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Spring 1999

Review of *Managing Growth in America's Communities* by Douglas R. Porter

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Scholz, Gordon, "Review of *Managing Growth in America's Communities* by Douglas R. Porter" (1999).
Great Plains Research: A Journal of Natural and Social Sciences. 437.
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Managing Growth in America's Communities. Douglas R. Porter. Washington, DC: Island Press, 1997. viii+311 pp. Figures, tables, notes, index. \$29.95 paper (ISBN 1-55963-442-1).

About 80% of America's population now lives in metropolitan areas, and almost 90% of recent population growth has occurred in towns, cities, and urban communities. The increasing urbanization of America has led to growth pressures in many communities, large and small. And although growth is championed by a majority of American communities for economic reasons, the repercussions of fast-paced urban development have caused many places to consider and adopt better ways of guiding the composition, quality, and location of future expansion.

The growth management concept emerged in the 1970s as a holistic approach to guiding urban development. Douglas Porter in *Managing Growth* defines this concept as “a dynamic process in which governments anticipate and seek to accommodate community development in ways that balance competing land use goals and coordinate local with regional interests.” His main thrust is to describe strategies, policies, programs, and techniques that have proven successful for managing growth in a variety of American communities. In nontechnical language, his narrative provides an excellent overview of current growth management practice in the United States.

The Great Plains region generally has not experienced the growth pressures that have stimulated a broad range of growth management techniques elsewhere, especially in states on the east and west coasts. Among Porter’s several brief case studies, only two—Lincoln and Boulder—are in or close to the Great Plains. While Plains communities may not be at the forefront in growth management practice, the volume is nevertheless instructive in suggesting how any community can exercise more effective control over future growth.

Two-thirds of the book is devoted to general descriptions and specific case study examples of numerous growth management techniques, organized in six categories corresponding to chapters 3 through 8. Porter suggests that his categories also define the major goals or purposes of growth management: preserving natural resources and environmental qualities and features; managing the location and character of community expansion; ensuring efficient provision of community infrastructure; maintaining or creating a desirable quality of community life; improving economic opportunities and social equity; and providing regional and state guidance of community development. The book concludes with a well-balanced discussion of the costs and benefits of growth management.

Douglas Porter is president of the Growth Management Institute, a nonprofit organization founded in 1992 by a group of practitioners and scholars recognized nationally in the field of growth management. His book draws upon the expertise of eleven other growth management experts, most of whom are on the Institute’s board, interspersing some fourteen one-page essays by them on specific growth management examples and topics. The book’s publisher, Island Press, is a nonprofit organization whose principal purpose is the publication of books on environmental issues and natural resource management. *Managing Growth* fulfills the publisher’s goal of providing solutions-oriented information to a broad audience—professionals, public officials, business and community leaders, and citizens—

involved in shaping responses to environmental problems. **Gordon Scholz**, *Department of Community and Regional Planning, University of Nebraska–Lincoln*.