

SCHOOL AND URBAN PLANNING COORDINATION

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ABSTRACT

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Many benefits can be derived, by both schools and communities, through closer cooperation and coordination. In many communities, the lack of coordination has resulted in overall community loss.

To permit better integration and coordination between school and community authorities, there remains a definite need for resolving conflicts between theory and actual practice in the relationships of the school district and the community. Through joint capital improvement programming, differences in each governmental unit's respective courses of action may be resolved and coordination provided at both policy-making and administrative levels.

It is emphasized that the community planning agency be given a major role in the administrative structure and that the comprehensive plan is an essential prerequisite for achieving effective joint capital improvement programming.

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By

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | Page |
|---|------|
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | ii |
| LIST OF EXHIBITS | iv |
| LIST OF APPENDICES | v |
| INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| CHAPTER | |
| 1 PROBLEMS IN URBAN AND SCHOOL PLANNING COORDINATION . . . | 3 |
| School District Independence | |
| School District Dependence | |
| Trends and Conclusions | |
| 2 AREAS AND METHODS OF COORDINATION | 12 |
| Areas of Coordination | |
| Methods of Coordination | |
| Analysis of East Lansing Achievements | |
| 3 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMMING | 27 |
| 4 LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE FOR JOINT CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMMING | 34 |
| Michigan Legislation | |
| Joint Capital Improvement Programming in East Lansing | |
| Conclusion | |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 55 |

LIST OF EXHIBITS

| EXHIBIT | Page |
|-----------------------------------|------|
| 1 GOVERNMENT BOUNDARIES | 50 |
| 2 GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE | 52 |

LIST OF APPENDICES

| APPENDIX | Page |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| EAST LANSING - CASE STUDY | 48 |

INTRODUCTION

Both school planning and urban planning have the orderly growth and welfare of the community as major objectives. However, in many areas throughout the United States, planning accomplished by these two units is done on separate and unrelated bases. In most states, school districts and cities are separate autonomous bodies even though their physical areas of jurisdiction may overlap or even be coterminous.

No planning program is complete unless school studies are included as a basic ingredient of the comprehensive master plan. Coordination of school planning with the urban planning process is a necessity to avoid duplication of effort and to prevent separate governmental units from working at cross-purposes.

Local government expenditures for public school purposes made up approximately 41 per cent of the total amount spent by local governments in urban areas during 1960. It appears that education has continued to demand a growing portion of all local government expenditure.¹ Since schools require a large share of the local tax money, it would seem logical that some relationship should exist between the school board and city officials to determine capital improvement priorities and to provide for a planned and balanced tax levy on a community basis. The fundamental purposes of this study are to determine problems that must be overcome to increase coordination between urban and school planning, to review areas where coordination would be beneficial to the

¹Allen D. Manvel, "Changing Patterns of Local Urban Expenditure," Public Expenditure Decisions in the Urban Community, ed. Howard G. Shaller (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1962) p. 24.

two governmental units involved and to analyze the use of capital improvement programming as an administrative tool for increasing coordination.²

The amount of coordination possible between school planning and urban planning will vary according to the laws governing school district organization and administration. The structure of the local government and the traditional working relationships within and among the local governmental units will also determine the extent of existing coordination. Of primary interest to this study are three governmental agencies: the school board; the city council; and the city planning commission, including its technical staff. East Lansing, Michigan, is used as a case study to show areas and methods of coordination existing in a practical situation and to determine whether the use of joint capital improvement programming is possible under existing Michigan legislation and local administrative structure.

²Capital improvement programming for purpose of this study means the long-range programming of capital improvements which includes new or additional public buildings and/or services of large size, fixed nature or long life.

CHAPTER 1

PROBLEMS IN URBAN AND SCHOOL PLANNING COORDINATION

In most states the political framework for school districts, as created by the state constitution and the legislature, provides for units of government separate from local communities. In many communities, school district independence has resulted in a lack of cooperation and coordination in many activities which should have been undertaken jointly. However, notable accomplishments have been achieved on an informal and individual basis in most cases. Many school authorities feel that school districts must be operated on an independent basis. The main concern is with fiscal independence, that is, complete control over the school budget and tax levy. At times the need for independence is extended to include noninterference by community agencies in all matters relating to schools.³ On the other side of the controversy, many community officials feel that effective administration, particularly sound fiscal administration, can best be achieved by closer coordination between school and community governments.

School District Independence

Many school authorities state that the nature and importance of education is such that schools should be administered under a governmental unit free from control or influence by local public officials. They feel that revenues available for school purposes and the

³National Education Association, Fiscal Authority of City School Boards, Research Bulletin 28:2 (Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, April, 1950), p. 49.

determination of the amounts and uses of these funds should not be subject to local political authority.⁴ However, desire for self-sufficiency is common to all specialists who consider their particular function to be of overriding importance.⁵

Several major factors that led to the independence of school districts include the right of citizens to create and finance a school, timing of school service development, corrupt municipal governments and the rise of urban growth. During the pioneering period of this country, citizens felt they had a need and right to provide education facilities for their children. Schools were built and financed by different means throughout the country. In many areas there were no direct connections with other governmental agencies and the provision of education was accomplished largely on an independent basis.

School district independence was strengthened by the fact that public education developed earlier than most other services of government. The Federal Government, during the early stages of this country's growth, established a land policy of setting aside acreage for school establishment and endowment.⁶ Education was considered a vital function of government almost a century before the regulation of public health, housing and land use.⁷

⁴Nelson B. Henry and Jerome G. Kerwin, Schools and City Government (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1938), p. vii.

⁵Benjamin Handler, Economic Planning for Better Schools (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1960), p. 75.

⁶Land grants specifically for educational purposes were provided for in the Northwest Ordinance of 1789 and in early acts of the Michigan Territorial Legislature.

⁷International City Manager's Association, Guidelines for Municipal-School Cooperation, A Report Prepared by the Management Information Service (Chicago: International City Manager's Association, July, 1964), p. 1.

The deplorable condition of local community government in the latter part of the last century was one of the chief circumstances continuing the independent existence of the school district. Local community government was considered to be corrupt and education had to be kept clean. Corrupt community government increased the desire to have schools close to the people and not responsible to other influences; particularly political power.

A final reason influencing the independence of school districts was that, during the growth of large municipalities, problems were created for both school and community government. At this time, many administrators felt that solutions could only be found through specialized agencies. Successful administration could then best be achieved by defining clear-cut areas of responsibility free from competing agencies.⁸

Comparison of today's school and community governments show there are many areas of service involving direct parallels. Specific problems on which the need for independence was based are no longer the lone concern of the respective jurisdictions. Yet, the desire for self-sufficiency still exists with many school authorities. Summarization of reasons given for school district independence follows:

(1) Independence is necessary if schools are to receive the greatest amount of public backing. Due to controversies arising from competition for the tax dollar, independence is the only way to avoid the diversion of school funds for nonschool purposes.

⁸International City Manager's Association, Guidelines for Municipal-School Cooperation, A Report Prepared by the Management Information Service (Chicago: International City Manager's Association, July, 1964), p. 2.

(2) Independence is necessary if schools are to be kept free from political influence. Fiscal control by the local community government may result in coercion with respect to professional and technical matters. The controlling community body would have, in effect, de facto control of educational policies and could force the school board to adopt certain policies or face a cut in the school budget. Educational policy would thus be very unstable and lack continuity. School authorities state that, by being independent, they know what they can count on in the future.

(3) When an intermediate authority (such as a city council) stands between the school board and the state, difficulties are created which prevent total responsibility to the people and the state. Greater competition for the tax dollar could result and strained relations would be created between community and school governing bodies. Each unit of government would be jealous of its rights and believe that the other is attempting to gain an unwarranted advantage. Many school administrators feel that much time and energy is lost when school authorities have to present and justify their budgets to a controlling municipal agency.

(4) Many school districts cannot be dependent or coordinated with local community agencies, since many school district boundaries are not coterminous with any other unit of local government.

