John DeGrove on Growth Management, Regionalism, and Sustainable Development

Kevin Bryant and Robert Inerfeld

John DeGrove directs the Florida Atlantic University/Florida International University Joint Center for Environmental and Urban Problems. He is a member of the Governor’s Commission for a Sustainable South Florida and chairs the Commission’s Committee on Urban Form, Intergovernmental Coordination, and Governance. He wrote The New Frontier for Land Policy: Planning and Growth Management in the States, published in 1992 by the Lincoln Institute for Land Policy. The authors interviewed him by phone after he lectured at the Department of City and Regional Planning’s 1997 Sustainable Development Lecture Series.

Carolina Planning (CP): What will southeast Florida look like twenty years from now if current development trends continue?

John DeGrove (JD): If current trends continue and we can’t alter the fundamental urban development pattern, we will have sprawled all the way to the edge and into the Everglades; we will have a predominant low-density suburban development pattern; and we won’t have sustainable communities or a sustainable environment. We’ll all be bitterly disappointed, and we won’t have a sustainable economy. That’s if we don’t change things in the direction of a sustainable south Florida.

CP: Can you quantify the costs of this sprawl?

JD: The cost quantification is a little difficult, because a lot of these are environmental values and it’s hard to put a dollar figure on what it means to be able to restore and sustain the Everglades ecosystem. What values do you put on having a sustainable population of various kinds of birds as opposed to not having them? On the other hand, the cost of sprawl patterns of development is much easier to address. We have hard data now that show urban sprawl costs very substantially more to provide the infrastructure than with more compact development patterns. So in dollars and cents, given the projected growth that we’re going to have, you’re talking about hundreds of millions of dollars in added infrastructure costs. I don’t have a precise number; one of the things we’ve done is ask Bob Burchell (who does this kind of thing out of Rutgers) to look at the statistical impacts of sprawl in South Florida. We want to quantify the difference in the trend plan, between doing things the way we’re doing it now, and the more compact urban form approach—the sustainable communities approach—that we’re trying to move to.

CP: What kind of development do you envision for the Eastward Ho! corridor?

JD: We’re doing some very creative work there already (around the TriRail stations), and we’re hoping that will be one of the showcases of Eastward Ho!, but we’re also looking to get all the stakeholders in the game, including existing neighborhoods. It’s very dangerous to run around doing this kind of thing without involving the people who are already there. You go around talking about high density or even moderate density, people automatically say “Oh, lord, we don’t want that around us; we don’t want those old ugly highrises” or whatever vision they have. You have to give them a vision of moderate-density, well-designed environment, and you have to get them on board. You have to understand, this is a corridor where a lot of things are happening already; we’re trying to influence what’s happening, to make it have more residential so that we can accommodate some

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part of this population increase so that we don’t continue to spread out toward and eventually into the Everglades.

CP: What would it take to get developers to do more redevelopment and infill? What kind of incentives do they need?

JD: Well, some of them, who are developing the corridor now, say “We don’t need any incentives from you government guys. Just take off the shackles that you now put on us that make it hard for us to develop and redevelop.” These shackles include rigid and inflexible land-development regulations that discourage mixed-use stuff, that discourage creative development that we’d like to see going into this corridor... just outmoded codes.

CP: Have those started to change at all?

JD: Yes, some. That’s going to be a big focus of the Department of Community Affairs (the state land planning agency) as we go through the process of upgrading local comprehensive plans. They’re putting much more focus on trying to work with local governments and to give special grants to clean up old codes, make them flexible, make mixed use easy instead of hard. We now make it harder, it’s fair to

EASTWARD HO!, WESTWARD WHOA!

The Southeast Florida region, which includes Palm Beach, Broward, and Dade counties, is and will remain one of Florida’s fastest growing regions. With a projected population growth of 50% over the next 20 years, the natural beauty and quality of life that has attracted most of South Florida’s residents is in serious jeopardy. Most notably, the current westward drift of the population toward the Everglades jeopardizes what is already an environmentally threatened area. Current growth and development patterns make it clear that planners in southeast Florida need to be more creative in the way they manage growth.

