

a painful experience for many people and laissez faire approaches to urban development have had many opportunity costs associated with them.

‘To what extent should the public sector decision-makers intervene in the property development process?’ ‘Should it be only to control development to ensure public health and safety?’ or ‘Should it be to promote public amenities?’ In other words, should the public sector be concerned with the use of sticks or carrots or both in shaping the nature of human settlements, and their components? ‘How far can the public sector support, through legislation or subsidies, private profit making investment actions that are perceived to be in the public interest?’ In the United States, recent court cases (e.g. *Southwestern Illinois Development Authority versus National City Environmental*, 2002) have limited the power of governments to use the power of eminent domain to acquire land to be sold on for private uses even though the public amenity of any ensuing development might have highly beneficial consequences.

The case studies included in this book show a wide variety of roles of the government in property development. In some cases the development has been part of a national policy to redistribute a population. These policies have been implemented through the acquisition of land, the creation of a development programme, the hiring of a designer or set of designers, and the implementing of a design for whole cities. In other cases the whole development process has been entirely privately funded and subject only to standard zoning controls. Many urban development projects have involved the public and private sectors of an economy in a partnership that has set the requirements for a scheme, organized the process of its development and its funding, and then implemented it (Frieden and Sagalyn, 1991; Garvin, 1995).

The scope of the public’s concern about the cities they inhabit (as represented in a government’s rights to make decisions on everybody’s behalf) has varied over time. Recently, for instance, it has been seen as the government’s role to be concerned about the health of the planet Earth. Inevitably this concern raises questions about the shape of cities, policies for reducing pollution and the heat-island effect of large-scale developments and the use of breezes to flush cities. Dealing with such issues all requires communal action. So do the broad questions about the liveability of cities.

As the twentieth century progressed governments intervened more and more in the ways cities are developed. Municipal authorities have, for instance, been determining land-use policies, where and how the infrastructure necessary for development should be provided, and they have been ensuring that what is built is safe and healthy. They have also intervened in determining the aesthetic nature of the environment, from the ambient quality of streets and public spaces to the appearance of buildings. In using their power to do so, they have had, in the United States at least, to demonstrate that the goals they establish are in the public interest and that the mechanisms they use to achieve those goals are constitutional and are based on evidence that they work (see *Daubert versus Merrell Dow*, No. 92-102, 1993; and *Dolan versus the City of Taggart*, 1994; Stamps, 1994). In an even more recent hearing (the United States Supreme Court decision in the case of *City of*