To conclude, school authorities feel that, when education is placed under the control of local community officials, the school board is not considered as important as the local council. Where school district boundaries overlap those of two or more communities, there is more than one local council to contend with. Even where

limited controls are in effect, it is felt that the tendency has been for local community officials to extend them, usurping authority given to the school board by state law. Community authorities have continued to oppose educational development, have traditionally restricted and curtailed school operations and have been reluctant to assist school authorities in the performance of their duties.⁹

School District Dependence

Public administrators advance the following counterarguments concerning school board independence:

(1) The community benefits to a greater extent when all public services are weighed against each other. The amount of support given to the school district should be determined by the local governmental unit, which can weigh school needs against all other needs. Duplication and overlapping of services is avoided and the coordination and integration of services where school and community authorities have a mutual interest can be facilitated. Substantial saving could be the end result.

(2) Fiscal planning can better be accomplished on a community-wide basis. The determination of expenditures and priorities for all purposes requires a single local legislative authority. School boards are often not aware or are unconcerned about the needs and fiscal problems of local community government. With overlapping units of government, there is a tendency to increase the total load of bonded debt and the limits on tax rates above those that would exist if one

⁹ National Education Association, Fiscal Authority of City School Boards, p. 78.

unit of government were responsible. The trend has been toward the abolishment of special boards and taxing units. Some control over school district financial matters is needed to facilitate better economic planning for the total community.

(3) Intergovernmental relations of local communities are made more complex by independent agencies that operate in similar areas such as taxation, records and reports. Close cooperation and coordination between school and community authorities would help reduce the complexity of local community government.

(4) An independent school board does not protect schools from politics or guarantee greater financial support for education. Schools are not nonpolitical entities. They are heavily involved in public policy and public affairs. School existence and operation is closely controlled by taxes, and school activities are the subject of many public debates.

There is an important need for urban and school planners to coordinate respective planning efforts. School authorities cannot control land development within the school district, yet future school enrollments, curriculum proposals, school facility needs, and other related items have to be based on population and land use patterns within the school district. A comprehensive plan developed in coordination with school authorities can provide the basis for policy decisions by both community and school officials.

Trends and Conclusions

There still remains strong sentiment that education is a matter for school professionals and should not be encumbered by control by the

nonexpert. Even though controls may be purely administrative in nature, it does little to reduce folkway traditions which have built up over a long period of time.¹⁰ A chief obstacle in overcoming these traditions is the common belief that the administration of community government is subject to political influence. Political interests of school board members, however, affect the management of schools just as the political interests of community officials affect community administration. In fact, an independent school board could mean two sources of political interference instead of one.¹¹

In recent years, local community government has greatly improved and has overcome its traditional "bad name" of irresponsibility at both administrative and policy-making levels. The past has shown that as local community governments have become more professionalized and give more active support to the school board, objections to integration are fewer and closer coordination is possible.

All local government is created by state authority and the special status which the school district seems to possess results from public policy, not from fundamental law. The growing realization that state and local governments are partners in governmental activity has helped to renew thought toward cooperation and coordination in the provision of services at the local level. Society is characterized by increasing urbanization, growing complexity and greater governmental activity. It is, therefore, very doubtful that, in the future, one governmental service can or should stand alone. Education is not a unique function. It calls

¹⁰International City Manager's Association, Guidelines for Municipal-School Cooperation, p. 4.

¹¹James H. Thomas, "Schools are in Politics," The Nation's Schools, 28 (October, 1958), p. 53.

for the, ". . . same knowledge, skill, integrity, efficiency, and responsibility in its administration as do other public services."¹²

School and community cooperation would improve services of both far more frequently than it would impair the services of either.

Analysis of existing interrelationships between the various public services shows that there are many points of contact between school and community authorities. Independence of a particular governmental unit is not as real as it often appears. Public officials, both community and school, have devised informal and subtle means of achieving coordination. Extralegal methods of contact and cooperation are used as a matter of convenience and for the sake of economy and efficiency.¹³

Much of the coordination achieved depends on the abilities of involved individuals and the degree of harmony between authorities of each governmental unit.

School authorities, through their demands for fiscal independence, have tended to isolate themselves from society. Eighty-five per cent of American school districts have the freedom to determine school budgets and levy school taxes without prior coordination with local community authorities. School district independence has contributed toward pushing education to the side, rather than making it an important ingredient of community life.¹⁴

Professional educators may be right when they profess that fiscal authority should not be separated from the organization responsible for

¹²International City Manager's Association, Guidelines for Municipal-School Cooperation, p. 2.

¹³Henry and Kerwin, p. 3.

¹⁴Richard C. Lonsdale, The School's Role in Metropolitan Area Development (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1960), p. 50.

education. The governmental unit having fiscal control ultimately determines educational policy, and the separation of authority may confuse issues and obscure educational objectives. However, being fiscally independent should not mean that the school district can take what it wants of all available funds, leaving the remainder to be shared by other units of community service. Cooperation and coordination is necessary in the determination of the use of community funds; especially in locations where there are overlapping tax districts.¹⁵

The emphasis of this study is not on fiscal matters. Because the need for fiscal independence is a major argument for keeping the function of education independent of other local governments, it was discussed in some detail. Some of the problems involved with fiscal independence will have to be solved if increased coordination between urban and school planning is to be achieved. To conclude, there is a need to resolve conflicts with theory and practice in the relationships between school authorities and community officials.

¹⁵

A. D. Dotter, "Long Term Financial Planning," School Board Journal, 117, (December, 1948), p. 43.

CHAPTER 2

AREAS AND METHODS OF COORDINATION

The preceding chapter presented a discussion of general problems that must be considered to increase coordination between urban and school planning. East Lansing, Michigan, is used to show how various accomplishments have been achieved in a practical situation. Additional areas where planning coordination would be beneficial are pointed out. This chapter includes a discussion of the methods of coordination used in East Lansing and possible alternative means of coordination. Background information for the East Lansing, Michigan, case study is available in the Appendix.

Even though school districts and cities are separate governmental units, and their boundaries may not always be coterminous, they often engage in cooperative programs and provide services to each other. It is common for the average citizen and even for many public officials to overlook the fact that each are separate units of government.¹⁶ In this regard, East Lansing is no different than many other cities throughout the United States.

Areas of Coordination

Both school authorities and city officials of East Lansing have stated that although the two units of government (school and community) are operated independently, fine cooperation in many activities has obtained important results for the community. Examples of major areas

¹⁶Robert L. Morlan, Intergovernmental Relations in Education (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1950), p. 45.

of cooperation and accomplishments achieved through past coordination by the City of East Lansing and the East Lansing School District include the following:

(1) The city treasurer collects taxes for the school district.

(2) There is a mutual understanding (no formal agreement) that neither the school district nor the city will ask for a millage vote that will run concurrently with the other's.

(3) In 1956, Old Hickory Lane was extended and construction completed to coincide with the completion of the high school. The school board provided the right-of-way and contributed toward the cost of street construction. The amount of contribution was based upon mutual benefit, as worked out by administrators of both units of government.

(4) The city council and school board jointly finance a year around recreation program. The city owns and maintains most of the facilities, while the school board provides instructors and administers the recreation program.

(5) Both the city and the school district purchase lighting from the same source, thereby receiving discount prices. In the past, the city provided gasoline for school buses but this was dissolved by mutual agreement because problems arose.

(6) Through joint agreement, the school garage is located on city property.

(7) Through joint cooperation, a pedestrian overpass over Saginaw Street near Hitching Post Road has been provided for school children.

(8) Property for the new East Lansing Library was deeded to the city by the school board. The property was given to the city because it was a functional location and would benefit both the community and the school.

(9) Plans are being made to extend Burcham Drive to provide access to the new junior high school by the time it is ready for use. The school board will provide part of the cost for right-of-way and street construction. The amount will be based on the degree of mutual benefit.

(10) A school-park study was completed by the planning commission's staff, as part of East Lansing's comprehensive plan. Data concerning enrollment age, classroom size, expected expansion, load limit per classroom, and other standards on which to base forecasts was obtained from the school board administrative staff. There was general agreement that the school board should plan and develop school sites in conjunction with the city planning staff (no formal agreements).

As illustrated in East Lansing, programs and services that may be provided jointly are numerous. Municipalities may provide utilities and maintain school facilities, while the schools may supervise recreation programs and provide adult education for community residents. Cooperative health and safety programs are also often used by other communities as well as centralized budgeting, accounting, procurement and personnel administrative facilities. There are many areas where municipalities and school districts can benefit through cooperation.

