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**A Report for the Association of Romanian Municipal Chief Architects
And
The Ploiesti Metropolitan Area**

This report was developed based on joint missions with **John Driscoll**, Institute for International Urban Development and **Mr. Liviu Ianasi**, Vice-Dean of the School of Urban Planning in Ion Mincu University of Architecture and Urban Planning and consultant to the Chief Architects Association and Ploiesti municipality.

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ROMANIA LOCAL GOVERNANCE BRIDGE PROGRAM

METROPOLITAN PLANNING AND COOPERATION IN
ROMANIA

A Report for the Association of Romanian Municipal
Chief Architects and The Ploiesti Metropolitan Area

OCTOBER 15, 2005

DISCLAIMER

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

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Acronyms

COG	Council of Government
EU	European Union
GIS	Geographic Information System
ISTEA	Inter-modal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act
LGI	Local Government Initiative (USAID-funded program)
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
PUD	Detailed Urban Zone
PUG	General Urban Plan
PUZ	Area Development Plan
RPA	Regional Plan Association (New York)
SMSA	Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas
TCRPC	Tri-County Planning Commission (Illinois)

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report is based on a request to USAID to help the Municipality of Ploiesti to redefine its approach to implementing metropolitan development—spatial and metropolitan governance—and to assist the Romanian Chief Architects Association to identify different approaches to metropolitan development in Romania. This is part of a larger activity of the association to systematically highlight major challenges on various topics that are relevant to the planning activities of chief architects in Romanian cities.

This report is divided into the two major topics of the request for assistance: (a) an overview of metropolitan and inter-communal planning approaches in the U.S., the EU and Romania; and (b) a review of current initiatives in Ploiesti and recommendations for subsequent activities. For the purposes of this report, the Association requested that an emphasis be put on reviewing U.S. experiences that could be relevant to the Romanian context. More extensive work on the EU dimension of metropolitan planning and inter-communal cooperation has been undertaken separately by the Chief Architects Association and covered in related work by Romanian consultants working on metropolitan initiatives in Romania.¹

In the last five years, the concept of metropolitan and inter-communal cooperation and the emergence of specific proposals have gained momentum in Romania. There is an emerging body of experience and research within in both the fields of urban and public administration on the topic.

This report was developed based on joint missions with Mr. Liviu Ianasi, Vice-Dean of the School of Urban Planning in Ion Mincu University of Architecture and Urban Planning and consultant to the Chief Architects Association and Ploiesti municipality. Mr. Ianasi contributed to sections of this report including metropolitan approaches and potential metropolitan scenarios for Romania, and recommendations for the Ploiesti Metropolitan area. The time given by the Mayors of Ploiesti and the communes for interviews in July is also appreciated. Ms. Simona Munteanu, Chief Architect of the Municipality of Ploiesti, worked with the consultants to review current initiatives for the Ploiesti metropolitan area and develop proposals for further cooperation. The consultants would like to thank ARD-Romania for the assistance provided during the course of this assignment.

Professor Francois Vigier, Professor Emeritus at the Harvard School of Design and President of the International Institute for Urban Development in Cambridge Massachusetts contributed advice and text to the summary of the experience of metropolitan development in the United States.²

Ms. Muneanu, Mr. Andrei Luncan, Dr. Arh. Radu Radoslav and other members of the Subcommittee on Metropolitan Cooperation of the Chief Architects Association provided important insights to the current efforts in metropolitan development in Romania. The work of the Association should receive continued support given the potential impact of positively shaping urban growth in Romania. Discussions with Dr. Nicolae Taralunga and Dr. Sorina Racoviceanu of the Institute for Housing and Urban Development

¹ See I H S Romania www.ih-s-romania.ro.

² Also useful background to some of the case description in the U.S. is the work of Dr. Allan Wallis of the University of Colorado on “new regionalism.”

Studies in Bucharest were helpful in elaborating the current challenges in metropolitan cooperation in Romania.

Considerable work has been undertaken by the individuals noted above on the topic of inter-communal cooperation in Romania. Faculty at the Ion Mincu University of Architecture and Planning in Bucharest have also been involved in studies and research on metropolitan planning and have undertaken studies for cities through PATICO. The USAID Local Government Initiative (LGI) program from 2000 to 2005³ has played an important role. This report draws upon previous studies developed for Oradea and Iasi under the LGI program.

³ Research Triangle Institute and its subcontractor, The Harvard University Center for Urban Development Studies (Oradea, 2000-2001); the DAI/GRASP program (Iasi, 2003-2004); ARD (Association of Chief Architects and Ploiesti, 2005).

METROPOLITAN AND INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION IN THE U.S.

The management of spatial growth through zoning and development controls in the United States is the responsibility of local governments. The role of the federal and state governments consists primarily in the construction and maintenance of major transportation infrastructure, the application of environmental standards, grants-in-aid to local governments (of which welfare is the major component), and a limited number of economic incentives to promote the economic revitalization of depressed areas. Even though spatial development consistently spreads over political boundaries, regional planning in the European sense is not part of the American national planning strategy.

DEVELOPMENT OF METROPOLITAN APPROACHES

The development of metropolitan regions dates back to the end of the 19th century. As land values rose in the central cities, new residential and economic activities moved to the fringe areas that were becoming interconnected by streetcars and suburban rail lines.

The need to manage the region was very much in the mind of public officials and planners. Metropolitan-level interventions initially revolved around the provision of water and sewer, a problem that individual, independent cities found increasingly harder to manage on their own. Boston provides an early example in the 1890s with the creation of independent, state-chartered agencies for sewer, water, and parks. In 1919, these commissions were consolidated into one commission for 38 of the 66 jurisdictions that comprised the urbanized metropolitan region at the time.

Early structures for economic cooperation at the metropolitan scale originated from inter-state disagreements over the management of port and rail facilities in New York and New Jersey. At the encouragement of the business community, the two jurisdictions created the Port of New York Authority in 1921, the first interstate authority in the United States that also had the power to raise revenue through the bonds.⁴

Metropolitan planning, as such, started in 1922 with the creation of the New York Regional Plan Association (RPA), an independent non-profit organization that is still very active today. The RPA geographic focus is in the urbanized region centering on Manhattan and covering parts of northern New Jersey and southwestern Connecticut. Its self-defined mandate is to undertake studies of evolving trends in the region, seek strategic partnerships with key stakeholders, make recommendations to improve the quality of life and the economic competitiveness of the region, and provide technical support to local governments and state agencies to implement growth management policies.

⁴ History of MPOs, Mark Solof, NJTPA quarterly.