To combat and change the pattern of development in Southeast Florida, the Governor’s Commission for a Sustainable South Florida developed the Eastward Ho! strategy, explained in the Commission’s report Eastward Ho! Revitalizing Southeast Florida’s Urban Core. Eastward Ho! is the Commission’s effort to direct more of the population growth into the developed corridor between the Florida East Coast Railroad and the Chesapeake Seaboard Railroad. This corridor, just west of the Southeast Florida coastline, was chosen because of its existing infrastructure and opportunities for infill and redevelopment. By creating more attractive development opportunities within the redevelopment district, the Commission hopes that more people will settle between the railroads and fewer will choose to live in sprawling development west of the area.

The Eastward Ho! program has outlined three broad areas of concern: the physical characteristics of the area, from open space to public facilities management; the human characteristics of the area, which includes jobs and crime; and infill and redevelopment in the study area, which includes reclaiming contaminated sites and financing projects. To address these concerns, the Eastward Ho! report includes 44 recommendations designed to revitalize the urban core.

Key to the Eastward Ho! program are incentives to developers to use a more compact urban form in the Eastward Ho! study area. The recommendations encourage higher density development around transportation nodes, specifically near stops along the Tri-Rail system, which runs between West Palm Beach and Miami and has 17 stations. Efforts to bolster ridership on Tri-Rail will reduce dependency on the automobile and consequently reduce congestion on the roads. “It’s the key to our infill and redevelopment strategy,” said John DeGrove.

One of the basic principles of the Eastward Ho! project is that sustainability as a concept must be applied broadly. The goal of protecting the Everglades depends on a viable and sustainable urban corridor in the Eastward Ho! study area. Keeping suburban sprawl from encroaching on the Everglades ecosystem means having attractive urban options for development and redevelopment.

Information about Eastward Ho! and other planning topics in southeast Florida can be seen at http://www.sfRPC.com.

-Kevin Bryant
say, to develop where we want developers to go than out on the edge to do sprawl development.

CP: Is there going to be any attempt to make it harder for them to do development out on the edge?

JD: Yes. By increasing the concurrency requirements out there. The main thing is to draw real urban growth boundaries and to reduce densities in areas outside those urban growth boundaries—reduce them very substantially.

CP: It seems like in this country you often hear people say, everyone wants their own home with a two-car garage, and a lawn, and so on and so forth. Do people want to live in compact developments? Given the choice, what do they choose? Also, have any surveys been done of this?

JD: Yes, there are some surveys, and we’re going to promote additional surveys about whether people would be willing if given choices. Are there some people who would like to live in moderate-density communities in this Eastward Ho! corridor? This question has been raised all over the country, and everywhere we’ve given people well designed and attractive options there has not been a problem with the market. And that is certainly true of south Florida, because, as we are beginning to learn, a surprising amount of development is going on in this corridor, in the greater planning area as well as the corridor more narrowly defined. And there is a market for this stuff. At Mizner Park in Boca Raton, the most popular thing there are the 282 rental and condominium apartments that are up over the retail. What I need to know is who are those people living there, who are the people on the waiting list?

CP: And why are they deciding to live there...?

JD: Why are they deciding they like that idea. Because I know a number of people whom I’ve talked to since we’ve started all this who say, “Listen, if we had a choice, we’d love to get out of way out west—it’s not real far from where we are now, you understand—because we get caught in all this traffic. Give us some good options in the East and we’ll take it, leave our sprawl suburbia behind.

We are very concerned with showing the development community that there is a market. Of course, we have a couple of developers working in this corridor who say “Hell, I know there’s a market.

We have a couple of developers... who say “Hell, I know there’s a market... What I have trouble doing is getting through your labyrinth of rules, regulations and things that make it hard for me to do anything.”