In the planning of school and community facilities, cooperation can and should be a two-way relationship resulting in benefits for the

entire community. The most desirable and adequate plans for a community are possible only when community planning agencies and school boards develop their comprehensive plans for future growth and development in unison.¹⁷ School officials can contribute to the urban planning process while, in turn, the planning agency can make specific contributions to educational planning.

An active community planning commission with a competent technical staff can provide useful information for school planning. The type, size and location of schools are directly related to practically all portions of the comprehensive plan; including those dealing with residential areas and densities, recreation facilities, nonresidential areas, such as commercial centers and industrial corridors, and the network of transportation routes and utility services. Basic data on the probable numbers, composition and distribution of future student population can be provided. Existing neighborhood boundaries can be delineated and, through population analysis, population growth potential of existing neighborhoods and expected areas of future growth can be determined. Such information is valuable in the determination of whether to expand existing facilities or to build new schools in relatively undeveloped areas.

The size and location of schools must be in harmony not only with the distribution pattern of the student population, but also with the present and future land use patterns of the whole community.¹⁸ Schools

¹⁷Russell A. Holy, "Common Elements in City and School Planning," The Nation's Schools, 13 (March, 1934), p. 34.

¹⁸Mary McLean, "Relation of School Plant Planning to Total Community Planning," American School and University, 25 (1953-1954), p. 110.

should be located where there is mutual compatibility with surrounding land uses. In urban areas, residential zones are the common location of schools. In recent years, many communities have selected sites and determined sizes and types of schools in coordination with community recreation planning.

Information useful in final school site selection, which can be provided by community planning agencies, includes data on utilities, physical features, economics, street facilities and traffic patterns. Specific data on utilities involves location and capacities of all utilities, anticipated expansions with expected capacities and information on areas where limited utility service would restrict growth. Topography and physical features that should be taken into account in school site location can be shown. Community planning agencies can aid in estimates of real estate acquisition costs, tax income, site condemnation costs and general trends in assessment and real values. Street and traffic data includes information on traffic volumes, traffic origins and destinations, reasons for travel, time-distance relationships and locations of existing and proposed streets and highways, including those to be widened, to be made one-way or abandoned.

Planning tools of implementation, which are zoning, official maps, subdivision regulations, urban renewal and capital improvement programming, should also be considered major sources of aid to the school administrator. The zoning ordinance is a legal means for guiding future growth. Zoning, based on a comprehensive plan, provides a density control, tends to stabilize residential neighborhoods and helps to

prevent blighting which could depopulate school attendance areas.¹⁹ A recorded official map, delineating future streets and other public areas, provides the legal means to prohibit construction that would have to be removed at the time a recorded street is constructed or area developed. An official map could be used as a means for preserving land for future school sites. Subdivision regulations require that large subdivision plats give consideration to allocating suitable areas for schools, parks and playgrounds and that this land be dedicated for public use. Community urban renewal has to be based on a redevelopment plan, of which a master plan for schools is a component part. Through redevelopment plans, community planning agencies can physically change the complexion of neighborhoods and create new school sites where desired. In many states, capital improvement land acquisition has to be approved by the community planning commission after adoption of a master plan. Such a provision requires urban and school planning coordination and provides another means for preserving future school sites.

Planning assistance is a two-way process. While community planners can give specific planning information to school authorities, school authorities can, in turn, aid community planners by pointing out significant trends revealed through their work with student population and other data available to them. School statistical data may be another source of information that community planners can use to determine population shifts and trends, economic developments, areas of future community growth and values, mores and traditions of the community.

¹⁹Russell A. Holy, The Relationship of City Planning to School Plant Planning (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1935), p. 41.

In most states, the school board is required to conduct an annual school census. Requirements of the school census vary from state to state, but in many states the census provides the only population data available between federal decennial censuses. Additional questions asked in the school census survey would obtain data with which planning agencies could update community plans.

An important area in which school authorities can aid community planners is education itself. Schools are necessarily close to the people of a community and the citizens will oppose community projects that school authorities believe are detrimental to the school system.²⁰ Schools educate the people of the community and what is taught and put across to students has a significant impact on community attitudes. Community planning agencies ". . . cannot hope to achieve good results unless the people of the community understand and appreciate the significance of good community life and the role planning has in achieving such a life."²¹

School planning should be part of a larger cooperative effort. Communities need to make use of urban planning to insure good locations for school sites long before intensive development takes place. The problem of school site selection is small if the planning agency, in cooperation with school authorities, has prepared a school location plan based on a long-range comprehensive plan and a realistic zoning pattern. Through the planning process, community growth is guided

²⁰ Frederick W. Hill, "School Planning," Planning 1959 (Chicago: American Society of Planning Officials, 1959), p. 154.

²¹ Ibid., p. 155.

and, as a result, schools benefit and prove to be a greater asset to the community.²²

Present trends are toward joint school and recreation facilities, as well as the incorporation of school needs with adult education, libraries and other cultural and social needs of the community. Advantages of the joint use of facilities and grounds include the economical provision of services, elimination of duplicate services and additional improvements made possible through accrued savings.²³

In the past, many community officials and school authorities have ignored each other. The result has been overall community loss. Increased coordination between school authorities and planning officials is necessary and desirable to obtain optimum plans for the community. Increased coordination, however, cannot be accomplished unless the problems discussed in Chapter 1 are overcome or lessened and the methods of coordination provide the administrative structure necessary to increase coordination.

Methods of Coordination

The East Lansing case study demonstrated that informal means of cooperation and coordination are used. Much that has been accomplished has been due to concerned individuals rather than formal administrative structure. Governmental relationships which most resemble a formal agreement are the semi-annual dinner meetings of the East Lansing School Board and the East Lansing City Council. There is no written

²² L. B. Parkins and W. D. Cocking, Schools (New York: Reinhold, 1947), p. 19.

²³ Handler, p. 66.

agreement which calls for these meetings; they are instead more traditional than formal. The main reason for initiation of these meetings was a joint recreation program undertaken by the city and the school board. The spring meetings are used to present the budget for the forthcoming fiscal year's program. The fall meetings are used to present the program and financial summaries for the previous summer. The meetings have now expanded to include discussions on other problems that are of mutual interest.

Other means of cooperation are used when mutual problems arise. Representatives from both units of government get together to form special committees that are designed to study and resolve the problems involved. There is also much communication between the city manager and superintendent of schools, or representatives of each, to resolve problems as they arise. Quite often a member of the school board sits in on a council meeting and vice versa, but this is purely on an informal basis.

In the existing means for coordination between the two units of government, there is no direct contact between the planning commission, or its staff, and the school board, or its administrative staff. Indirect contact is available, since planning commission members are also members of various school board committees. East Lansing also has a community council made up of citizens of the community who are interested in community problems. This council is independent of any city function; however, the city planning director is a member and several representatives for the school board are also members. Community- and school-related problems are brought up in their meetings,

thus, the community council provides another means for indirect contact between the planning commission and the school board.

Coordination should be in effect at both the policy-making and administrative levels. Among the various methods used in other communities are:

(1) Regularly scheduled meetings; either formal or informal sessions of the community council and school board.

(2) Special committees made up of members of the school board and the community council.

(3) Advisory commissions which include representatives for both governmental bodies.

(4) Joint meetings of corresponding committees from both governing bodies.

(5) Appointed administrative officials or other staff members who represent the school board and council at periodic conferences.

(6) Representatives from each governmental body attending the other unit's meetings.

(7) Review and approval of all or some programs of one governmental unit by the other unit.

(8) A consultant employed by both units to research particular problems.

(9) Encouragement of frequent exchange of informal communication between administrators of both governmental units.

Various other techniques are employed to increase cooperation and coordination between school and community authorities. Some of the techniques include; giving the municipal council and/or planning commission responsibility for approving school site locations, requiring community approval of school board budgets and bond issues, joint recreation and health programs, joint civil service and retirement systems, community control of school property and use of joint capital improvement programming.