The post-World War II period coincided with a major restructuring of the urban settlement pattern of the United States. Rising household incomes, a substantial mass of savings accumulated during the war years, and the growing affordability of the automobile precipitated an exodus of the middle-class toward suburbs where single-family homes were being built by developers. By 1960, 56 percent of the total population lived in Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSA) defined by the Office of Management and Budget as “*a system of settlements, socially and economically integrated, operating in concert with and dependent upon a central city.*”

Although debated within the planning profession, metropolitan government has not been generally deemed feasible as it went against the grain of a strong home rule tradition. Different forms of metropolitan cooperation did begin to emerge in response to rapid and fragmented growth in cities.

METROPOLITAN COORDINATING BODIES

In the 1960s, the federal government passed legislation to encourage coordination of centrally financed programs among local governments in metropolitan areas.⁵ This funding led to the growth of Councils of Governments (COGs) in metropolitan areas that provided a forum for advising local governments and undertaking studies. While the creation of nearly 100 metropolitan planning bodies did improve local coordination, these organizations lacked real authority and had limited impact on local land use decisions. Additionally, cooperation was often limited to what was required to obtain outside sources rather than developing plans and programs that reflected local priorities. “Many local officials supported regional planning only to the extent that it would sustain their capacity to accommodate the windfall of development projects coming their way.”⁶

New legislation in the 1970s resulted in the formation of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) in areas with more than 50,000 in population to improve regional coordination on transportation investments. In 1991, the Inter-modal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) introduced a stronger role for local government in the transportation planning process. The previous MPO planning process was dominated by state-level transportation agencies that favored roads over transit. Fiscal realism was also encouraged to avoid the “wish list” factor in the planning of projects. MPOs are required to develop a three-year investment plan in a single agenda that is approved by participating regional and local authorities.

In 1998, there were 340 MPOs that received federal support under the Intermodal Transportation Efficiency Act. Almost half of the MPOs are part of the regional councils.⁷ These organizations focus primarily on transportation but also include other sectors such as economic development, community development, environment and land use. Gathering information, conducting studies, providing GIS data and acting as a facilitator of regional planning are generally the minimum functions these groups take on.

Effective MPOs are the ones that forge linkages and partnerships. “Prevailing thought among MPOs is that they are consensus-building organizations, so the greater their diversity, the better positioned they are to bring

⁵ The 1964 Urban Mass Transportation Act provided incentives for preparing metropolitan transportation plans. The 1965 Housing and Development Act encouraged stronger linkages between highway and transit planning. The 1966 Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Act required that funding applications for centrally financed housing, roads and other facilities be coordinated and reviewed by an area-wide planning agency. Additionally, the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1966 introduced broader review criteria such as the impacts of projects on historic structures, natural resources and the social implications.

⁶ History of MPOs, Mark Solof, NJTPA quarterly.

⁷ Web site for the National Association of Regional Councils www.narc.org/ and the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations www.ampo.org.

the responsible and affected parties together. Even those MPOs that have provision for weighted voting seldom use it because they see it as a divisive mechanism rather than one that can bring the region together.”⁸

REGIONAL PLANNING AUTHORITIES

There are about 600 regional planning organizations in the United States. Some regional planning authorities undertake planning studies that suggest regional development patterns while others actually have been given powers to define and approve land use decisions, usually in consultation with local authorities.⁹

In Massachusetts for example, there are 13 regional planning organizations established through legislation. The largest, the *Metropolitan Area Planning Commission* in Massachusetts is an advisory agency created by the state legislature in 1963 to oversee the activities of 101 communities in a 3,680-km² area with a population of over 3,000,000 people. With an annual budget of \$2.8 million from federal, state, local and private grants, it conducts studies, makes policy recommendations and provides technical assistance to its members. It is active in “selling” the region to potential developers and new economic activities, advocates “smart growth” and is a member of the Boston area Metropolitan Planning Organization that oversees the region’s centrally funded transportation program. It produces periodic comprehensive reports to guide development within the region. The latest, *Metro Future – 2002*, was based on extensive consultation with stakeholders and claims to represent a consensus as to the Boston metropolitan area’s future.

Councils of Governments have also evolved into regional planning agencies that focus on developing regional development strategies and provide technical assistance to smaller units of local government. In Denver, the Denver Region Council of Governments, created in 1997, developed the *Metro Vision 2020* plan and works with the Colorado Department of Local Affairs to “augment” local planning efforts with a team of planners, economists, GIS specialists and environmental, water quality and transportation specialists. The Council offers technical assistance in planning, mapping, economic and demographic studies, and the review of zoning codes for smaller local governments that limited staffing and planning capabilities.

A unique feature of the Denver Council is the *Mile-High Compact*, an association of county and local governments created in 2000 to manage the growth of the Denver, Colorado, metropolitan region. The *Mile-High Compact* is a voluntary association of county and municipal governments representing 85 percent of the Denver region’s population. The *Mile-High Compact* commits the local governments to prepare comprehensive plans and adopt zoning regulations that relate to the *Metro Vision 2020*. From the beginning, an underlying concept of the compact has been that it is inclusive and open to all local governments in the Denver region. When the agreement was signed in August 2002, the compact included 30 local governments; as of June 2005, there were 39. It is generally agreed that this voluntary association has made considerable progress in managing the growth of a rapidly growing metropolitan region and controlling sprawl.

REGIONAL GOVERNANCE

In the U.S., there are two examples of metropolitan cooperation that have incorporated regional governance structures: Portland, Oregon and Minneapolis/Saint Paul, Minnesota. In both cases, the encouragement and authority for establishing a scheme for a metropolitan government lies with the respective state governments. In Portland, an elected regional government (Metro Council) oversees the development of the Portland

⁸ Bruce D. McDowell, AICP, discussion paper for the Brookings Institute.

⁹ Some states (Florida, Texas, Virginia, Georgia, Kentucky) favor regional planning and service delivery while others prefer to work through the local authorities. (National Academy of Public Administration, Building Stronger Communities and Regions: Can the Federal Government Help? (Washington DC, March 1998).

metropolitan area. Established in 1979, it is responsible for land use planning and transportation, and manages garbage disposal and recycling for 1.3 million residents in three counties and 24 cities.

The Minneapolis/St. Paul (Minnesota) Metro Area was first created as the Metropolitan Council in 1967 as a public corporation responsible for coordinating the planning and development of the seven-county metropolitan area with 188 local governments. In 1971, the Fiscal Disparities Act was introduced to equalize inter-municipal revenues between older urban areas and rapidly growing suburbs within the seven counties. The Metropolitan Land Planning Act in 1976 required local governments in the seven counties to develop local comprehensive plans. Local governments cannot promote development plans that are in conflict with the comprehensive plan reviewed by the Council. Subsequently, the Metropolitan Reorganization Act of 1994 merged the functions of three regional agencies responsible for wastewater collection and treatment as well as transportation into the Metropolitan Council.

The “Metro Council” operates bus and rail services, wastewater collection and treatment, and regional parks. Working within its 2030 Development Framework for growth plan, the council “works to support development that makes the most efficient use of public resources and investments, protect natural resources, enhance livability and quality of life and promote economic competitiveness.” It plans for “regional systems” and seeks to balance regional needs with local concerns.

