

Section 22

**Master Plan Hides Regional Government
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MASTER PLAN HIDES REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

State's Growth

Proposal Calls

For 20 Agencies

One of the prime objectives for Gov. Edmund G. Brown Jr. when the 1976 session of the State Legislature is convened will be to act on the master plan for the state's growth in the future. It was issued earlier this year by a task force composed of environmentalists and business executives and sponsored by the California Planning and Conservation Foundation, a private land-use reform group. A year was spent in compiling the final report which covers every inch of California land and water.

On the surface, this appears to be a great stride in planning for the future, with emphasis placed on conserving our waters and some of our land for open spaces and agriculture. But the stinger comes when one considers the main objectives of the study are placing a freeze on farmland, melding Bay Area counties and putting an end to what the report called uncoordinated development.

Melding all Bay Area counties. Remember that phrase well because it is just another way of saying regional government in which the nine counties of the Bay Area will be "melded" into one huge county insofar as planning and land use is concerned. According to the report, this would be accomplished by the year 1977.

Of course, the report does say city and

county governments still would have the right to issue permits, but in the next sentence it states all such permits could be vetoed by the regional land-use groups. This places us right back to Richmond Assemblyman John Knox's regional government which would give the power of veto to someone in the Bay Area over every inch of ground in the small counties comprising the North Bay area which includes Solano, Napa and Sonoma counties.

It would be dishonest to say there isn't anything good about this study. There is, but when you wrap up the good with the back-handed attempt to establish a regional government regardless of the name it is given, the good loses most of its potential value.

One point in particular must be brought to light. This embraces land owned by an individual who is holding it for a potential future development. But if the basic measures of the master plan for growth are adopted by the legislature, the individual will lose all personal control over that property.

For instance, if that property owner is prevented from constructing or developing that land because the master planners had decided it could be put to better use, perhaps as open space, for whatever reasons they give, he not only will be required to give up right to that land, but also accept whatever compensation the master planners decide. In their own words, here it is:

"It is not realistic for landowners to assume that they are legally entitled to compensation when government regulation reduces the current market value. . .

Because many people mistakenly believe that landowners are entitled to compensation wherever government restrictions causes loss in land value, there have been many disappointments and much litigation . . . but where there is to be compensation, it should not be based on a market value inflated by unrealistic expectation."

The task force pointed out that compensation for land is a political problem and it urged the governor and the legislature should provide for some compensation. This could be in a form of tax and assessment changes, transferring development rights and spreading the risk of loss through insurance.

Ironically, while the task force believes the compensation should not be based on an inflated market value, the state operates in an opposite manner in assessing property on an inflated value. It doesn't make a bit of difference whether, say, a home, can be sold at the inflated re-assessment, nevertheless that is the assessment upon which the owner's tax is computed.

In addition to creating one regional government for the nine counties in the Bay Area, the plan would reduce the state's 58 counties to 20 state agencies. The 19 other agencies would have jurisdiction over the rest of the state. These would be given power to act by the year 1977 and begin coordinating land use by 1978. These area planning agencies, the report states, should have logical boundaries reflecting geography and communities of interest and not necessarily follow county lines.

What this means is that California would become a state of 20 regional planning agencies instead of the present 58 counties. Further, it would mean all

Counties Would

Give Up Control

Of Local Issues

counties would have to give up their home or local rule and abide by decisions made by a stranger who is not aware of the local problems each county faces.

This is documented by the report which states the proposed regional councils would take away important powers previously held at county levels. This would come about as the regional councils assume the power to decide what is to be done on transportation, air and water quality and supply, solid waste disposal, agriculture, parks, open space, recreation areas, revitalizing inner cities and adequate housing and jobs.

Nothing has been omitted. This is based on the report's finding that all parts of the state are interrelated to some extent and state policy must consider the entire land area, not just the critical areas.

This is one of the most blatant attempts ever made to destroy the rights of citizens and to impose more stringent government controls and restrictions on the citizens of California. It is a bitter pill coated with sugar to deceive the taxpayers. Gov. Brown should be told this as soon as possible. Next year could be too late.