I’ve already been developing the corridor. I have no trouble filling up my apartments, rental or condominiums, or even single-family stuff. What I have trouble doing is getting through your labyrinth of rules, regulations and things that make it hard for me to do anything.”

CP: As these markets develop, as you hope, how will you prevent gentrification from occurring in some of the infill and redevelopment areas?

JD: A major, major issue. We have a whole center at Florida Atlantic University—CURE: The Center for Urban Revitalization and Empowerment, I think it stands for. The center is now under contract with DCA to work with these existing lower income communities, black as well as Hispanic and white, to make sure they don’t just get wiped out by a gentrification process.

CP: Are there any particular tools or techniques they’re are looking at using to prevent gentrification?

JD: Sure, including plans to upgrade some of these neighborhoods, and even expand them. We’re developing a plan now where there already is a major expansion of a TriRail station underway. There’s a lot of land there for infill or redevelopment, including a black community not too far away, and part of the design strategy is to expand and strengthen that community. There are still some federal dollars for moderate and low income housing. We expect to have Secretary Cuomo down here working with us in that corridor along with EPA and other federal agencies. The EPA is important because they’re working with
us to overcome the problems of brownfields. You name it, we’ve thought of it, but we haven’t necessarily figured out how to make it go. But we’re not just going along in some kind of fool’s paradise, is what I’m trying to say.

CP: Now, I’ve been in south Florida a little bit, and I remember seeing a lot of big shopping centers with a lot of big-box retailers.

JD: There are a lot of them down here. And a lot of them are half empty too.

CP: Are there any older shopping centers that people are looking at redeveloping?

JD: The answer to that is yes. Mizner Park is an old mall development that I voted for reluctantly when I was on the planning board in Boca Raton years ago. And the city finally decided that it was so ugly and not doing well, that they bought it and tore it down, and that’s been redeveloped. That’s one of the leading examples of mixed-use successful redevelopment through a public-private partnership.

CP: Now what’s to stop people from just building more of the big-box shopping centers?

JD: Well, as you know, this is an issue across the country—how you can stop that. Of course land-use controls are one way you can do it. Or else you try to

Legislating Sustainability

In 1996, the Florida legislature passed the Department of Community Affairs’ (DCA) Sustainable Communities Demonstration Project. The Sustainable Communities legislation is significant for two reasons. First, it is the first state legislation in the nation that specifically outlines sustainable communities as a legitimate interest of the state. Second, it codifies what the state of Florida will recognize as a sustainable community (see opposite page).

The Sustainable Communities legislation is designed to accomplish six principles of sustainable development: restoring key ecosystems; achieving a more clean, healthy environment; limiting urban sprawl; protecting wildlife and natural areas; advancing the efficient use of land and other resources; and creating quality communities and jobs.

One of the key aspects of the legislation is that it will give local governments more flexibility to plan as long as they observe the six principles of sustainable development and other criteria outlined in the legislation, which include establishing an urban growth boundary. As John DeGrove explained, “The local government gets that urban growth boundary set and it’s free to do damn near anything it wants to inside that boundary. It’s freed up from a lot of state rules and regulation, including by other state agencies.”

According to Sue Mullins in Florida Planning magazine, “The department intends for the program to remove some of its strictly oversight duties and create conditions to encourage creative and innovative approaches.” Participating local governments receive benefits such as exemption from DCA review of local comprehensive plan amendments within their urban growth boundaries and prioritized funding from state agencies.

To participate in the program local governments need to apply to the DCA. The initial legislation only provided funding for five local governments to participate in the program, but DCA is working on another round of legislation that will make the project a state-wide effort. Participating governments must continue to uphold the guidelines set out in the legislation to remain participants in the project. Despite concerns that there would be little interest in the Demonstration Project, 28 local governments applied for the five designated slots provided for in the enabling legislation.