SPATIAL PLANNING

In the cases highlighted above, the level of urban planning coordination varies with the level of authority given to the regional planning agency. With the exception of the limited number of metropolitan cooperation structures that include planning authority (Portland and Minneapolis/St. Paul), the general approach is that a non-binding regional vision and strategy plan is drafted by a regional planning authority through a consensus process. Local governments, who have been involved in developing the regional strategy are encouraged and supported to harmonize local plans to the regional strategy. As noted in Denver, this can include a voluntary compact among local governments to adhere to the regional plan.

Overall, the consensus by experts is that it has been difficult to link the transportation planning activities to local land use decisions. An April 2004 report commissioned by the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations highlighted some examples of where there were linkages.

- The Atlanta Regional Commission provides grants to local jurisdictions on a competitive basis to conduct studies that influence land use planning in town centers and areas around commuter stations. This helps to link regional transportation to local development and fosters local innovation, involvement and control.
- The Tri-County Planning Commission (TCRPC) in Illinois (population 347,000) undertakes planning studies in cooperation with local governments. The Commission was approached by one of its member local governments to develop a study for a major new traffic corridor that will involve a total of five jurisdictions and a future population of 63,000 in the corridor. The joint study set an early tone for cooperation by establishing the corridor within a larger regional development vision and including local officials and civic groups in defining land uses and how to control growth, protect the environment and develop a multi-jurisdictional land use decision model.¹⁰
- Two other MPOs highlighted in the study concentrated on strengthening the ability of local governments to integrate transportation and land use planning by providing materials and assistance that included

¹⁰ www.tricountyrpc.org/projects/index.htm

maps, growth forecasts, information of environmentally sensitive areas and transportation plans. An interactive CD was developed to show the implications of land use decisions on transportation.

OTHER INSTRUMENTS FOR INTER-COMMUNAL COOPERATION

In addition to the examples above, bilateral and multilateral cooperation among local governments occurs through special districts, contracting and sharing of revenues for special purpose projects. A study by the National Academy of Public Administration in 1998 summarized these forms of cooperation:¹¹

- *Special Districts* – most numerous and fastest growing in the last 50 years. Established to provide transportation, water, sewer, cultural, park, and sports facilities, the special districts are usually financed by taxes or user fees. The multiplication of the special districts/agencies can lead to uncoordinated planning.
- *Contracting Among Local Governments* – Local authorities are contracting among themselves or with the private sector for specific services or are developing formal agreements for joint service provision along borders. Types of services include medical and social services, education, public works, and transportation.
- *Sharing Tax Base and Revenues for Specific Proposes* – Some local governments share tax revenues for special purposes such as education, economic development or transportation projects.

SUMMARY

The evolution of metropolitan cooperation in the U.S. occurs in a context of selected central government interventions and guidance. When present, national policies to promote cooperation have focused on transportation (MPOs) and on different administrations, environmental and housing programs. State and local governments, which are responsible for land use planning and local services, have been the main initiators of metropolitan cooperation with the legal basis lying in state legislation.

The Portland and Minneapolis/St. Paul cases are unique in their comprehensive and integrated approach within an elected or appointed regional governance model. An interesting feature of the Metro Council in Minneapolis/St. Paul is that the Council's *incremental growth* in responsibility occurred over a 30-year period.

More common are the voluntary or ad-hoc forms of inter-jurisdictional associations and agencies that are used as an effective alternative to more formal metropolitan governance structures. These ad-hoc structures are created to either address specific circumstances or through a voluntary association of local governments facing specific growth management issues: the inefficiencies of urban sprawl, responding to a perceived threat to their economic competitiveness or in order to jointly capture an opportunity.

The change in the focus of metropolitan coordinating efforts over time is an indication of lessons learned along the way. The initial wave of Councils of Governments provided a coordinating function and a venue for conducting studies but was limited in their ability to influence local investment, land use and financial decisions that collectively shape development patterns at the metropolitan scale.

¹¹ Building Stronger Communities and Regions: Can the Federal Government Help? National Academy of Public Administration, Washington DC, March 1998.

The introduction of metropolitan planning organizations were useful for promoting coordination of transportation investments but were initially weighted towards highways and lacked effective roles for local governments. Subsequent legislation in 1991 addressed these issues by promoting balanced forms of transportation for both the central city and the outlying suburbs. The role of local governments in deciding on transport alternatives was strengthened and attempts were made to better understand the impact of transportation on land use decisions. Instruments have been developed, such as Memorandums of Understanding to clearly identify the roles and responsibilities of different agencies working within a MPO. The growth of regional planning authorities was in response to the need for a more comprehensive inter-jurisdictional spatial planning and coordination of programs in economic development, housing and environmental protection.

What has evolved is the consolidation of these different types of organizations and more proactive partnerships among them. This is helping to address the issue of coordinating numerous authorities with regional service mandates. For example, it is not unusual to find regional planning functions being carried out by a council of government or a regional planning organization that is also responsible for coordinating transportation as a metropolitan planning organization. Regional planning and coordinating bodies have also shifted their role and practices to focus on obtaining consensus from local governments on regional development visions and strategies and supporting the implementation of the strategy through advocacy and technical assistance.

Ten Reasons for Regional Cooperation

...save money....deliver quality services....achieve greater political clout....achieve greater economic clout....solve a specific problem....share scarce external public resources....plan more realistically....work on environmental issues....create sense of regional harmony....complement strengths and weakness.

*—Regionalism as an Economic Driver, Center for Government Studies,
Northern Illinois University*

Hard lessons have been learned concerning the cost of fragmented growth—urban sprawl, traffic congestion, loss of open space, social disparities and water and air pollution. While these lessons provide solid reasons for cooperation among political leadership and authorities within metropolitan regions, there is also an awareness that economic competitiveness in a globalized economy is closely linked to the quality of life and the level of services in a region. A study ¹² by the Brookings Institute of recent “smart growth” initiatives in the United States noted that “regional economic performance is enhanced when areas are developed with community benefits and the promotion of vital urban centers in mind and that suburbs also benefit from investment in healthy urban cores.”

¹² Mark Muro and Robert Puentes, “Investing in a Better Future: A Review of the Fiscal and Competitive Advantages of Smarter Growth Development Patterns,” Brookings Institute, March 2004.

METROPOLITAN AND INTER-COMMUNAL COOPERATION IN THE EU

EUROPEAN SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE

The European Spatial Development Perspective, published by the EU Commission in 1999, is promoting polycentric development as a means to guide growth at the EU scale through a “balanced system of metropolitan regions, city clusters and city networks.” The intent is to promote territorial cohesion through the promotion of balanced competitiveness as a complement to the previously adopted overarching goals of social and economic integration.