Meaningful cooperation and coordination on a continuing basis can be achieved only through formal structural interrelationships between the community and the school district. Continuing communication is necessary to obtain satisfactory community-school coordination. Communication between school and community officials limited to the discussion of occasional joint problems prohibits full use of cooperative action. Determination of the relevance of each unit's policy-making and operational activities to those of the other is only reached by systematically gathering policy-makers, administrators and technical staffs. In this way, the programs and objectives of educational and community counterparts, which have a definite relationship on respective policies, are brought to each governmental unit's attention. Joint problems are more easily defined and anticipated, resulting in the final formulation of satisfactory solutions.²⁴

Coordination and cooperation should not be a one-time venture, nor should successful coordination depend upon the use of any one method or technique. Most administrators are aware that formal organization

²⁴ International City Manager's Association, Guidelines for Municipal-School Cooperation, p. 12.

is often subsidiary to informal organization. However, formal structure and procedures are required to guarantee cooperation and to provide for long-range coordination in planning.

Analysis of East Lansing Achievements

East Lansing appears to have excellent coordination and cooperation to meet problems as they arise on a day-to-day basis. Most of the accomplishments achieved through coordination were due to the occurrence of problems of mutual concern, whereupon individuals or study groups from each unit of government worked together to resolve differences, if they existed, and reached problem solutions.

The accomplishment that most closely resembled school-city coordination in long-range planning was the extension of Old Hickory Lane in 1956 and the proposed extension of Burcham Drive for the new junior high school. Here again, a problem was posed before joint cooperation and planning was undertaken. This example could not be considered as using coordination in long-range planning projects.

A review of constructed and proposed capital improvements for East Lansing and the East Lansing School District show there were two cases where there may have been a lack of proper coordination. Two swimming pools are to be built by the school district, one in the existing junior high school and the other in the proposed junior high school. The school-park study, prepared by the planning commission, recommends an outdoor swimming pool for the community. It was stated by the city planning director that the question concerning which swimming pools should be built was informally discussed. Since the

school program uses a pool differently, it was decided the amount of joint use would be limited. There was also the question of timing. It was doubtful if bond issues for all three pools could be approved by the voters at the same time. The two school swimming pools were included in the school bond issue passed in November, 1965. Based on interviews with community and school officials, it appears that not much thought or study was given concerning which pools should have priority. It is doubtful whether many of the citizens voting on the November, 1965, school bond issue actually knew that a proposal for a community swimming pool even existed. A system for annual review and the means for providing long-range priority planning of capital improvements, for both the school district and the city, is a necessity.

In 1964, the East Lansing Planning Commission formed a school-park study committee to aid in the preparation of the school-park study. Committee members did not include members from either the school board or the school staff. Although data was obtained from the school board's staff, the lack of school board representatives on the study committee may have prevented an optimum amount of coordination.

Statistics concerning enrollments in the school-park report are not directly related to the school district because of differences in physical boundaries. Through adjustments, the information presented in the report is of use to the school board. As shown by this example, differences in physical boundaries can be overcome in an endeavor to achieve coordination.

A conclusion in the school-park study was that there should be written agreements between the school board and the city council,

". . . covering all school-park functions, site acquisitions, planning, basic design of commonly used facilities, development, maintenance and operation." The planning commission recognizes a need for a formal structure for coordination. Mr. Michael Conlisk, Planning Director for East Lansing, stated that the need for a written agreement was necessary because, "Sooner or later there may be a situation that would be clarified by written agreement." An implication of this statement is that past coordination was achieved mainly through the desire of individuals.

The joint school board and city council meetings twice a year provide the only regular means for continuing cooperation and coordination. Experience has shown that members of the two groups have increased the number of unofficial exchanges and the need for more special committee meetings is increased each year. As in many cities throughout the United States, officials from both the school district and the city government have devised informal and subtle means of achieving coordination. There is a need for increased coordination, and possibly a need for a formalized administrative structure capable of providing continuing coordination.

Many past accomplishments should be credited to the ability and foresight of administrators in both governmental units, rather than administrative structure. All cooperation and coordination is, as mentioned before, done on an informal basis. There is no definite procedure that provides for long-range planning and coordination between the two governmental units. Day-to-day needs are adequately met by the existing informal procedures; however, to achieve long-range coordination

there must be a formalized administrative tool. The use of joint capital improvement programming may be the solution to the problems of coordination in East Lansing.

CHAPTER 3

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMMING

Capital improvement programming includes the total process of planning for all capital improvements, evaluation and establishment of priorities (usually on a six-year basis) and generalized capital budgeting for financing programmed services and facilities. More specifically, capital improvement programming consists of determining the types and locations of public improvements to be undertaken, plans in respect to their timing and costs and a coordinated program of methods by which capital improvements are to be financed in terms of the financial capacity of the community. A complete capital improvement program has been defined as, ". . . a complicated process of policy determination, program analysis, administrative coordination, and planning integration."²⁵

There is a need for sound capital budget planning and execution to fulfill long-range building proposals of the capital improvements program. In most capital improvement programs, money is allocated only to projects which are to be undertaken in the following year. Annual review is then used to revise the six-year plans, where necessary, in light of new trends and additional data.

Capital improvement programming requires that officials and administrators of local governmental units compile factual data and make many decisions. First, a list enumerating all capital improvement projects, including number, kind, size, type of construction and all

²⁵Handler, p. 70.

other pertinent information concerning physical development has to be compiled. Second, a separate estimate of cost is required for each project on the list. These cost estimates are necessary to balance needs with financial resources. During this phase of capital improvement programming, it should be remembered that periodic review is necessary. The process of capital improvement programming is not one of making a firm decision on projects at the outset and then abandoning thought; rather, it is a process of give-and-take. When difficulties are revealed in succeeding stages of the improvement programming process, revisions involving previous program steps may be required.

A third major decision required is the determination of the location of projects on the basis of forecasts revealing where proposed public improvements are likely to be required or desired. Here again, flexibility is necessary to allow for changes that may be required because of unforeseen eventualities. Following location determination, decisions are required as to priorities and timing of improvement projects. Final determination of project priority is made on the basis of a rational process. Much research is still needed in this phase of capital improvement programming. Timing of individual capital outlays has to be integrated and made consistent with the timing of overall community plans. One of the outstanding benefits of long-range capital improvement programming is that it is possible to have sufficient advance notice of problem areas to permit the evolution of alternative solutions.

Determination of the exact methods of financing and the sources from which revenues can be derived requires a careful correlation of

revenue and expenditure on a community-wide basis. A forecast of future demands on current revenues, arising from capital outlays, is required, which clarifies future tax requirements. Decisions have to be made on the basis of public acceptance, ability to pay and equitable treatment for future citizens, as well as present citizens. Tax rates should not be allowed to fluctuate too widely. Readjustments, with respect to timing and methods of financing, may be required.

Capital improvement programming forces decisions to be made. Decisions and conclusions have to be reached, whether on the basis of, ". . . informed guesses, intuition, or sheer desperation."²⁶ Such decision-making is especially evident when there are no long-range planning of facilities prior to embarking on a capital improvement program. If such farsighted planning does not exist, capital improvement programming is not without value. Even though results might not be entirely accurate, the very activity of capital budgeting has value as a discipline. Once begun and continued, capital improvement programming requires that a conceptual structure and body of data be developed to provide a factual and rational foundation for reaching
²⁷decisions.

Because capital improvement programming is based on systematical procedures and accumulated accurate information, it should illuminate the planning and financing processes of capital improvements for all citizens of the community. All local government authorities would have a better perspective of problems involved and, as such, would be

²⁶Handler, p. 83.

²⁷Ibid.

better able to evaluate planning proposals and would not have to hide behind, ". . . a screen of expert obfuscation."²⁸ The entire capital improvement program can be clearly and explicitly illustrated in a published report.

Through capital improvement programming, all projects can be analyzed in relation to the needs of all local community agencies. Relationship of all projects to the community comprehensive plan can be determined. In many communities, coordination of capital improvements means extending beyond community political boundaries, including other jurisdictions such as school districts and other special agencies, authorities and districts.²⁹

Public improvements are important in determining the degree and direction of community growth, and represent a large percentage of community expenditure. It is of much importance to the citizens of the community that all capital improvement projects be based on a comprehensive plan and be developed as related items in an integrated process. Failure to obtain proper coordination may result not only in serious financial problems, but may also be detrimental to the future urban development of the community.

Planning of school improvements, like the planning of all capital improvements, demands decisions concerning size of facilities, location cost, methods of financing and, eventually, facility replacement or

²⁸ Handler, p. 78.