Not all planners are jumping on the legislation’s bandwagon. According to the April 1997 issue of Planning, Florida APA chapter president Thomas Pelham has warned that the legislation may be the first step in repealing the state’s growth management laws. If the Sustainable Communities Demonstration Project is successful, it will be interesting to see if the two laws can co-exist effectively. -Kevin Bryant
Criteria for choosing sustainable communities—from the Sustainable Communities Demonstration Project legislation, Section 15, HB 2705

In determining whether to designate all or part of a local government as a sustainable community, the DCA shall:

A. Assure that the local government has set an urban development boundary or functionally equivalent mechanisms, based on projected needs and adequate data and analysis that will:

1. Encourage urban infill at appropriate densities and intensities, separate urban and rural uses, and discourage urban sprawl development patterns while preserving public open space and planning for buffer-type land uses and rural development consistent with their respective character along and outside of the urban boundary.

2. Assure protection of key natural areas and agricultural lands.

3. Ensure the cost-efficient provision of public infrastructure and services.

B. Consider and assess the extent to which the local government has adopted programs in its local comprehensive plan or land development regulations which:

1. Promote infill development and redevelopment, including prioritized and timely permitting processes in which applications for local development permits within the urban development boundary are acted upon expeditiously for proposed development which is consistent with the local comprehensive plan.

2. Promote the development of housing for low-income and very low-income households or specialized housing to assist elders and the disabled to remain at home or in independent living arrangements.

3. Achieve effective intergovernmental coordination.

4. Promote economic diversity and growth while encouraging the retention of rural character, where rural areas exist, and the protection and restoration of the environment.

5. Provide and maintain public urban and rural open space and recreational opportunities.

6. Manage transportation and land uses to support public transit and promote opportunities for pedestrian and nonmotorized transportation.

7. Use urban design principles to foster individual community identity, create a sense of place, and pedestrian-oriented safe neighborhoods and town centers.

8. Redevelop blighted areas.

9. Improve disaster preparedness programs and the ability to protect lives and property, especially in coastal high-hazard areas.

10. Encourage clustered, mixed-use development which incorporates green space and residential development within walking distance of commercial development.

11. Demonstrate financial and administrative capabilities to implement the designation.

12. Demonstrate a record of effectively adopting, implementing, and enforcing its comprehensive plan.
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do it through incentives and disincentives, and that’s part of what Sustainable Communities will be about.

CP: So can you actually zone an area mixed-use and say you can’t put a big shopping center here; you can only put a mixed-use development.

JD: Yes. Portland Metro’s doing it, and we could do it. But you must have choices, and there will still be plenty of room for big-box retail. I mean, we may have more of them than we need already, you understand. I mean, that’s just a matter of carefully crafted comprehensive plans and land-development regulations that are based on data. You have to be careful about private property rights, but I’m convinced that we can do anything like that we need to do if we plan carefully and if we have a solid data base undergirding those plans.

CP: I think I heard you say once that you don’t see the private property rights folks as a threat, but it’s kind of a thorn in the side of these efforts.

JD: It’s not a threat; it’s a thorn in the side. And I’ll tell you why it’s a thorn in the side: because of ignorance, often, on the part of county and city attorneys. Being very cautious has a chilling effect on changing land-development regulations and plans. “Gosh, maybe we’ll get sued.” So they say to city council, the county commissions, “Well, I can’t guarantee you won’t get sued under this Burt-Harris Private Property Rights Act we now have in Florida.” I don’t think there’s any question that has had somewhat of a chilling effect, but fortunately we’re getting more and more other local governments that have said “Look, if we do this carefully, we’re going to go ahead and make the changes. We’re going to do the things we need to do, and if somebody wants to sue us, let them sue.” Boy, if you’re not willing to stand up to that, even a mild private-property wrongs flaw, as I often call it, can shut you down practically. Just out of being super cautious. County and city attorneys are famous for being super cautious.

CP: Let me ask you about TriRail. What’s being done to encourage more people to use that, as opposed to automobiles?