The development of networks and clusters of different sized areas at transnational, national and sub-regional levels is seen as an important method of avoiding over-concentration of growth in high-potential areas and promoting the development of depressed areas. At the EU scale, transport networks are being developed to structure this growth along these objectives. Within member states, efforts are being made to link development regions and metropolitan areas within a coherent network to support the objectives of territorial cohesion. The National Spatial Strategy of Republic of Ireland offers an excellent example of this approach.

The promotion and encouragement of a more systematic Metropolitan approach to development has a longer tradition in the European context and continues to be encouraged through planning approaches adopted by member states. These include the use of regional development strategies supported by suggested “structure plans,” central subsidies to encourage inter-communal cooperation and mechanisms for inter-communal agreements on service delivery, sharing tax revenues and urban planning.

INTER-COMMUNAL COOPERATION IN FRANCE

In France, planning for urban agglomerations has been actively encouraged by the central government. A *communauté d'agglomération* is a public entity for municipal cooperation that regroups multiple municipalities, forming a geographic area encompassing a minimum population of 50,000. At least one of these municipalities should have a population of at least 15,000. The entity's mission is to undertake joint economic development, land use planning, and housing and security activities. The Association has the option of assuming joint responsibility for road infrastructure, sewerage, water, environment, culture and sporting facilities.

Each association has a council made up of locally elected officials designated by the municipal councils to represent the town. Each town is represented proportionally to the size of its population. To ensure that larger towns do not completely overwhelm the smaller ones in terms of representation, no town will hold more than half of the seats. Councils typically have around 40 members.

The program is voluntary and funding comes from the central government for operational funding, loans to finance investment spending and subsidies for specific projects. To encourage uniform economic development, the unique professional tax rates for each town are progressively consolidated into one rate.

New approaches to inter-communal planning in France reflect practices encouraged by the EU. Since 2002, there has been a shift away from narrowly focused land use plans to more strategic and multi-sectoral approaches that stress common regional development policies with a spatial reference.

There are more alternatives to organizing inter-communal cooperation and joint land-use planning. Existing inter-communal associations can cooperate with individual communes outside their boundaries to develop joint plans. Individual communes can associate for the purpose of developing a plan. A key element in the new approach is that there can be no enclaves in the joint planning initiative. When voting to adopt an inter-communal development plan, the requirement is that either two-thirds of the communes and one-half of the population adopt the plan or that one-half of the population and two-thirds of the communes adopt the development plan. Once adopted, local decisions must be in compliance with the regional plan.

SUMMARY

The new EU planning strategies at the metropolitan or sub-regional level tend to be more strategic, rather than detailed in their orientation and include social, economic and environmental policies with a spatial reference. Using various means, local governments are encouraged to adopt investment and land use decisions that incorporate the goals of the regional development plan. Active consideration is given to the urban and rural nature of the urban agglomerations through the promotion of guided and balanced growth in urban, suburban and rural areas and protection of open space and environmentally sensitive areas. A critical feature is that the spatial planning element is an integral part of the regional strategies and policies. How these strategies and policies “physically play out” is an integral part of the debate on adopting the plan.

At the national level, the example of the French inter-communal cooperation demonstrates how the central government can take a more proactive role in encouraging inter-communal cooperation; its role can be characterized by:

- Active policies and incentives to promote inter-communal cooperation and cooperation among larger urban agglomerations.
- The use of a combination of incentives (funding) and penalties (a municipality is not able to expand urbanized areas without cooperating with neighboring local governments).
- Move towards a strategic approach and introducing policies for planning and simplified land use categories for a regional plan.

Similar to the cases discussed in the United States, the role of regional planning agencies is to provide technical assistance to local governments in developing their local growth policies.

ROMANIAN CONTEXT FOR METROPOLITAN INTER- COMMUNAL COOPERATION

There are major trends in Romania that are influencing how larger urban areas are growing and the ability of local governments to address the challenges of this growth.

- The opening of the economy has contributed to a growing competition among cities and regions and restructuring economic activities and linkages among cities, smaller towns and communes. Cities are interacting in a network at a much larger scale and transportation corridors are a structuring component of these ties regionally and within cities.
- The physical growth of cities, largely due to new economic and housing activities in green field areas and along emerging development corridors is occurring across administrative boundaries.
- Increasing mobility among labor, businesses and housing decisions are leading to new development patterns and growing social and economic disparities—regionally and within the finer grade of urban agglomerations.
- Legislated decentralization of public administration responsibilities (since the early 1990s) and finance (since 1997) has made local governments key actors in providing services that influence urban growth and shape the quality of the economic, social, and built and natural environment.

The convergence of these trends on the ground is leading to new development patterns and “urban sprawl” due to the fragmented governance and spatial planning practices. There are emerging discontinuities in the urban fabric with new residential, economic and retail developments occurring on the urban fringe with the resulting loss of open space and construction taking place in natural and sensitive ecological zones. This fragmented growth requires ever larger expenditures in infrastructure and services and the increased consumption of energy (mainly for transportation).

THE PUBLIC-PUBLIC PARTNERSHIP – VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL

The approaches promoted by the ESDP are viewed as relevant to accession countries as the EU enlarges. In Romania, transport policies are being adopted that are consistent with EU-scale policies. There are eight development regions that manage the distribution of EU funds with the objective of weighting support towards economically depressed zones. The main initiatives are in infrastructure development (mainly for transport corridors) and regional programs intended to balance development. Unfortunately, the regional development strategies do not include a spatial component to better understand how these projects contribute to territorial cohesion.

In Romania, as responsibilities are decentralized, both the regional authorities and local governments are confronted with a wider list of matters in which to decide. The obvious benefits to decentralization are that local authorities can decide more appropriately *what* public services will be provided as well as *who* and *how* services will be delivered. In more dynamic urban agglomerations, where economic, residential and service mobility is high, it is challenging to allocate development responsibilities and resources for services and programs.

In the area under city ‘influence’, the issues related to *who will benefit, at what cost, and how to deliver more efficiently* are increasingly difficult to address, as it is not always evident *which taxpayers* are benefiting for various services. Many people live in a settlement and work in another and use services in both such as utilities, the collection and treatment of solid waste, schools, medical assistance and public transportation. Many of these services are located in the center city. At the same time, many economic activities that are tied to the city and its resources are located in neighboring communities, where land for development is more available, but are requiring access to cities’ utilities, or better links for transport, services or distribution, and labor.

The application of territorial cohesion and competitiveness in Romania is changing the definition of local areas from zones falling concisely within administrative boundaries to local development areas based on spatially oriented interests, activities and linkages.

These inter-linkages are generating new cooperative arrangements among local neighboring authorities (horizontal cooperation), and among local, regional and national authorities (vertical cooperation). Increasingly, local governments, which previously implemented programs planned and financed from central governments, must now promote the vitality of their local economy and associate with other regional and local governments and the private sector to improve the quality of life for local residents.