²⁹ Frank Lombardi, "The Planning Agency and the Capital Improvement Program," Journal of American Institute of Planners, 20 (Spring, 1954), p. 98.

abandonment.³⁰ Joint capital improvement programming is the logical procedure to follow if a community wants to provide public improvements in an efficient manner. Programming of improvements forces community-school officials and administrators to outline and determine programs for the future, and is a recognized tool for implementing capital improvement recommendations set forth in the community comprehensive plan.³¹

Joint capital improvement programming could provide a structural procedure by which necessary information would have to be combined if community and school planned proposals were to be implemented. Besides forcing decisions in all areas as described in the preceding paragraphs, programming of capital improvements eliminates waste in several ways. First of all, it permits a rational balancing of capital improvement needs with available resources. Before making expenditures for plan implementation, each project should be weighed against all others. A large percentage of public funds for school and community activities come from the same taxpayers' pockets and substantial economy is achieved by coordinating capital improvements and services.³² Coordination of the activities of all agencies having some type of jurisdiction over capital improvements within a community serves to show how an individual project ties in with overall community objectives and plans, and how all projects, over the years, tie in with tax base capacity.

³⁰Handler, p. 69.

³¹Norman James Bowman, "The Municipal Capital Improvement Program" (unpublished Master's thesis, Department of Urban Planning and Landscape Architecture, Michigan State University, 1959), p. 87.

³²Morlan, p. 50.

Joint capital improvement programming is a way to avoid making decisions based on shortsighted financial considerations and provides the means for the most efficient and economical debt administration. "Vitality needed improvements would not be deferred in order to keep taxes down, nor would uneconomical and large bond issues be voted on, in a wave of whipped-up enthusiasm. Rapid capital expansion and a consequent pyramiding of debt by isolated actions of independent authorities would no longer be possible. Far greater insight into and control of the community's whole financial situation would result from coordinated action."³³ To summarize, a joint capital improvement program should be considered as a procedure through which the citizens of the community can decide what is most needed, and utilize their financial means to the best advantage in raising their standard of living.

A great deal of unnecessary duplication and an almost unlimited potential for confusion may exist, if communities and schools attempt to forecast their needs independently. Through joint capital improvement programming, the number and location of school facilities, as well as other public improvements required at different future periods of time, is shown. Important long-range community plans that affect school sites and school expansion plans are clarified. In turn, inclusion of school improvements in a community capital improvement program enables anticipation of nonschool use of educational facilities. New school facilities and services can be designed so all the citizens of the community are in a position to take advantage of school buildings

³³Handler, p. 73.

and included land area. Plans for broader public use of school facilities can be made far in advance of actual construction. Results are maximum use of school facilities and increased community benefits.³⁴

As a continuing process, joint capital improvement programming enables school and community authorities to review programs on the basis of information derived from ever changing situations. Mistakes are likely to occur, but joint capital improvement programming tends to minimize errors. Those mistakes that do happen are apprehended with expediency and adjustments made, based on factors that later emerge. A means is thus provided to counteract wasteful effects of initial errors when such circumstances arise.³⁵

The process of coordinated capital improvement programming would assist in revealing contradictory and self-defeating elements of each unit's prospective courses of action and would tend to force coordinated planning.³⁶ Contradictions that exist between the objectives and interests of the two governmental units would be revealed and clarified so that the aims of one governmental unit could not be achieved in isolation from the other's plans and goals. Joint capital improvement programming should be conceived of as a unifying force for the community,³⁷ setting broad social policy and revealing the needs of the people.

³⁴ International City Manager's Association, Guidelines for Municipal-School Cooperation, p. 20.

³⁵ Handler, p. 74.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 75.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 80.

CHAPTER 4

LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE FOR JOINT CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMMING

Joint capital improvement programming is not a new method for increasing cooperation and coordination between school and community authorities. Early in 1964, the International City Manager's Association undertook a questionnaire survey in 313 cities to determine the amount of existing community and school cooperation. The survey showed that 12 per cent of all cities surveyed used joint improvement and budget programming. The size of the city, however, had a definite influence as to whether or not capital improvement programming was used. Only five per cent of the cities under 10,000 population and 25 per cent over 100,000 used this method of coordination. Seventy-eight per cent of the cities in the 10,000 to 100,000 population class used it.³⁸

Use of joint capital improvement programming to increase coordination between urban and school planning in East Lansing depends not only on the size of the city, but also type of government and legislation available in Michigan. Joint capital improvement programming is more likely to be initiated in communities where there is a council-manager type of government since this type of government seems to define responsibilities more clearly.³⁹

Another study has shown that a greater degree of planning process integration is more likely to occur with a mayor-council type of

³⁸ International City Manager's Association, Guidelines for Municipal-School Cooperation, p. 7.

³⁹ Handler, p. 76.

government, since a nonprofessional mayor and council have to rely upon a professionally trained planning staff.⁴⁰ In a council-manager type of government, a professionally trained city manager may feel he has the technical knowledge and resources available to make his own studies and recommendations. In either case, effective planning is a necessary prerequisite for successful capital improvement programming.⁴¹

It is debatable which type of government is the best for fostering closer coordination between school and community authorities. In both cases, state legislation usually provides the legal powers to achieve closer coordination, leaving the opportunity for local authorities to use all means to increase coordination.

Michigan Legislation

It is beyond the scope of this study to analyze in detail all state legislation that may have a relationship to providing a means for cooperation and coordination between school and community authorities. This section will only summarize state legislation under which school and community authorities could increase coordination in East Lansing.

Michigan, as with most states, has legislation which creates school districts and provides for the formation of communities as separate autonomous bodies. In Michigan, municipalities derive their powers from the state and are allowed to handle their own local affairs as long as they do not violate the state constitution and statutes of the state. School districts are specific local governmental units,

⁴⁰Bowman, p. 58.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 67.

which are organized to create and maintain public schools in Michigan. They are self-taxing and self-governing under the general laws of the state.

School authorities receive their power from, and are regulated by, the General School Laws of the State of Michigan. The General School Laws require the school board to conduct an annual school census and to publish an annual financial report. Both reports should be beneficial to planning officials of the two aforementioned governmental units. School boards are able, upon written application of any responsible organization within the school district, to grant the use of all school grounds and school buildings as community or recreation centers for the entertainment and education of the citizens of the community. School authorities are authorized to purchase land and construct buildings for school purposes and to purchase, construct or lease pedestrian overpasses to permit school children to cross busy thoroughfares safely. All of these school laws could provide a springboard for closer coordination between school and community authorities.

The general laws of the state also provide legal authority for intergovernmental contracts. Under these legislative enactments; counties, townships, cities, villages, special districts and authorities are able to contract among themselves for the joint acquisition, ownership and operation of any public property or facility, or for the joint performance of any service or function, which each contracting unit, itself, is empowered to own or perform. Instead of joint ownership or performance, the contract can stipulate that one or more of

the units owns public facilities or performs functions for the benefit of others.⁴² The law concerned with intergovernmental contracts should not be ignored as a possible legal means for initiating a joint capital improvement program between school and community authorities.

The State of Michigan has numerous legislative enactments that could be of assistance to school authorities and administrators. These enactments, among others, include the City and Village Zoning Act, Urban Redevelopment Corporations Act, Rehabilitation of Blighted Areas Act, Municipal Sale of Blighted Area Properties, Plat Act and Recreation and Playground Act. The following summarizes some of the laws relating to planning in Michigan that could possibly provide legal bases for community-school coordination through joint capital improvement programming.

(1) Municipal Planning Commission Act (Act 285 of the Public Acts of 1931). This municipal enabling act states that the planning commission shall make and adopt a master plan for the physical development of the municipality, including any areas outside its boundaries which have a relationship to the planning of the municipality. Included as part of the plan shall be recommendations for streets, playgrounds and open spaces and the general location of public buildings and other public property. Once the planning commission has adopted and recorded the master plan, all proposals for new streets, public building sites and public grounds (including schools and schoolgrounds) must be submitted to and approved by the commission. The general

⁴²Dean L. Berry, The Powers of Local Government in Michigan (Southeastern Michigan Metropolitan Community Research Corporation, 1961), p. 57.

purpose of the plan is guiding and accomplishing the coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the municipality and its surrounding area. After the planning commission has adopted a master plan, a coordinated and comprehensive program of public structures and improvements should be prepared, for the ensuing six years, giving general order of project priority. The capital improvement program needs to be based upon the requirements of the community for all types of public improvements. Part of the commission's duties shall be to consult with and advise public officials and agencies, including educational organizations, in relation to the protection and implementation of the plan. These are the most significant sections of the act that could be legal bases for community-school coordination.