JD: Well, right now ridership is declining. And you say, my god you’re putting all your horses on that to make sure Eastward Ho! works. Well the reason is, we’re in the midst of double tracking this thing and that makes it difficult to maintain the schedule. The other thing we need to do is to integrate the east-west bus systems with the north-south TriRail system much better than they are now so that people not only will find the schedule of TriRail convenient but will find it easy to take a bus to the station. Only one county has made a major move in that direction, and that’s Palm Beach through their Palm Trans which is their bus system. They adopted a six-cent local option gasoline tax a couple of years ago, and they dedicated three cents of it to updating their bus system and integrating it with the TriRail system in Palm Beach County.

I think TriRail ridership peaked at ten to twelve thousand folks a day. Projections are, if we can make all these improvements, you’d go to 35, 40, 50 thousand folks a day. I forget the exact projections, but they are very substantially greater than they are now. And that’s feasible, but we have to make sure we get the money. And we’re proposing—we’re going to put this before the legislature next year—a regional tax to support the public transportation system, that is TriRail and the buses with maybe some of that money going to airports too. But mainly for surface transportation.

TriRail’s has some bids out for some mixed-use development at the stations they now have and the stations they’re planning. I’m pushing hard to ensure that those mixed uses include the maximum feasible amount of residential development as well as other uses, including retail and light industry.

CP: Can you tell us about the state role in Eastward Ho!?
JD: When the original decision was made to attempt to restore the Everglades ecosystem, there was a decision by the governor and others to establish the Governor’s Commission on a Sustainable South Florida, a broad-based all-the-stakeholders-at-the-table group that began work three years ago.

About a year and a half into our work, we concluded that you couldn’t restore and sustain the Everglades ecosystem unless we had different urban development patterns and unless we contained the projected 2 million population increase in Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties, between now and the year 2020. Out of this we conceived the idea of a regional development and infill corridor generally running from Palm Beach County, through Broward County and into Dade County. And the specific strategy to implement that we named Eastward Ho! Eastward Ho!, Westward Woe—alright, if you want to get cute. To encourage mainly through incentives, now—not so much through a system of command and control; mainly through a system of powerful (we hope powerful) incentives—led by the Department of Community Affairs, carried out by the two regional planning councils and with a lot of contract work done with several folks including my center, the Joint Center For Environmental and Urban Problems, that has this whole region as its area of interest and concern.

CP: Does the Eastward Ho! program have the support of the Florida Department of Transportation?

JD: Yes, yes, I think it’s fair to say it does. Our DOT is now (I’m trying to be careful how I say this), for the most part it’s part of the solution instead of being, as it historically was, part of the problem. It does recognize the relationship between transportation, land use, and air quality.

CP: I have a question about the sustainable communities legislation. Part of the incentive package is for those communities that have been selected, they don’t have to get DCA approval for a lot of...

JD: changes in their comprehensive plan or development regulations.

CP: Yes. My question is, does that serve as a contradiction to the state growth-management program.

JD: Sure, it would, if not for the fact that in order to become a sustainable community, you have to incorporate into your local plans and land development regulations these six principles of sustainability. And what they are, they reflect the goals of the growth management system.

CP: Does the state play an active role in maintaining, making sure those communities uphold those principles?

JD: Yes. It will be monitored through the state and regional planning councils. And, secondly, if a local government comes in and starts to amend its plan so that it violates the sustainable concepts and principles,
We’re trying to build the incentives. . . for stronger intergovernmental coordination. . . that’s one of the things you have to do to be a sustainable community.

then they have to go back to all the regulations they were subject to in the first place. But the focus in this is on incentives, on providing at least modest fiscal benefits, on trying to get state agencies to coordinate with each other to get development to occur the way we want, and to encourage local governments to clean up their own codes.

I’ve just been up in Martin County (one of the first five sustainable communities), north of here, trying to talk through how we can persuade Martin County to change their comprehensive plan and land development regulation to encourage sustainable development instead of low-density sprawl. They’re proud of their plan, see, but their plan makes it very difficult to do mixed-use, you know the whole concept of New Urbanism—it makes it very difficult to do that sort of thing. And we’re trying to figure out a strategy to get the strong supporters of environmental protection and growth management in Martin County to recognize that their plan almost requires low-density sprawl. If they don’t change that, they’re going to be the loser in the long run in protecting not only their urban quality of life but their natural systems also. And we spent a couple of hours, and we decided on some strategies, and we’re going to start working with a couple of county commissioners and others up there to try to persuade them to change their ways. It’s going to be tricky, because they’re sort of dug in.