This is requiring new forms of “associative governance” and a framework for cooperation in the areas of: spatial planning; environmental protection and safeguarding natural ecosystems; energy and communication; transportation infrastructure; provision of utilities, social services, housing, and communal services such as public transport and waste disposal; the fostering of economic activities; and labor training and mobility.

In response to these challenges, local governments in Romania are forming associations for economic development and service delivery that cut across jurisdictional boundaries. *Selective institutional responses to these trends include an emphasis on local economic development, support for local infrastructure investments, and more competitive provision of public services, entrepreneurial local public administration, and strategic planning.* These forms of cooperation can be grouped into three major categories:

- Metropolitan cooperation—large cities associating with adjoining communes (Oradea, Iasi, Ploiesti and Timisioara);
- Associations among smaller and medium-sized towns within well-defined geographical boundaries (Jiu Valley Association); and
- Inter-communal cooperation among communes (often with assistance from the counties) for infrastructure, development projects and the creation of rural-micro regions.

As noted in the EU and U.S. cases, programs to address the physical reality described above are now being approached from crosscutting economic, social and environmental perspectives and are operating in the context of devolution. In Romania, these new forms of cooperation are taking place in the context of new relationships that are being developed among city halls, citizens, community-based organizations and the private sector. Civil society and the private sector are playing a larger role in defining the local development agenda in areas such as local economic development, municipal services, housing, social services, environmental protection and culture.

METROPOLITAN APPROACHES IN ROMANIA

Interest in a metropolitan approach to planning and service delivery in Romania's recent economic and social transition was a stated objective in some of the early planning studies for larger cities such as Iasi and Bucharest.

The Oradea Metropolitan Zone represented the first proactive efforts to develop a comprehensive metropolitan approach in a first-rank city. In 2000, Oradea and the surrounding communes signed a protocol to accept the existing territorial limits of their respective administrative units. Subsequent initiatives and protocols led to the formal development of the Oradea Metropolitan Zone in July 2001 and the development of inter-communal agreements for: bus transportation, a gas network, a landfill, a metropolitan development strategy; and joint planning of land use along key development corridors.

Viewed as an important pilot initiative, the Ministry of Public Works provided seed funding for the metropolitan development strategy, aerial photography to develop area land use maps, and the urban planning studies along the development corridors. Oradea Municipality also undertook initiatives such as providing computers to the communes and software to assist in the collection of data and preparation of financing programs. More information is available on the Oradea Metropolitan Web site (<http://zonametropolitana.oradea.ro/>).

The initial institutional coordinating framework involved meetings among the Mayors with the local councils endorsing joint activities. Technical support for inter-communal initiatives was provided by an effective coordinating group within the Oradea Municipality and the respective agencies providing services. Subsequently, a nongovernmental organization (NGO) was formed based on an assembly of delegates elected from the respective councils and staff that includes a director and specialists. Its primary function is to develop metropolitan initiatives, undertake studies including economic development and seek funding for inter-communal projects.

In Iasi, a metropolitan approach began in earnest in 2003. The difference from the Oradea case is that the county played the initiating role in bringing together the Municipality of Iasi and the surrounding communes. The Iasi Metropolitan Association was legally registered in April 2004 with a board comprised of representatives of the associating local governments and the county. The president of the Iasi County Council is the president of the association. There are two vice-presidents, a permanent place for the Mayor of Iasi and a rotating vice-resident for the Communes. It also includes commissions in land use, financial planning and public services. The Iasi Metropolitan Development Agency was created to develop programs and projects and seek funding. Similar to Oradea, the Iasi initiative received initial funding from the Ministry of Transport Construction and Tourism to develop planning studies and aerial photography. The initiative also served as a focal point for consolidating infrastructure financing requests to the Ministry.

Other larger cities include *Ploiesti* that began initiatives for metropolitan cooperation in 2002 including commissioning studies on demographic trends, economic development and a proposed institutional context for cooperation (see Ploiesti section below). *Timisoara* has been working with adjoining communes on a more informal basis in the areas of urban planning, road networks, proposed land use, residential development and infrastructure projects. The Timisoara Development Strategy adopted in 2001 laid the groundwork for cooperation between the municipality and the surrounding communes. *Bacau* adopted an inter-communal Territorial Plan in 2003. The cities of Baia Mare and Turgu Mures are also initiating efforts in metropolitan cooperation.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The following is a brief summary of the legal context for metropolitan development in Romania; more extensive analysis is available in existing studies and the work of the Chief Architects Association.¹³

- A metropolitan area is defined in Law No. 351 (2001) as an area comprised of the voluntary association of urban and adjacent local governments.
- A metropolitan region is defined in Law 350 (2001) as the area around first rank cities, including localities within 30 km, where mutual relationships are created in the areas of communication, economy, society, culture and municipal infrastructure.
- Ordinance 53 on the Law of Local Government Organization and Cooperation defines the process of establishing a metropolitan area.

Underlying these legislative acts is the concept of subsidiary where local governments do not give up their existing competencies to a higher level of government.

The planning instruments available for shaping the physical development of metropolitan areas or cooperation on land use planning among two or more local governments are noted in the following table. The planning instruments can be divided into two main categories:

- Directive – provide guidelines and the institutional framework for cooperation; and
- Imperative – are compulsory and detailed plans.

Planning Instrument	Directive (Guidelines)	Imperative (Compulsory)	Metropolitan Application
Inter-communal Plan	xxxxxxx		Developed for inter-communal and metropolitan approach. The plan provides administrative guidelines but is not binding in terms of land-use regulations.
PUG (General Urban Plan)	xxxxxxx	xxxxxxx	Possible for two or more adjoining municipalities to develop a PUG. Approved by local councils, not an option that is practiced.
PUZ (Area Development Plan)		xxxxxxx	Two or more local authorities can develop an area development plan that, upon approval of local councils, becomes binding. Has been used for inter-communal land-use planning.
PUD (Detailed Urban Zone)		xxxxxxx	Possible but an unlikely use of this instrument in an inter-communal setting.

¹³ For an English summary see *Iasi Metropolitan Cooperation, A case Study* (Grasp 2004)

General Urban Plans fall somewhat into both categories of directive and imperative since the plans define structural elements such as roads or transit; provide guidelines on administering the plans; and define compulsory land uses and specific development areas. While all four planning instruments can be potentially applied in inter-communal cooperation, the two most used are the inter-communal plan and the area development plan (PUZ). The Oradea metropolitan zone used the PUZ for developing joint land use plans along development corridors that included the municipality and the communes. The Inter-Communal Plan is an important instrument for developing a consensus on regional development priorities and the identification of physical plans to guide growth and protect sensitive zones.

The recent forms of metropolitan or inter-communal cooperation are operating under a flexible legal framework that allows local governments to associate to provide public services. There are few directives in the law and the more innovative local governments have gone ahead and developed their own forms of association.

