Planning in a Post 9J-5 World: Florida’s Planners Finally Get What They Deserve

(Less Bureaucracy, Greater Responsibility)

Dr. Tim Chapin
Associate Professor and Chair
Department of Urban & Regional Planning
The Florida State University

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The Big Points for Today

• There are economic and demographic challenges facing the state that require attention from the planning community.

• Florida has created (and still retains) a planning system the envy of most places in the United States.

• However, this innovative system simply hasn’t worked... in part because of design flaws and implementation failures, and in part because of a lack of vision and commitment to smart growth.

• The recent changes to the system offer a mix of good and bad news for Florida’s communities, but I remain optimistic that the planning community can and will rise to the challenge.
Florida’s Growth Trajectory

Florida's Historic Population, 1830-2010

- Just over 500,000
- Almost 3 million
- Roughly 90,000
- Almost 19 million
But Wait, Isn’t Florida “Over”?

Is Florida the Sunset State?
By Michael Grunwald/Miami

Thursday, Jul. 10, 2008

Saturday, September 29, 2007
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL | BUSINESS LEADER (U.S.) | SEPTEMBER 29, 2007
Is Florida Over?
Is Florida Over? Probably Not

Source: Florida EDR
Unemployment is Down, But Remains High

Source: Florida EDR

Homeownership Rates Have Fallen
(Probably to More Feasible Levels)

Source: Florida EDR

Long-Run Average = 66.3%

Quarter 2

Source: Florida EDR

Dr. Tim Chapin, FSU Urban & Regional Planning
The Housing Market has Begun to Recover, But Has a Long Way to Go

Source: Florida EDR

Median Sales Price of Existing Homes

Source: Florida EDR
Types of Florida Counties:
Urban County Balance (Hillsborough County)

Key Attributes
• Age Balance
• Gender Balance
• Looks More Like the US Pyramid

Outline: Florida 2000

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Types of Florida Counties:
Classic Rural County (Gulf County)

Key Attributes
- Male Leaning (often due to a Prison)
- Fewer Young Adults
- Fewer Children

Outline: Florida 2000

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Types of Florida Counties: College Town USA (Leon County)

Key Attributes
- College Boom
- “Fountain of Youth”

Outline: Florida 2000

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Types of Florida Counties: Retirement Land (Sarasota County)

Key Attributes
- Top Heavy
- Gender Imbalance at Top
- Small Young Adult and Child Cohorts

Outline: Florida 2000
Comparing Pop Pyramids 1970 and 2030

**In 1970: A “Rocket Ship”, Ready to Takeoff!!!**

The Promise of a Young, Growing State

**In 2030: A “Mushroom Cloud”, Poised to Destroy??**

The Fear of a Demographic Time Bomb

Planning in a Post 9J-5 World
Around 2022, Florida is projected to have more residents aged 65+ than residents aged 0-19 for the first time in its history.
“Leave it to Beaver”
Getting Left Behind

Table 1. Percent of households with and without children, 1960, 2000, and 2025.

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>1960</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2025</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Households with children</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>28%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Households without children</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>72%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Single-person households</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>28%</td>
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The Catalysts of GM in Florida

• Between 1972 and 1986, Florida created an innovative and extensive system for managing growth.

• This approach represents a near perfect version of the planning profession’s “comprehensive planning” model.

• Several factors contributed to the state’s aggressive involvement in local land use decisions, including:

  1. A population explosion
  2. Major infrastructure issues (drainage problems, road congestion, potable water supply issues)
  3. Urban development on environmentally sensitive lands
  4. The use productive agricultural lands for their “last harvest”, single family homes on quarter acre lots.
  5. The loss of scenic, beautiful places
Florida’s Comprehensive Planning Framework (as Designed)

STATE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
GROWTH MANAGEMENT PORTION

STRATEGIC REGIONAL POLICY PLANS
(Regional Planning Councils)

REGIONAL WATER SUPPLY PLANS
(Water Management Districts)

LOCAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

LOCAL LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT ORDERS

Source: 1000 Friends of Florida Citizen’s Guide (Part II)
The Strengths of Florida’s GM Regime

• Local Planning is Ubiquitous and Important
• There are Strong Plan - Regulation Linkages
• The State is an Active and Engaged Planning Agent
• Planning Processes are Detailed and Plentiful
• The System Encourages Flexibility in Local Plans & Policies
• Public Participation is Required and Watchdog Groups Play Important Roles in the Process
• Regional Planning is Promoted (but not always respected)
Despite these Many Strengths
Planning in Florida has Failed to Save Paradise

• Developed land per capita actually *increased* post 1985... Florida consumed more land per person after the GMA was passed and implemented.

• Roughly 70% of incremental population growth in the 1990s occurred in *new* urban and rural areas.

• Florida lost 1,557,000 acres of farmland to development between 1982 and 2007.

• Less than 2.5% of work commute trips in the state’s highest-density counties are made by mass transit.

• While impact fees, special assessments, and special districts have provided much needed local revenue, these funds fall well short of meeting community infrastructure needs.
The Urban Sprawl Epidemic in Florida

Images source: 1000 Friends of Florida, Florida 2060 Report
Who’s to Blame?: The Usual Set of Excuses

1. Massive population growth between 1990-2007 that overwhelmed the state’s infrastructure and regulatory systems.

2. A lack of state commitment to fund infrastructure and support the concurrency mandate... a funding problem that remains largely unaddressed.

3. A spectacularly poor State Comprehensive Plan, one largely ignored almost immediately after its passage.

4. Uneven (at best) political commitment to the state’s growth management laws and system.
Who’s to Blame?: The Enemy is Us (in part)

1. A too stringent focus upon planning processes and rules as the *sine qua non* of good planning.

2. A lack of state guidance in the form of development principles; Florida desperately needs to articulate separate goals and strategies for urban and rural areas.

3. An over-reliance by local governments upon the state to make hard planning and development decisions.

4. The creation of an adversarial environment in which the forces of good (planners) are battling against the forces of evil (development community).
Planning’s “New Normal”

• In 2011 the Florida Legislature finally moved beyond its annual tinkering with GM and finally made massive changes to the state’s decades old system for managing growth.

➢ Gone is DCA, Chapter 9J-5, land use need, several concurrency mandates, broad and occasionally aggressive state review of local plan amendments, and required EAR-based amendments (as well as state funding for RPCs).

➢ In its place is DEO, expedited state review, a focus upon important state resources and facilities, new sprawl rules, and technical assistance as the operative institutional response.
Views on Planning’s “New Normal”

• My discussions with professional planners, interest groups, and developers across Florida identified two general responses to these changes:

1. The Glass Half-Empty View
   Yes, reform was needed, but this was an evisceration of a system desperately needed in a state that will see its economy crank up again in the near future.

2. The Glass Half-Full View
   It’s about time the state ratcheted back its heavy-handed rules and review processes; we need to allow economic development to occur and trust communities to plan effectively.
Evaluating Planning’s “New Normal”

**The Good**

- The “ceiling” has been removed; High performers can innovate and implement more easily
- The sprawl criteria provide a concise vision of desirable development outcomes
- The transportation concurrency conundrum has been addressed by making it optional for local governments
- Local communities have been empowered to develop and pursue plans with little “parental” oversight

**The Bad**

- Planning’s “safety net” has been removed; Rural & Suburban communities can get away with less
- State review now revolves around undefined state interests; The parents are no longer watching closely
- Only four of eight sprawl criteria need be satisfied, potentially a rather low bar for new development
Despite All of These Challenges, I Believe that the Future is Bright

- Planners and growth management advocates have shown an ability and willingness to learn and adapt
- The private sector is an active and willing agent in many planning initiatives
- Regional planning has become a widely pursued and valued activity
- Demographics as Destiny... Baby Boomers and Single-Person Households provide opportunities for density and mixed-use
- Planning is more visible than it has ever been