(2) Regional Planning Commission Act (Act 281, Public Acts of 1945). This act was created to provide for regional planning. Two or more local units, including school districts, may, by resolution of their governing bodies, establish a joint regional planning commission. The purpose of the commission is to determine plans for the physical, social and economic development of the region. Local governmental units, whether active participants or not, may adopt all or portions of the plans prepared and adopted by the regional planning commission.

(3) Mapped Improvements Act (Act 222, Public Acts of 1943). This act enables community planning commissions, after adoption of master plans, to certify and adopt plats which show future boundaries of streets, parks, playgrounds and other public grounds and to regulate the construction of buildings within the latter three areas. The legislative body of the community may also certify and adopt the same by ordinance.

(4) Neighborhood Area Planning Act (Act 208, Public Acts of 1949). Cities, villages and townships are allowed to designate neighborhood areas for the purpose of planning and implementation of local public improvements for the prevention of blight.

(5) Public Improvements Reserve Fund Act (Act 177, Public Acts of 1943). Through this act, a fund may be created for acquiring, constructing, extending, altering, repairing or equipping public improvements or public buildings that are parts of local political subdivisions. Local political subdivisions include counties, cities, villages, townships, school districts and other local governmental units of the state.

The foregoing brief review of existing planning legislation in Michigan shows that the legality for many forms of community-school coordination already exists. However, the majority of legislation provides only for voluntary methods of cooperation and coordination. Final determination on whether legality exists in certain areas may require legal counsel. In most cases, there remains only a need for the full utilization of all legal resources available.

Because of the custom of keeping schools independent from other governmental authority, some questions may arise concerning the legality of joint community and school capital improvement programming. If cooperation and coordination exists, the question of school independence becomes academic except for the purely legal sense. Control becomes a matter of vesting legal authority in the appropriate functional body to fix responsibility in accordance with good administrative

procedure.⁴³ Past court decisions have shown that state legislation may select whatever agency it prefers to control the school systems. The state concept of education does not imply that local school systems must be entirely free of local community authority.⁴⁴

Joint Capital Improvement Programming in East Lansing

A bond issue passed by the citizens of East Lansing, during late 1965, provided a base on which long-range planning for school facilities and services can continue. The city planning department anticipates completion of a comprehensive plan for the city during 1966. The comprehensive plan is to be used as a guide for a long-range (six-year) capital improvement program. It would seem that the next logical step would be to incorporate a joint community-school improvement program. There is general agreement between school and community officials that there is a need for coordination on all aspects of school-park functions; site acquisitions, planning, basic design of commonly used facilities and the development, maintenance and operation of facilities. Steps should now be taken to formalize administrative procedures that would guarantee continuing joint cooperation and coordination.

Since general harmony, confidence and mutual understanding between school and community officials exists in East Lansing, it is felt that administrative procedures could be established which would lead to a joint capital improvement program within the existing governmental and administrative framework. It seems that legality of procedures could

⁴³Handler, p. 77.

⁴⁴Henry and Kerwin, p. 92.

be worked out, since legislative discretion, rather than the generally-accepted concept of community-school relationships, is the determining factor.⁴⁵ The administrative and procedural setup would have to be developed by officials and administrators representing both governmental units. Examples of joint programs, that are working in other cities, could be used as study guides.

In San Francisco, the department of planning is charged with the responsibility for preparing a six-year program of capital improvements. Before funds for a capital improvement may be appropriated or before any changes in use, sale or acquisition of public property may be made, advice on conformity of each project to the city's master plan must be sought from the planning department. Annually, projects that are planned for the next fiscal year by each city department, school district and other public authorities are reviewed in detail to determine if conformity to the master plan exists. Projects are then formally passed upon by the planning commission after reviewing staff study findings. Projects for the next five years are reviewed in general terms by the planning staff. Where conflicts arise, the city charter requires that the planning department meet with the involved departments and/or other government units to resolve differences. The San Francisco School District, housing authority (over which the joint city-county government has limited jurisdiction) are included in this process so that there will be full coordination of all proposed capital improvements.⁴⁶

A procedure used in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, is another example which should be studied for possible application in East Lansing.

⁴⁵Henry and Kerwin, p. 10.

⁴⁶Lombardi, Journal of American Institute of Planners, 20, p. 96.

In Bartlesville, the city's master plan designates future school areas and includes both the city's and the school's capital improvement programs. This is accomplished by conference and ensuing agreements between school and community planners. The capital improvement programs itemize the assessed valuation of the respective units of government, new improvement bonds to be voted during the improvement period by each government, and sets ceilings on the ad valorem tax levels of both units, for each year within the capital improvement program period.⁴⁷

Both of the systems cited rely heavily upon the comprehensive plan and the community planning agency. The comprehensive plan is an essential prerequisite for effective capital improvement programming. It should be used as the basic framework within which community and school officials may determine the capital improvements that are necessary for implementation of the plan.⁴⁸

Joint capital improvement programming, with the city planning agency acting in a coordinating and advisory role, could provide the means for putting into effect the coordination of long-range plans developed by the legislative bodies of the city and the school district. The community planning agency is in a better position than any other department of the city or school district to take an overall view of community needs. However, the planning agency should not be able to determine the political feasibility of any particular project. This

⁴⁷International City Manager's Association, Guidelines for Municipal-School Cooperation, p. 11.

⁴⁸Donald H. Webster, Urban Planning and Municipal Public Policy (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958), p. 95.

determination should be the responsibility of elected officials of the two governmental units. Also, the planning agency should not attempt to influence procedures of the operating departments in carrying out their assigned programs, unless the procedures adversely affect the goals of the comprehensive plan.⁴⁹

Administrative procedures for joint capital improvement programming should also contain informative elements whereby each community and school agency is familiarized with the problems, plans and proposals of other agencies so that, in turn, each unit of government knows the other's plans. If this is not done, there is likely to be capital improvement project lists that are unrelated to each other, and the improvement programming process will not reflect a coordinated comprehensive approach in determining needed capital improvements.⁵⁰ A procedure for two-way communication must be mandatory to achieve optimum utilization of joint capital improvement programming.

Another problem area that requires consideration in formulating administrative procedures is capital budgeting in the improvement programming process. Since the usual activities assumed by most planning agencies are, to some degree, apart from capital or annual budgeting and are not fully integrated with local government they have, in the past, not been involved in capital budget preparation to any great extent. Many community officials believe that the finance office and the city manager are in the best position to judge operational implications of various capital improvement proposals. They feel that

⁴⁹ Donald H. Webster, Urban Planning and Municipal Public Policy (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958), p. 95.

⁵⁰ Bowman, p. 59.

it would also be for the best if both the annual and capital budgets were prepared by the same office or individual. This procedure could develop in East Lansing, since the programming of funds for capital improvements is presently supervised by the city manager and specific capital improvement projects are referred to him by department heads. The present programming system is not long-range. It is based only on available funds and cost estimates of projects for one or two years. The next step that might develop is long-range budgeting for proposed capital improvements, controlled by the city manager or finance office. In an administrative setup such as this, the planning agency may be left out entirely, unless its part is formalized and set forth by law. The planning agency should retain responsibility for certifying approval of each project to be certain that it conforms to the comprehensive plan, and it is also desirable that the planning agency make general recommendations on project priorities and financing.⁵¹ The role of the planning agency should be to act as the coordination catalyst in improvement program planning, but also furnish constructive proposals toward achieving a well-balanced capital improvement program.⁵² The East Lansing Planning Commission, by ordinance, is presently charged with the responsibility of preparing the capital improvement program for the community.

The extent to which administrative procedures should be formalized depends upon the size of the city, the governmental structure of the local community, the degree of harmony between community and school authorities and many other considerations. However, one problem planning

⁵¹ Lombardi, Journal of American Institute of Planners, 20, p. 101.