A recent report by ARD for USAID Romania¹⁴ highlights new proposals under consideration in the Local Public Administration Law to provide additional incentives for the creation of “associations for community development.” These associations are to be formed by two or more local governments that create a new entity with its own legal personality to provide a specific local public service. The associations will be managed by a board of administration with members appointed by the participating local governments. The report notes that financial incentives for associations are available to “finance their [the associations] activities” on a competitive basis (overseen by the State Office for Decentralization). An important emphasis in the report is “the apparent intent is that newly created associations will use these funds primarily for necessary infrastructure rather than for operating and maintenance expenditures.”

SCENARIOS FOR APPROACHING METROPOLITAN COOPERATION IN ROMANIA

Romania’s transition towards a market economy involves ongoing economic restructuring, privatization, and private market development. The opening of the Romanian economy has given wide latitude to domestic and foreign investors, and private investment has started to gravitate to locations in rural communes on the urban fringe where land is cheaper. Development controls are lax and new construction is occurring frequently without adequate infrastructure or an understanding of the long-term consequences of fragmented growth.

In more dynamic urban areas, rising standards of living, increased availability of credit for automobiles and housing (secondary mortgage market legislation is under consideration) will also increase pressures for development on the urban fringe.

The forthcoming infrastructure programs financed by EU structural funds and environmental programs will represent a very significant increase in funding levels for infrastructure. Within metropolitan areas these investments, when programmed in an uncoordinated manner, have the potential to accelerate undesirable development patterns.

These trends need be addressed by clarifying the relationships among the county, municipal governments, and communes in the preparation of regional development strategies and a fair sharing of its anticipated public costs and benefits. Inter-communal and particularly “metropolitan” cooperation can increase the effective absorption capacity of EU structural funds and the quality of the projects that will be undertaken.

The need for partnership between cities and surrounding regions is becoming more important as development pressures accelerate. In Romania, guiding growth at a metropolitan scale is hampered by the difficulty of identifying common opportunities and problems that cross jurisdictional boundaries, and

14 Larry Schroeder, forthcoming Report Reviewing Draft Decentralization Legislation, September 2005.

hindrances to organizing across boundaries to collectively address them. In a separate report for the Chief Architects Association,¹⁵ Mr. Liviu Ianasi outlines the following scenarios that might be considered:

1. “Imposing partnerships” through a strong central government role. This approach is characterized by a top-down decision requiring compulsory cooperation in a pre-established format for municipalities in certain situations (population size, contingency) or in certain areas (narrow valley, sea-shore, mono-economic vocation).
2. The “learning by doing” attitude: leaving the total freedom to municipalities to decide when, on what subject and under what terms to cooperate; allowing them to do so within the limits of local autonomy and eventually providing the adequate tools—types of plans, programs’ or projects’ format.
3. The “proactive” approach: designing and implementing a coherent policy that brings together a consistent legal frame, institution-building processes and strengthening capacity through trainings, identification of models/patterns of partnerships, central sectoral policies coordinated with regional/county strategies, and financial and fiscal incentives and community partnerships.

Imposing partnerships in the context of adopted decentralization policies is not a viable alternative. As also noted by Mr. Ianasi, the learning by doing approach reflects the existing approach to metropolitan cooperation that is characterized by:

- A clear but very loose legal frame;
- Isolated experiences (with various levels of success, given institutional weaknesses or lack of incentives);
- Limited financial or fiscal incentives and a critical lack of coordination in planning: both vertically, between policies and programs at various levels, and horizontally, between the spatial planning, infrastructure investment planning and public finance planning.

The preferred approach is one that would reflect current EU practices and the more recent forms of metropolitan cooperation in the United States that fall into the proactive approach.

- Developing mechanisms and frameworks to coordinate the EU structural funds and centrally financed infrastructure investments that shape metropolitan growth. A formal proactive consultation process with metropolitan areas that will be affected by these projects is needed to ensure that they not only reflect metropolitan area and local needs but that local governments can incorporate them into their strategic plans and take full advantage of their economic and spatial development potential.
- Identifying a range of alternatives for metropolitan cooperation based on voluntary forms of cooperation within a coherent set of policies, programs and incentives that ensure better horizontal and vertical cooperation.
- Identifying important core issues that can be addressed at a metropolitan scale; for example, economic development, access to financing, strengthening public administration and coordination, infrastructure, planning studies, social services, environmental issues (sustainability) and social inclusion policies to address growing social disparities.
- Integrating data collection and reporting for metropolitan areas.
- Identifying models of cooperation that ensure a link between “governance, transparency and accountability” and technical capacity to undertake programs.

¹⁵ Mr. Ianasi is a member of the project team involved in this assignment.

- Developing capacity-building programs and best practices to strengthen the capacity of coordinating bodies to implement a range of programs.
- Depoliticizing the process by building awareness, especially among leadership of local governments to understand the benefits of inter-communal cooperation and provide examples and tools of how the cooperation can be formed given local priorities.

Institutional Cooperation

A challenge to developing effective regional development strategies will be finding mechanisms for encouraging local authorities to develop their plans in accordance with the adopted regional strategy.

Experiences from the U.S. and French cases highlight the need to develop effective linkages between activities of a “regional agency” and the capability of local governments to develop and implement their own land use and infrastructure investment policies within the regional guidelines for development. The earlier experience in the U.S. of Councils of Government showed the limitation of an outside “NGO” effectively influencing local land use decisions driven by local priorities and interests. More recently, the mission of regional planning organizations in the U.S. is to be advocates for regional strategies through consensus building and technical assistance. This requires access to technical and professional skills in strategic planning, infrastructure and planning studies, geographic information system (GIS), and demographic studies among others.

The Oradea metropolitan case provides a good example of how technical assistance can be provided to local governments in developing joint planning activities along the development corridors. The Oradea metropolitan technical team located in the Municipality of Oradea coordinated the studies among the different local governments involved and provided the necessary technical and management skills.

Models of Cooperation

All of the cases presented for the U.S., the EU and Romania have a common feature: the need for metropolitan or inter-communal cooperation between a major urban center and the surrounding communities. *The examples from the EU and the U.S. illustrate that “one size does not fit all” in developing models of cooperation at the metropolitan scale.* In Romania, EU accession will influence potential choices of cooperation that will work within a more coherent vertical structure. The U.S. models show the advantage of providing more flexibility in developing inter-communal compacts based on local needs and priorities. Yet, in both the EU and U.S. models, the underlying trend is to develop effective models in the context of devolution.

Romanian models for cooperation will reflect local institutional capacities and resources. For example, in some cases, the County may play a stronger initiating and coordinating role while in other cases, due to stronger institutional capacity, the major city will be the initiator and potential provider of technical resources.

A major issue that is evolving with the current model of a metropolitan NGO is the capacity of the NGO to develop the technical expertise in land use planning, infrastructure studies and GIS. To date, many of the larger municipalities have invested considerable time and resources in developing these activities through extensive training programs and have built an experienced cadre of professionals. They have also gained experience in writing terms of reference for consulting studies and services and managing these contracts to achieve effective results.

