

MANAGING AGGREGATE RESOURCES AND THE COMMUNITY PLANNING PROCESS

by

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Abstract: The relationship between aggregate resources and the market place is one of continuous conflict. Reserves are depleted, not by mining, but by land use regulations, public opposition, and urban development. In spite of the ubiquitous nature of aggregate materials, these conflicts have led to increasing concerns about the future availability of this material. For example, the State of Maryland estimates that 80 percent of its aggregate reserves have been sterilized by urban development and negative land use policies toward the aggregate industry. A more serious problem is that few planning agencies consider aggregate resources as a relevant element in their comprehensive planning process, and fewer still attempt to identify and protect these resources for future use. In response to concerns for the loss of these reserves, the State of California and the Province of Ontario have established programs that not only regulate mining practices, but preserve aggregate resources for future use. Both governments place the responsibility of protecting these resources in the hands of the local planning agencies. Although the negative image of the industry is pervasive, incorporating resource protection policies and mining regulations into the local planning process offers many advantages. Communities can be assured of continued access to aggregate reserves; reduce future aggregate costs as a result of shorter hauling distances between source and market and; reduce negative environmental impacts related to long distance trucking. In addition, through the protection of aggregate bearing lands, communities can preserve open space; influence the pattern of development; and influence the creation of specific land forms and habitats. To implement this concept communities must make some fundamental changes regarding the aggregate industry. They must 1) develop a better understanding of the role this industry plays in society; 2) identify the aggregate resource base; 3) understand the nature of mining and how it can be regulated to achieve the most positive results; and 4) have a long range vision on how to use the resource and the mining activity in creating future landscapes. Concurrently, the aggregate industry must recognize that it is an integral part of an increasingly urban fabric. Case studies show that mining, through proper land use practices, can be a positive and constructive part of an urban environment.

Topical Subject Matter: Policy and Regulations.

Key Words: aggregates; resource management; resource protection; land use planning.

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