggested resource materials, the unit can be used until such time as a more comprehensive unit is developed.

Questions for Electors – 1978
(BMR Topic, No. 6, October, 1978, 39 pages)

This **TOPIC** presents some current issues in six areas of Ontario: Metropolitan Toronto, Hamilton, London, Ottawa, Sudbury and Windsor. The prime purpose of the document is to provide information for the recent municipal elections. The applicability, however, is much wider since the areas of concern presented are ones which do not disappear after the municipal elections are over. Background information on governmental structure and current issues is presented along with questions which municipal candidates and elected officials should be addressing.

Many of the items presented are specific to the particular area being discussed, such as the penitentiary in London, the federal-municipal problems of Ottawa, the employment problems of Sudbury. There are also a number of issues which are province-wide and a special section is included to review these. Property tax reform and the municipal grant structure are areas which have been causing municipalities some concern. The organization of regional government and the Provincial reluctance to allow changes in the present system is having an adverse effect on the efficiency of some municipalities.

Municipalities are also starting to feel that they should be given more control over the special purpose bodies under their jurisdiction, such as school boards, library boards and transportation authorities. There is also a trend to start to think of the unemployment situation as one which municipalities, along with the provincial and federal governments, should be tackling. Development issues are also still in the foreground in most areas.

The nature of this **TOPIC** does not allow solutions to these problems to be put forward. It does however, raise current issues and provide some new ways of assessing municipal actions, both past and future.

**Should the Province Help Save Ontario's
Downtowns?**
(BMR Topic, No. 7, November, 1978, 25 pages)

This **TOPIC** evaluates the newly developed Downtown Revitalization Program of the Ministry of Housing. The Program is designed to assist mid-sized municipalities (pop. 25,000 - 125,000). The Bureau concludes that the Program is conceptually sound and is workable under its present form. A number of concerns arose during our analysis. The risk to municipalities can be quite extensive, particularly in terms of the administrative and financial burden. Existing retailers must relearn their skills to survive in the new developments. The proposals depend heavily on the commitment of an anchor store which can then direct development of the project. Finally, the success of the Program depends heavily on the co-operation of the various Provincial departments, something which is not always easy to accomplish.

The **TOPIC** suggests several areas for improvement in the Program. First, it is unfortunate that a program which can achieve so much for a relatively small investment of public funds, should be cut off at a funding level which cannot possibly fill the need. At the least, the funds recovered should be placed back into the Program.

Second, the needs of the smaller communities will not be adequately met by this Program. These municipalities need more administrative assistance, less risk and an impetus for smaller scale development.

Third, further consideration should be given to means of revitalizing downtowns through the encouragement of institutional and residential uses, as well as commercial.

Finally, the Province and municipality should evaluate the impact of the municipal proposal on the entire municipality and not merely the financial and commercial aspects.

**Transportation Planning in London:
Can London Catch the Bus?**
(BMR Topic, No. 8, December 1978, 55 pages)

This **TOPIC** examines and evaluates transportation planning and decision making in London.

In the first section, the procedures, structures and responsibilities of the transportation agencies are analyzed. The conclusion is that the responsibility for transportation policy making belongs to too many agencies that are poorly co-ordinated. There are agencies that deal separately with transit, roads and parking with no apparent co-ordination either in administration or policy making.

Two recommendations are suggested here to remedy the situation. First, City Council should establish a Transportation Department which would assume responsibility for transit, parking, traffic and planning and research. Second, City Council should replace the Board of Control with a Policy Co-ordinating Committee, with membership functions and relations as set out in the Report of the City of London Management Committee.

This **TOPIC** also analyses the past attempts at strategic planning, concentrating on the London Urban Transportation Study (LUTS). The conclusions here are that none of the attempts at planning have been successful. A recommendation is presented which calls for the development of a new strategic plan for local transportation that makes use of community resources, has the endorsement of the majority of the citizenry and is given effect in the public policy statements. Specific suggestions on how this can be accomplished are outlined in the last chapter.

BMR in Review is published periodically and summarizes recently completed reports. Copies of these reports may be obtained by writing or calling the Bureau. The cost of reports is \$2 for Topics and \$4 for Civic Affairs.

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