Depending on local capacities, mechanisms should be developed to capture this scarce resource rather than reinvent it within an NGO. Based on Memorandums of Understanding, the planning offices of experienced

municipalities or counties could be engaged to undertake this function on behalf of the NGO. This would allow the NGO to concentrate its capacities in networking and developing funding proposals.

PLOIESTI METROPOLITAN ZONE

INTRODUCTION

Ploiesti, following examples from Oradea and Iasi, initiated planning efforts in autumn 2003 to support the formation of a metropolitan zone. Initial studies undertaken by local consultants have analyzed the current economic, demographic and, to a limited extent, the physical characteristics of development of Ploiesti. The studies have also recommended an institutional structure for organizing activities in the metropolitan zone.

There was general support for the concept among the mayors and local councils in the first half of 2004. After the June 2004 elections, new mayors and councilors were elected in the majority of the communes, and their priorities shifted to new mandates. Currently the Municipality of Ploiesti, Prahova County and selected communes are interested in reengaging the issue of metropolitan cooperation.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

The County of Prahova with 176 persons per hectare is the second most urbanized county in Romania. The County of Ilfov (190/persons/hectare) has the highest density given Bucharest.¹⁶ Together, these two counties are in the process of becoming an urban agglomeration given the new road (E60) and rail improvements connecting Bucharest and Ploiesti. The 2002 population in Ploiesti metropolitan area was estimated to be 300,350 with 237,400 residents in the municipality and 62,950 in the surrounding communes.¹⁷

Within the Ploiesti area, new commercial, industrial and residential developments are occurring within the city and on green field sites within the adjoining communes with a tendency for new growth to occur to the north and northwest along development corridors defined by the existing national roads to Transylvania and Moldova, as well as by the future highway corridor.

This new growth, occurring in an opportunistic manner within each of the respective jurisdictions, represents short-term economic gain, yet poses serious longer-term consequences. The **protection of water sources, open space and the longer-term operational costs associated with fragmented land use, infrastructure and other urban services are not being anticipated by local authorities.** Business opportunities that build on advantages of location in the Ploiesti area also may be lost because of disjointed approaches.

METROPOLITAN COOPERATION—CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

There is a recognition among the mayors of the functional relationships that exist between the communes and Ploiesti as the major urban center—for example: periphery to center commuting patterns for employment and services; students attending schools across jurisdictional boundaries; access to health care

¹⁶ Institutul National De Statistica- actualizare 2002.

¹⁷ Numbers rounded from the 2004 PATICO study.

and administrative services in Ploiesti; and access to recreational areas in the communes as well as specialized facilities such as the agricultural school in the Barcanesti commune. This recognition is offset by a lack of understanding of the long-term implications of rapid and uncoordinated growth and that cooperation in services and economic development bring mutual benefits.

For the majority of the communes, there is a sense that their financial status is strong and that budget resources have grown steadily in recent years. Mayors generally felt that they can implement development projects within their own resources and continue to attract economic development on available land. The communes have been successful in attracting SAPARD funds for roads and infrastructure improvements.

The commune mayors acknowledge that the county plays an important role in providing access to external finances and assistance. Some mayors also understand that their communes' lack the technical capacity in urban planning and managing their assets. The county is interested in working with Ploiesti and the communes in developing metropolitan approaches.

Regarding communal property, two issues are evident: there are selected disputes over the ownership of public property; and there is a tendency to sell communal pastures for green field development and ignoring the value of land as open space in the long term.

There is a lack of consistent cooperation between and among the communes and between the communes and Ploiesti on individual projects. While individual initiatives have occurred, both officials in the communes and the municipality note that implementation has lacked sufficient and consistent follow-up.

BUILDING METROPOLITAN COOPERATION

Developing a metropolitan approach for the Ploiesti area should be based on an incremental approach that systematically builds working relationships and political cooperation. Given the impact of the recent elections, it is difficult to move directly to a large-scale cooperation program necessary for the development of a comprehensive regional strategy. The development of smaller initiatives to build working relationships and the larger regional approach should work in parallel. Key activities in this process should include the following:

1. *Increase the awareness* of the political leadership, business community and the public on the opportunities and benefits of metropolitan cooperation as well as the costs associated with the lack of cooperation. The existing technical studies should be synthesized in a short summary document for distribution.
2. *Institutional and stakeholder assessment*—who is interested in participating among official, civic society and the business community and what are the key issues for metropolitan cooperation. Who is capable of actively participating (technical and staff resources, mandates, time) and what is needed to support the process.
3. *Identify **points of entry** for cooperation and prioritize.* Identify immediate short-term activities that can be implemented prior to developing a full regional program and institutional framework. The objective is to build working relationships among technical and political stakeholders at the county, municipal and commune level. Joint initiatives can be bilateral and multilateral. For example, based on discussions with the commune mayors, the following areas of cooperation with the municipality were mentioned:
 - Bucov: transit links, especially for students attending schools in Ploiesti.
 - Blejoi: improving transit options with Ploiesti and working with others to address the environment issues associated with networks of underground and aboveground oil pipes.
 - Paulesti: cooperation on county program to access loan funds to repair roads, upgrade the water network and build a small sports hall.

- Berceni: where most of the economically active population work in Ploiesti, there is an interest in better road connections to Ploiesti and transit services.
 - Bărcănești: cooperation in housing, transport and road connections to potential housing areas. Willing to develop formula for sharing public subsidies for transport.
 - Prahova County is developing a lending program for infrastructure improvements for local governments and is also interested in cooperating with Ploiesti in improving the efficiency of the building permit process for the communes in the metropolitan area.
4. *Develop mechanisms for engaging the business community* in the development of a metropolitan approach. Building on the existing economic analysis, engage the private sector through surveys and working sessions that emphasize economic competitiveness and the proximity and relationship to Bucharest. Working with the business community, identify information and data relevant to location decisions.
 5. *Gather, update and synthesize selected data* that indicate and monitor physical, demographic, and economic trends and use the information in developing proposals for joint initiatives. Data collection should occur for the entire metro area (30 km), even for communes not actively participating in the metropolitan area.
 6. *Build a communication network* among city halls through computer, networks and software. This will also enhance data collection.
 7. *Define and prioritize “urgent studies”* on water resources, road network, and distribution of high tension and refinery pipe networks that influence on development patterns. Conduct preliminary diagnostic study on sensitive areas (natural forestry, lakes and sensitive protection areas or areas facing high growth pressure and development corridors). Classify activities: programs, policies and projects; regional, bilateral, and multilateral; financing sources—local, central, external; short-term and long-term. These can be fed into the larger metro strategy and identification of priority topics for collaborative action.
 8. *Develop preliminary proposals for guiding and regulating development* (road networks, land use controls, permitting process).

