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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents a broad overview of the growth management practices of 86 Canadian municipalities. The results presented are based on a national survey of planning directors which was conducted in May of 1997. The survey, mailed to planning offices in growing Canadian municipalities (181 municipalities, excluding municipalities in Quebec; based on 1986-1991 census period), was used to inquire about how Canadian municipalities manage their growth and about the possible problems associated with growth.

As illustrated by the results of this survey, growth presents problems for the majority of municipalities. The most significant problems include infrastructure gaps, traffic congestion, and difficulties in recovering capital costs (infrastructure). Less significant problems include inner city decline, air pollution and poor water quality.

The majority of surveyed municipalities have developed growth management programs to assist in managing municipal growth and to address growth related problems. Interestingly, there appears to be no relationship between growth being a problem and a municipality's adoption of growth management plans and actions. This finding illustrates the generic nature of many of the growth management programs used by Canadian municipalities. That is, with few notable exceptions, the typical Canadian municipality's growth management program consists of an official community plan, an infrastructure phasing/prioritization plan and a zoning by-law.

The state consistency and concurrency requirements commonly found in American growth management programs are not prevalent within Canadian programs. A number of respondents indicated that a lack of consistency between their growth management plans and the plans of neighbouring municipalities had frustrated many management objectives. While infrastructure concurrency was often reported to be a community objective, it is not always easy to achieve. Consequently, infrastructure gaps are commonplace among many of the surveyed municipalities.

Based on correlations established between respondent's rankings of the problematic nature of low density development and infrastructure gaps, leapfrog development, and capital cost recovery, it was concluded that the majority of respondents are proponents of the planning perspective. Proponents of the planning perspective contend that low density, discontinuous, and decentralized development patterns do not represent efficient urban form. Proponents of this perspective perceive low density development patterns to be the root of many municipalities growth related problems. By promoting a compact, contiguous development pattern, on the other hand, some of the problems can be mitigated.

Recommendations for developing an effective growth management program are also presented in this report. The recommendations are based on the advice and experiences of respondents.

They include the following:

***\* Ensure extensive public participation in the design stage of the program.***

***\* Ensure that policies have a strong vision.***

***\* Develop a financial strategy.***

- \* Develop a growth management program that is flexible and capable of changing.*
- \* Ensure cooperation and coordination.*
- \* Ensure consistency wherever possible.*
- \* Phase development with infrastructure.*
- \* Educate the public and council about the full costs and benefits of growth.*
- \* Understand the limitations of your growth management program.*