CP: Besides the transit network, how else are you trying to make the various local governments in the Eastward Ho! area work together?

JD: There are a lot of local governments in this corridor. First, I’ll just say that’s a challenge. That’s why part one of the sustainable communities’ principles is real intergovernmental coordination with your neighbors; that is, persuading local governments, not only do they need to plan for sustainability within their own limits, but this is a region-wide thing, and they have to plan with each other. But, you know, that’s not a natural thing for local governments to do. And so we’re trying to build the incentives in there for stronger intergovernmental coordination, and that’s one of the things you have to do to be a sustainable community.

CP: What’s the role of the regional planning councils in this?

JD: They have a critical role. They’re being given substantial funding by the state, by the Department of Community Affairs, to help do the baseline studies, help document the land uses in the corridor now, document the development patterns going on in the corridor, where vacant land is, where there are opportunities, where there are barriers, where there are problems, identifying brownfield sites, you know, all the basic data about the corridor. You might think we’d have all that data . . . well, maybe you wouldn’t.

CP: What’s been the role of public involvement in Eastern Ho!?

JD: It’s beginning to be extensive. Our Joint Center, for instance, is responsible along with 1000 Friends of Florida for putting together workshops all up and down the corridor with all sorts of neighborhood groups. But not just neighborhood groups—with developers, bankers—trying to involve every possible stakeholder in the corridor. And we’ve had our problems: we think we’ve found everybody that we ought to involve and then somebody pops up and says “Well, nobody’s talked to me.”

One of the things we feel we have to do is engage neighborhoods, engage communities, parts of communities, and of course, ultimately whole cities and whole counties. But it’s has to be . . . we see that as just a huge challenge, to get all those actors in the corridor to get involved in the game, including some now who are either indifferent, skeptical, or outright hostile—those people, not just the ones who think this is a good idea. I’m willing to work to make it happen. Now there are other people who think it’s a good idea but they’re not willing to work to make it
happen; they just don’t believe it’s going to happen

CP: Are there any key champions within the corridor of the Eastward Ho! project outside of the governmental councils?

JD: Yes. The guy who actually coined the phrase “Eastward Ho!” is Roy Rogers, who is a vice-president for JMB Developers. They’ve done some of the major communities here in Boca Raton and down in Broward County, Weston, and others. It’s kind of ironic, because Weston is a major community right out on the western edge, right, so Roy Rogers, their vice president, comes up with this Eastward Ho! concept. And he’s a very enthusiastic supporter of it, by the way. So we have a cadre of developers, and people in banks even, and others. Our support is not only confined to government do-gooders like me.

We also have sceptics, people who don’t think its ever going to go anywhere, except what was going to happen anyway. They’re saying, you’re not going to influence this in any way. And some of those are on the public side, and some are on the private side. It’s yet to be seen how effective this whole thing is going to be. It’s not something you can do overnight.

CP: Let’s look out ten years. If you can make the Eastward Ho! project successful in ten years, what do you think will have made it so?

JD: I think being creative and involving the stakeholders in the region, getting them on board, persuading them it’s a good thing, persuading them that moderate-density, environmentally friendly places are something they ought to welcome; showing them there’s a good market—we have good evidence on that already—that there’s a market when you give people choices for really well designed moderate-density places.

Our success in finding financing—finding the banks, the savings and loans, the government agencies, various kinds of federal initiatives we’re now trying to pull in down here. That’s going to be one, you know, you must have the funding or it’s not going to happen, and this is funding for something that is different. I think another measure of success will be, we’ll look and say “My god, we did manage to drastically upgrade TriRail, and we do have mixed-use developments in a lot of these stations; the bus systems have been integrated with TriRail, and TriRail is carrying 25, 30, 40, 45 thousand passengers a day.”

