

LECTURE:

"PLANNING NEW SETTLEMENT"

BY:

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Planning New Settlements

1- Introduction:

1-1 This is a new approach for planning new settlements in Egypt. The idea is to convert the land use planning concept to an operational development process with a management concept. Previous planning experiences proved the inadequacy of the conventional planning concept which ends with the preparation of a land use master plan to be implemented along a period of 20 to 30 years. The same concept has been transferred to the developing countries through the planning consultants according to well defined program of work starting with the socio-economic and physical surveys which illustrate the existing conditions of the settlement at the time of the assignment. The results of these surveys are then analysed in order to get the data required for the preparation of the master plan. This data covers all social, economic and physical aspects. Accordingly the planners calculate their predictions for all components affecting the future of the settlement. The conclusions of these studies form the skeleton of the master plan which is presented in a land use form including all planning information related to densities, building heights, floor space index, roads, infrastructure networks, landscaping and stages of implementation. The plan is then transferred into a series of projects for execution and implementation action. The master plan also includes the rules and

regulations which guide the implementation process. In some cases the master plan document includes the administrative structure of the planning authority which supervises and monitors the development process.

1-2 In the case of existing settlements, the master plan concept proved not to be effective in the presense of many constrains which were not and could not be taken into consideration while preparing the master plan. These constrains are enbeded in the financial capabilities, the political structure, the social behaviour and the cultural set-up of the community. All these constrains on the other hand affect the decision making process which varies from one settlement to the other. This is why the master plan concept which puts the future of the settlement in a concrete shape cannot cope with all these variables.

1-3 The master plan concept which failed to guide the urban development of the existing settlements has been applied in the development of new towns. In the last case the same concept was also affected by the variables generated by the socio-economic changes in the community structure.

2- The Search For a New Approach for The Development of New Settlements.

2-1 The experience drawn from the development of new towns specially those built in Britain also shows the inefficiencies of the master plan concept. The continuous development in science and technology affected to a great extent the urban behaviour of the new towns. Industries are no longer considered as a polluting factor. A new concept of industrial parks has been applied in new areas. The increase in car ownership has caused the depression of local shopping centers when new shopping malls were built outside the residential districts. The same happened in schooling when new advanced schools were built on the fringes of residential areas. The New Town authorities consequently, sought new solution to face the continuous changes in social requirements by providing more flexibility in the development process.

2-2 It is clear that planners cannot predict the social changes within a long span of time. The master plan for new settlements ceased to be effective. A new approach for the urban development of new settlements should, therefore, be sought. The search for a new theory should be based on the mechanism of the natural growth of towns and the natural behaviour of the community. These two main factors differ from one community to the other. Therefore, the new theory should be adopted to each community to be transferred to a new settlement. These are the

criteria on which the new theory for planning a new settlement was based. The experience gained from urban development of new settlements in Egypt shows the following phenomenon:-

2-2-1 Public activities usually follow the main traffic flow. The ring roads surrounding a neighbourhood eventually attract the public activities and are converted to central spines combining the adjacent residential areas instead of separating them as planned. Eventually the local central area of the residential area dies out and the sense of neighbourhood ceases to exist as expected. In this case the ring road loses its main traffic function and efficiency and the flow of pedestrians increases. The trend to convert the ring road to a pedestrian street becomes evident.

2-2-2 The informal housing which expanded all around most of the towns and cities reflects the capabilities of low income groups to build their own houses and provide themselves with utilities required in a cooperative manner. The land is taken without any rights or authority. The savings are used in the building process along a span of time to meet the increasing requirements of each family. These communities were also able to build their own public facilities without interference from the local authorities. This phenomenon should be taken into consideration when housing the poor.

2-2-3 The development of new towns in Egypt on the line of land use concept shows a great satisfaction to industrial uses with less satisfaction to residential uses as been planned in the program of implementation. The integration of development has been greatly affected by scatered projects within the land use plan. It is, therefore, essential to ensure the integrated approach during the development process. This should be supported by adequate flexibility and effecient management. x

2-2-4 The management of the development process of the new settlement of Heliopolis which started in 1915 proved to be efficient and adequate to the development in a desert environment. The factor of attracting inhabitants, services and public activities to the new site was very well handled. This is beside the efficiency of the administrative structure of the development authority. The management becomes a great important factor in the development process. The approach to developing new settlements should therefore be built in accordance with the management capabilities of the administrative structure proposed for implementation. This means that the development of a new settlement as a continuous process should be planned and designed in order to cope with the different shapes of urban growth according to a proper plan of work and not as rigid land use plan.

2-2-5 The psychology of urban growth of old towns should be carefully studied and taken into consideration in order to ensure the social and culture continuity in the life of the community. The social growth should be observed as put of the urbe development process.

3- The New Approach of Urban Development of New Settlements:

3-1 According to last five facts observed from the experience of urban development in Egypt a new approach for the development of new settlements has been designed. The main objective of the new approach is to start a core town which could expand according to well designed creteria in order to control the continuous growth of the settlement and cope with the requirements of the flow of new inhabitants.

3-2 The concept of a core town is transfered to all components of urban development. It is applied to the core-school as well as the core shopping center and the core-house. This means that all planning components grow with the same rate of development in an integrated manner. The rate of increase in the size of the community is adapted to the increase of urban facilities and services. A planning cell with certain dimensions could be used as the basic unit for urban growth. This unit can accommodate a neighbourhood of 160 families, a school, a social center or a playing field.

3-3 The shopping facilities will follow the plans of traffic temporarily till the road reaches the state of saturation. In this case the traffic will be re-directed to both sides of the sub-district and the road will be converted to a pedestrian street. This process continues along the time of the development process until the settlement reaches its optimum size. The settlement will then be declared saturated and closed to any future development.

3-4 The development process in this manner has to be well managed. The administrative structure of the development process has to deal with the different urban activities starting with the construction of the core of the settlement, provision of urban facilities and services then accommodating the new inhabitants in an integrated urban pattern. The management of development as such becomes the focal point in the planning process. This needs to be discussed in more elaboration in a separate paper.