⁵² Webster, p. 320.

has had in making itself more effective is that there has been too much reliance on informal relationships and not enough on systematic procedures.⁵³ The same could be said about community-school cooperation and coordination relationships. Administrative procedures for joint capital improvement programming would be more effectively established by definite legislative resolutions, administrative policy determinations, and by definite formalized written agreements. The need for formality is not because the rights and liabilities of the two governmental units need to be legally binding, but rather to detail the precise terms of agreement and to minimize questions which may arise at a later time concerning the entailed agreements and procedures.⁵⁴

Conclusion

East Lansing, as with many cities throughout the United States, has a large amount of cooperation and coordination between community and school officials. Much of this cooperation is accomplished on an informal basis to meet day-to-day problems, as they arise. There is, however, no formal means that provides for coordination of long-range planning or detailing of projects of both governmental units which might affect community development. There is a need to provide coordination between the policy-making and administrative segments of both units of government. Coordination could be accomplished through one administrative tool; joint capital improvement programming. The process of capital improvement programming requires that governmental administrators - including the city manager, city planning director, other city department

⁵³ Bowman, p. 11.

⁵⁴ International City Manager's Association, Guidelines for Municipal-School Cooperation, p. 21

heads, superintendent of schools, school principals, and school business manager - all work together to present a six-year capital improvement program to their respective policy-making bodies; the school board and the city council. These legislative and policy-making bodies would retain final authority of approval for placing the capital improvement program into effect by retaining the power of allocating necessary financial resources.

Many details in administrative procedures have to be worked out before a joint capital improvement program could be put into effect in East Lansing. The legality of certain aspects would most likely have to be determined, but this would not be an impossible task. Both community and school officials have reached the stage wherein the next logical step in the planning process would be to use capital improvement programming to coordinate long-range planning. The city is near completion of an initial comprehensive plan, and the school district has set up a financial program for school construction, which requires plans for future development. The present relationships between community and school officials are such that joint capital improvement programming could easily be incorporated, after detailed study, into the existing administrative structure.

Joint capital improvement programming could provide a basis for coordinated and continuing long-range planning in policy and administrative functions. Exact administrative procedures would have to be formalized through written agreements. Written agreements would define and clarify for the citizens of the community, city-school administrators, and city-school policy-makers the terms of the agreements and

the procedures involved with both units of government. A formalized document would also provide the legal means for continuing the capital improvement programming process.

Legislation is available permitting joint capital improvement programming on a voluntary basis. Act 285, Municipal Planning Commission Act, requires planning commission approval of school sites and buildings after adoption of a community master plan, and even here the school board can override the planning commission's recommendations. Under existing legislation, a joint capital improvement program is possible only through persuasive agreements between the two units of government. A change in state laws will be required to make joint capital improvement possible other than on a voluntary basis. If only voluntary, it is doubtful if many such programs are put into effect. If a change in state laws requiring coordination is to come about, the long standing policy for the independence of schools will have to be overcome. Overcoming the policy for independence of schools will be difficult to change.

This study has shown that a community has much to gain from closer coordination between school and community authorities. Joint capital improvement programming should only be a interim attempt at bringing the two governmental units together. The final solution may not be found until schools are included as a department under the local community government. The ultimate answer may be the incorporation of school and community governments as one, on an urban basis. Until that time, joint capital improvement programming can provide a temporary solution and act as the coordinating device for achieving the long-range planning of all community-related capital improvements.

APPENDIX

EAST LANSING - CASE STUDY

East Lansing, Michigan, was chosen for a case study to illustrate the amount and type of coordination existing in a practical situation. An analysis is undertaken to determine what might be possible in the existing administrative structure, and whether it is possible to use capital improvement programming as a coordinating device between the two separate units of government.

As background information, a brief look is taken at the physical growth of East Lansing and the East Lansing School District, the administrative structure of the municipal government, and the finances and major capital improvements accomplished by both units of government in the last ten years. Much of the information for the East Lansing case study was obtained through personal contact and telephone interviews with the administrative assistant of the city, the city planning director, city superintendent of parks, school recreation director, and school business manager, as well as reports and publications produced by their respective offices.

Incorporated in 1907, the City of East Lansing comprised approximately 1,100 acres of land of which 100 acres were owned by the Michigan Agricultural College. Prior to 1957, 15 annexations took place, ranging in size from 3 to 50 acres. In November, 1957, 1,280 acres were added to the city's area when the Marble School District was annexed. Another large area was added to the city in 1958, when the Red Cedar area, southwest of the city, was annexed. Today, the city covers an area of approximately seven square miles, of which three square miles are owned by Michigan State University.

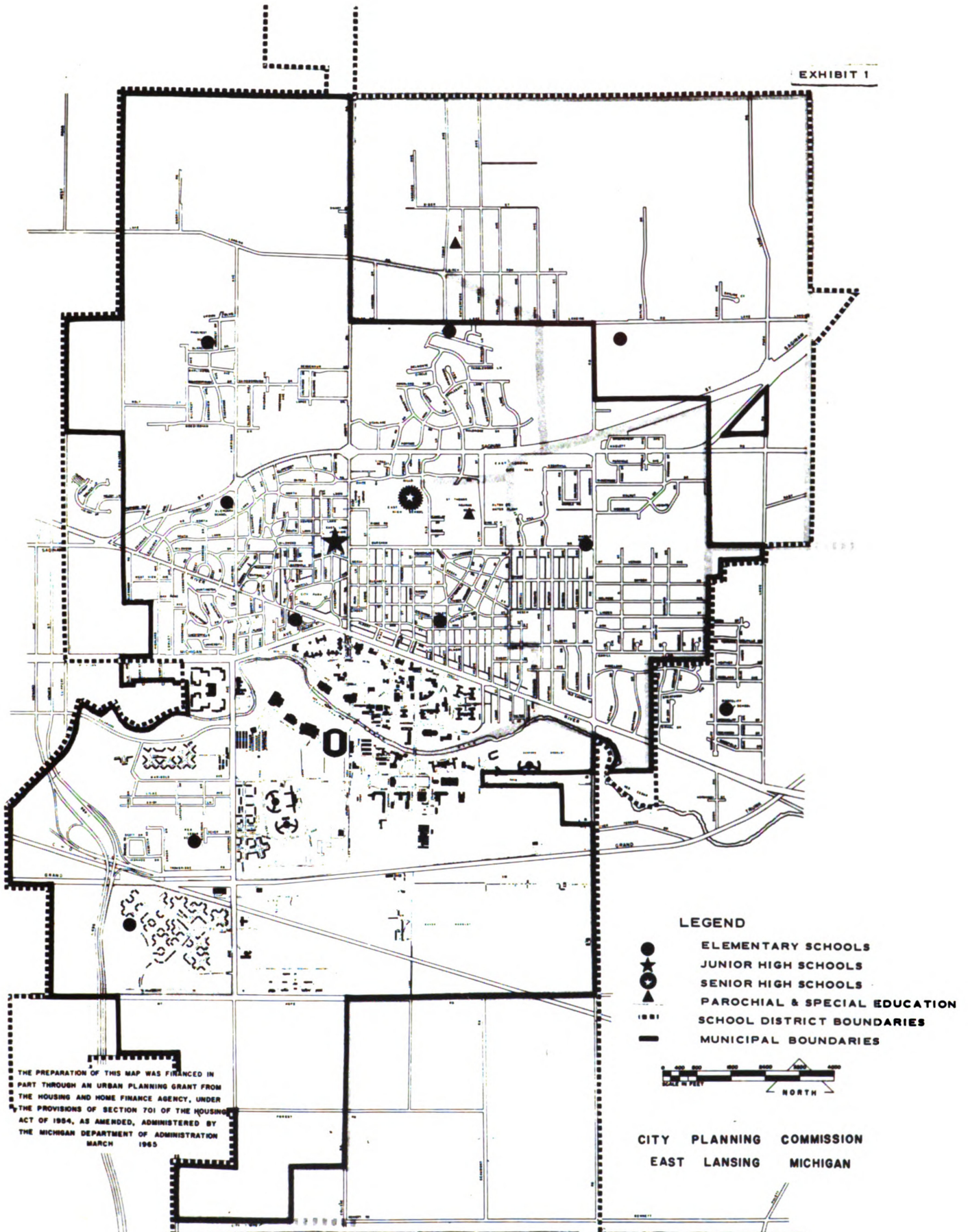
East Lansing's first school room was located in Williams Hall on the campus of Michigan Agricultural College in 1900. The first school building was built on the present site of Central Elementary School in 1902. The first high school, which is the present junior high school, was built in 1926. Today, the school system consists of one high school, one junior high school and eleven elementary schools.