CP: What do you see as the key components of effective state regional planning enabling legislation?

If you were going to create John DeGrove’s dream regional planning legislation...

JD: I think that in the first place, except in the unusual case of a state that doesn’t need a strong regional component, there has to be a strong regional component. And there has to be a set of state goals and objectives, a state plan that reflects those, and those goals have to be reflected in regional plans and local plans. On the other hand, I think the thing has to be bottom up as well as top down. But I think that framework has to be there and the regional level has to have the capacity to see that local governments cannot go forward planning in isolation. If you don’t have that then you don’t get an effective regional governance system. That’s all there is to it. It must have some top-down muscle, but it must have incentives, strong incentives to get local governments to play the game willingly.

CP: Let me ask you one overarching question. How do you know we’ve obtained a sustainable community? How will you know if you’ve reached the goal with Eastward Ho! for instance?

JD: Remember when I said that for any effective state or regional plan you must have a set of goals, a set of what-you-want-to-be-when-you-grow-up measures, if you will, a set of targets? I think you set them up, and what we’ve done is articulate them to a considerable extent in the Sustainable Communities criteria, and as you go along you measure what you’re doing: have we stopped this sprawl? How much of this population increase are we accommodating in a broadly defined Eastward Ho! corridor? Are we continuing to sprawl? Did we give up on the Everglades agriculture area and now we have “Dell

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Webb Sun City” there? Or do we have sustainable agriculture out there that is no longer polluting the ecosystem. I mean, you must have these measures, right: how much mixed-use housing, how much low-income housing, how much job-producing things are we getting in the corridor?

CP: Is part of the process going to be, perhaps, to set some numeric goals?

JD: Absolutely. We know there are going to be 2 million more people—of course my environmental friends say, “Good god, DeGrove, you ought to be working on keeping them from coming, instead of accommodating them without ruining the region.” Well, that’s not my position, as you know. They’re going to come; we’ll be lucky if it’s only two million. Look at the weather out here today. Suppose you were up there in New England fighting that black-ice, do they call it? I think that we must have measures, you know, milestones. You know all these words you planners use. We must have these built in so that we’re constantly looking and asking, are we getting there? And if we aren’t—this is where a new term (along with sustainability) has come on the scene: adaptive management. Adaptive management has been applied mainly in the natural systems restoration area. What it means is that you don’t know everything about everything, the science of this stuff, and you never will probably, and so you have to start doing some things to correct the worst problems. You don’t sit around until you know everything, because you’ll never know everything.

Adaptive management means that you move ahead in such a way that you are constantly monitoring the impacts of what you are doing. You know that you are trying to achieve A, B, and C by moving ahead, and adaptive management means you have a system in place to see whether you are achieving that; and, if not, how you have to change things—adaptive management. You don’t go forward in such a way that you close off all your options to do things differently, as the science gets better. That’s especially important in the Everglades ecosystem. We still don’t know a lot of things there, although we know a lot more than we did know.

CP: Do you think there has to be a regional planning system in place in a state before it can implement a version of the Sustainable Communities legislation or do you think the Sustainable Communities legislation can work on its own?

JD: The Sustainable Communities concepts are applicable just as much across the country as they are in this corridor here: the effort to grow smart instead of dumb. But the next question you ask is much more difficult to answer. Do you have to have a state or regional framework to make this concept work? Well, I have to tell you, I think there has to be some way to get local governments to work together in carrying out the Sustainable Communities concept because planning in isolation is what led us down this not-good path already, including a lot of unplanned sprawl—each local government doing its own thing, going its own direction, going its own way. I think you have to think about a meaningful regional framework to do this kind of thing, and that you can’t have a meaningful regional framework without at least some clear enabling legislation from the state. I see regions, areas trying to do this sort of thing all the time without some kind of state or regional framework, and I think it’s difficult if not impossible.

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