GOVERNANCE

Building the structure for metropolitan cooperation in the Ploiesti area should be based on a voluntary compact that is open to other communes joining in the future.

The existing proposal for an institutional framework outlined in the 2004 studies is based on what is possible within the existing public administration laws in Romania. The proposal is to create an NGO that would include a governing council drawn from the mayors and councils, the use of advisory commissions in key development areas, and a director and staff to support program and project development. Funding would come from the participating local governments as well as funds that the NGO can raise. Similar approaches have now been implemented in Iasi and Oradea.

Development of an NGO for metropolitan cooperation on the basis of voluntary association takes time and is accomplished in a context of political cooperation. Also, as evidenced from the Oradea and Iasi experience, fully operationalizing an NGO requires additional time and effort in terms of appointing staff and developing effective working relationships among the political leadership and senior technical staff in the county and other local governments.

INTERIM STRUCTURE AND ACTIVITIES

Working Group

It is advisable in the current political climate not to proceed immediately to developing an NGO; this should be done at a later stage. The first step in organizing metropolitan cooperation should be to appoint a small working group that includes senior technical staff from at least the Municipality of Ploiesti, the County and, if possible, those communes that have staff available. An interim advisory group could also be appointed drawn from the political leadership, civil society and the business community.

The working group could begin to work on joint projects and when working in a particular sector (data collection, building permits, transit, etc.), include technical staff from the respective agencies. These cooperative projects can be defined within MOUs which clearly outline responsibilities and resources. Suggested initial activities for the working group could include the following activities.

Data Collection. Selected data on land use and building permits, demographic and financial information should be collected and compiled for the Municipality of Ploiesti and all the communes within 30 km. Trends should be indicated by collecting data from at least three years.

Building Permits. The County of Prahova, with more than 100 administrative units, is responsible for assisting the communes in processing requests for building permits. Its planning department, with a staff of 18, lacks the capacity to process these requests in a timely manner. Ploiesti, on the other hand, processes permits within two weeks. Currently there is a discussion between the county and Ploiesti to have the municipality assist in processing the building permits for the communes surrounding the municipality.

This is a very *innovative initiative* that should be pursued. The proposal is to work within the existing procedures and legal framework; for example, permits would still be signed by the mayors in the communes. The processing of building permits with the assistance of Ploiesti provides a unique opportunity for improving the efficiency of the permitting process and collecting data on a regional basis regarding the location and type of building permits. The modalities for this cooperation will be explored by the Chief Architects of the county and the municipality including the cost of processing the permits and how to manage related fees.

Transport and Transit. Road links and coordinating public and private transit linkages between the communes and the municipality is a common point of agreement. Initial meetings have been held on potential cooperation and should be developed into a full program. In some cases, potential solutions between individual communes and the municipality might be relatively easy to accomplish. In the commune of Bărcănești, the mayor noted that there is a relatively short but important gap between the stop within the municipality and major retail and public facilities such as the regional agricultural vocation school where one-third of the students are from Ploiesti. In other cases, such as roads, the cooperation will require capital funds.

Seminar on Metropolitan Cooperation. There is a willingness on the part of the mayors to participate in a seminar to discuss possible areas and framework for cooperation. The initial resistance to cooperation on a metropolitan scale is not unusual, especially between the communes and a major urban center. Similar issues to those noted above were evident in the early stages of the development of the Oradea Metropolitan Zone. The seminar should be viewed as the first in a series to reengage the key stakeholders and provide an opportunity to illustrate to the political leadership and other stakeholders that there are:

- Multiple benefits to joint planning, economic development and service delivery based on existing and potential functional relationships among local governments in the Ploiesti Metropolitan Zone;

- Long-term negative consequences arising from the lack of cooperation; successful Romanian and international examples of metropolitan approaches to governance and service delivery;
- Potential areas of cooperation among local governments in the Ploiesti metropolitan area; and
- Potential funding sources available for programs, planning and infrastructure projects available through cooperation.

A suggested agenda for the first seminar is outlined in Appendix 1. One of the outcomes of the seminar is an agreement and action plan for initial cooperation and key milestones that can be subjects for other seminars. The seminar should be organized by the working group to build a track record of joint activities. The option of having both the Ploiesti municipality and the county sponsor the seminars should be discussed.

ANNEX 1:

OUTLINE FOR SEMINAR ON PLOIESTI METROPOLITAN ZONE

Audience: Mayors and Councilors participating in metropolitan initiative	
Purpose: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on current initiatives in Ploiesti; • Present International and Romanian cases; • Outline next stages of cooperation—potential projects (hard and soft) and structure for starting cooperation • Update on metropolitan efforts by the chief architects association and input to broadening practice in Romania 	
Format: A day and half	
Location: To be determined, most likely outside the city.	
First ½ day module:	Start in second half of the day. Gives people time to travel.
1. Introductions and official greetings	
2. Update on Ploiesti initiative and update on PATICO elaboration stage	Focus on potential areas for cooperation with emphasis on concrete programs and projects. For example—transportation initiative, joint processing of building permits.
3. International Perspective	Benefits of cooperation, selected examples to give perspective.
4. Short Roundtable by Mayors—development priorities, what they can bring to cooperation	This will require visits to the mayors prior to the workshop. They should be given an outline of a presentation and information to provide.
5. Romanian Case-Oradea (1) – Mayor Phillip, Commune Mayor	An option is to also invite one of the mayors from a commune in the Oradea Metro to present. A short written summary of the Oradea case should be provided.

6. Dinner	
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Second ½ day Module:	
1. Second Romanian case-Timisioara (Radu Radoslav)	The Timisioara case illustrates sectoral cooperation on specific planning issues developing from the Timisioara development strategy.
2. Oradea-Planning Issues (Andrei Luncan)	Presentation on planning initiatives coming out of Metropolitan cooperation including pilot metropolitan strategy, inter-communal planning studies along development corridors.
3. Urban Management issues in inter-communal cooperation.	Overview of management options associated with inter-communal cooperation. Legal framework, institutional structures for central, county, local financial cooperation; potential—capital investment strategies. Comment on experiences to date from Oradea and Iasi.
4. Parallel Sessions:	
a. Mayors: Discussion on joint development priorities and how to link independent activities.	Facilitated discussion to identify what priority activities that can be achieved in cooperation (bilateral or multilateral basis) and how to cooperate in (independent activities).
b. Chief Architects (Synthesis of Romanian cases and potential application to Ploiesti)	Recommendation on next steps to facilitate cooperation on projects.
5. Lunch	
Third ½ Day Module:	
1. Plenary—Parallel Sessions reporting back.	Outcome is an agreement of a work plan for next activities including preliminary agenda for second workshop.
a. Mayor’s session: Agreement of areas for cooperation.	
b. Chief Architects: Recommendations for Ploiesti.	
c. Agreement on next steps	
2. Closing	

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