Exhibit 1 shows the 1965 boundaries of East Lansing School District and the city's municipal boundaries. The school district boundaries extend beyond the limits of the map; one mile north to the New York Central Railroad Tracks and one mile south to Cavanaugh Road. East Lansing School District is a third-class school district, and school districts of this class are not required to have boundaries coterminous with municipal boundaries.⁵⁵

East Lansing has a council-manager type of government, which divides the legislative and administrative functions of government between the city council and a trained professional city manager. The council is the policy-making body of the city, while the city manager directs the daily operations of the city and is responsible to the council for the management of governmental policy.

By municipal charter, the council is given the responsibility of appointing the city manager as the chief administrative officer of the city. The council has the power to regulate the use of streets, to prescribe the terms and conditions upon which licenses may be granted, and to insure public peace, health and safety. The council is made up

⁵⁵Michigan school districts are broken down into six classifications from primary, fourth through first, and special districts. First and second class district boundaries have to be coterminous with municipal boundaries, whereas, the other classifications do not require this.



Government Boundaries

of five members, elected for four-year terms from the city at large. The mayor and mayor pro-tem are elected from this group.

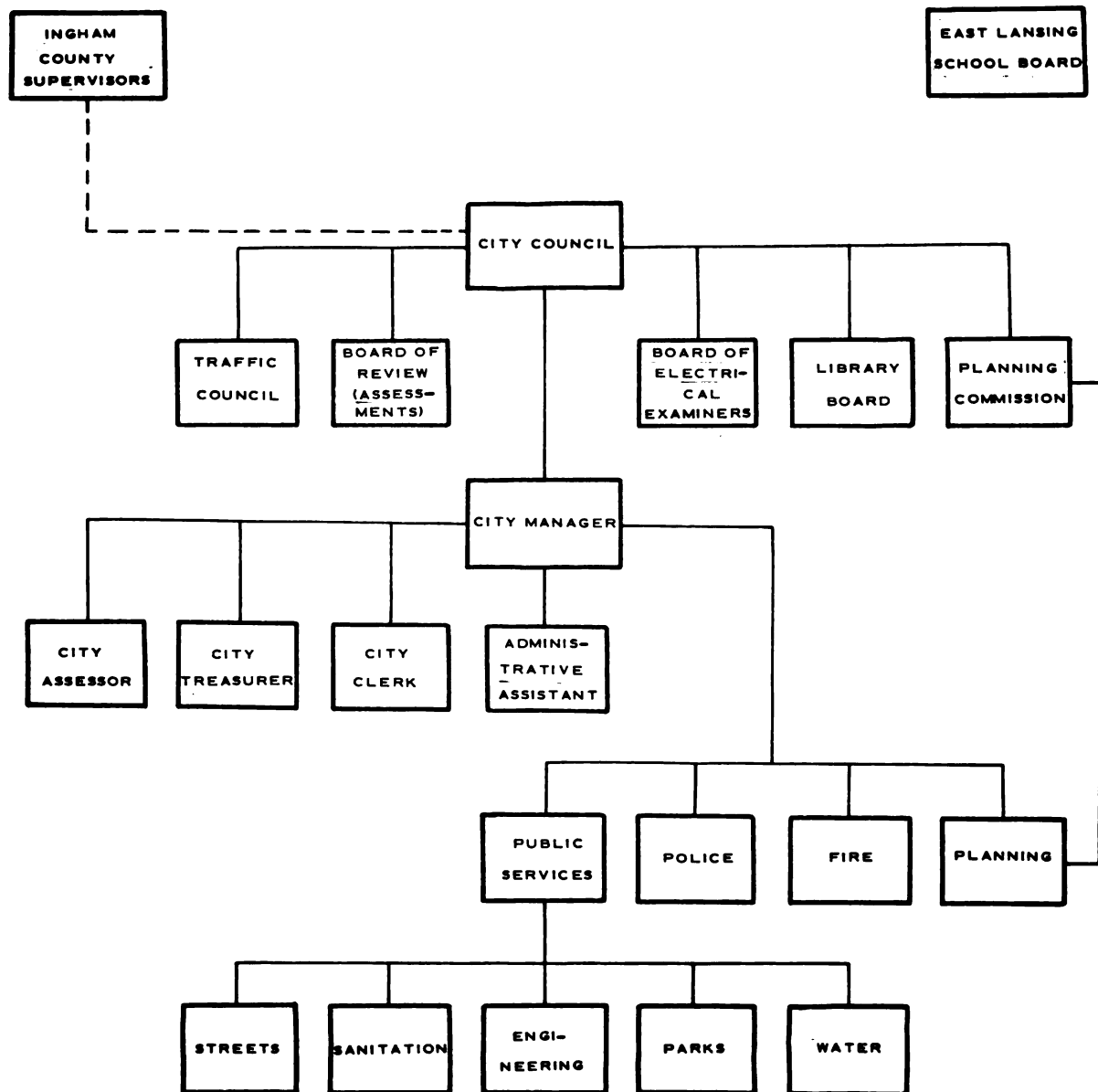
The city manager, as stated in the city charter, has the following specific duties: (1) appoints all administrative officers except the city attorney, (2) sees that all laws and ordinances are enforced, (3) manages and supervises all public improvements, (4) prepares and administers the annual budget, (5) is responsible to the council for effective administration of all city departments, and (6) performs such other duties as may be prescribed by the charter or as may later be required.

The administrative staff which works under the city manager includes: an administrative assistant, city assessor, city treasurer, city clerk, and departmental staff for city planning, engineering, streets, sanitation, parks, water, police and fire. Exhibit 2 illustrates government organization for the City of East Lansing.

The city council appoints the following boards and commissions to advise and assist in making decisions: (1) Traffic Commission, (2) Planning Commission, (3) Board of Review for Assessments, (4) Board of Electrical Examiners, and (5) Library Board. The council also appoints five representatives to the Ingham County Board of Supervisors.

The East Lansing Planning Commission was organized in April, 1958, under Michigan Act 285 of its Public Acts of 1931 as amended; the Municipal Planning Commission Act. The planning director is appointed by the city manager, with approval of the planning commission, to direct the technical staff. In 1960, planning objectives were formulated and integrated into an overall planning program. Planning objectives

Government Structure



included: (1) adoption of a comprehensive master plan, (2) adoption of subdivision regulations, (3) a detailed development plan for the central business district, (4) study of public building needs for East Lansing, and (5) a detailed capital improvement plan with a time table of recommended projects.

Both the city and the school district depend heavily upon the property tax for revenue. A breakdown of the property tax in the East Lansing annual financial reports shows that approximately 55 per cent of collected revenue goes to the school board, 30 per cent to the City of East Lansing and 15 per cent to Ingham County. Figures on proportion of total revenue obtained through property taxes were not obtained for the East Lansing School District, but for Michigan as a whole approximately 57 per cent of the total cost of operating the school system is obtained from the local property tax.⁵⁶ East Lansing would approximate the figures for the state. The property tax comprises approximately 52 per cent of the operating costs for the City of East Lansing.

Major capital improvements for the school district have included construction of four new elementary schools and a high school within the last ten years. All capital improvements were financed on a "pay as you go" plan, with the exception of the high school, for which a school bond issue was passed. On November 9, 1965, another school bond issue was passed to build a new junior high school and to provide site improvements for six elementary schools, as well as improvements for the existing junior and senior high schools. A proposal for the construction of two swimming pools was also included; one for the new junior high

⁵⁶William H. Roe, Financing Michigan's Schools (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1963), p. 5.

school and the other for the existing junior high school. These proposals indicate a construction period through 1970. The school district has, thus, initiated a basis for continuing long-range planning.

Major capital improvements for the city in the last ten years have included construction of water and sewer systems, streets, parking lots, a library, a city garage, a city hall, recreation development and land purchases. Since 1960, capital improvement financing has increased from 8.9 per cent of the annual budget to 11.9 per cent. This is not a true figure of the actual share of capital improvements in the annual budget, since the sewerage and water plants, storm sewers, library, city garage and city hall are financed by general obligation bonds and are not considered as capital improvements in the annual fiscal statement. If debt service is added as part of the annual cost for capital improvements, over 25 per cent of the annual budget is spent for capital improvements.

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