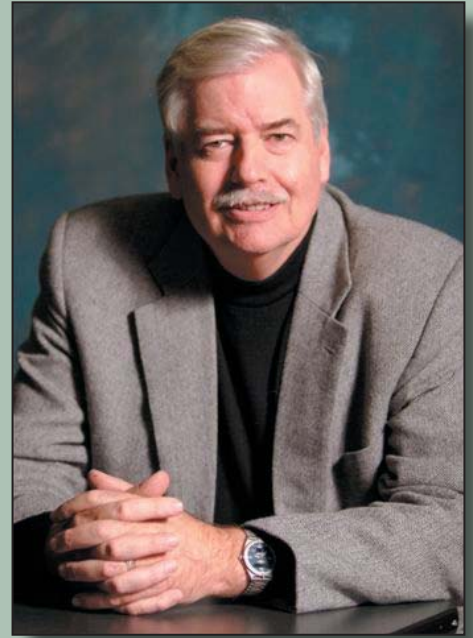


REPRESENTATIVE JOE KING

Joe King was a legislator from 1980-1992 when his political career ended with an unsuccessful run for Governor. Joe was Speaker of the House of Representatives from 1986-1992. Joe is most proud of his work on the Growth Management Act and on establishing the Washington State Basic Health Plan. He and his wife Sam currently make their home in Tenino, Washington, where they care for two horses, three dogs, and more cats than they can count.



Interview with:	Joe King
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Interviewed by:	Rita R. Robison
Transcribed by:	Brian McConaghy
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Tape 1, Side 1

Rita R. Robison: This interview with Joe King is about the history of Washington State's Growth Management Act (GMA). The date is August 3, 2005, and the interview is taking place at Joe King's home in Tenino. My name is Rita R. Robison, and I will be interviewing Joe King today.

Rita: What interest did you have in land use planning and the Growth Management Act before the passage of the GMA in 1990?

Joe King: On my background or interest, I'm not a planner. I have no professional planning background and very little interest in planning. The story that I've told a lot of times happens to be true about my initial impetus. It was to get some form of managing growth for the state. I was driving in Puget Sound—my district was Vancouver, which was starting to undergo some growth, but nothing like what was happening in Puget Sound—and I was stuck in traffic on a state highway. I looked over on my right-hand side and here were a couple hundred new apartment units going in. I like apartments, I like higher density. But I wondered, How the people were going to get to work, and I wondered, Who coordinated all this? Somebody must have taken into consideration the kind of impact the new residents will have on traffic and other impact they will have on the community. Well, I looked into it and clearly there wasn't any coordination. There weren't different people who were individually worrying about the impact of this growth. So that was really the impetus for growth management.

Rita: And was that in the late 1980s?

Joe: That would have been 1987, probably in the summer. We worked on growth management for a long time. We passed it in 1990, the first bill.

Rita: So then, when did this concern and idea that you had crystallize into the vision of a GMA?

Joe: I started thinking about it—it's not as though somebody throws a light switch and you see the problem going on. There was a trip that I sent several staffers on to Florida. They came back with lots of ideas. So that began a long process and a lot of coalition building. It took about three years of hard work.

Rita: So what models were used in drafting the Washington GMA? You mentioned Florida, that people went there. Is that one model that was used?

Joe: Florida was one. The first place that I went was Oregon. Oregon had had the strongest land use plan in the country—they were the earliest. So I began to explore in Oregon. I lived in Vancouver just across the river and had easy access to Oregon policymakers. One of the Carolinas also had done some work, but at that point with the exception of Oregon and Florida and one of the Carolinas, there just weren't a whole lot of great models. As you know by now, we came up with a model that didn't really rely on any of the other states. We took a little from all of them, I suppose.

Rita: What was the original intent of the GMA?

Joe: From my point of view, it was to make sure that as we grew that we measured the impacts of growth and had infrastructure in place to fund the impacts. It was not—at least in my mind, remember you had a lot of people who worked on it—intended to be an antigrowth law. It wasn't even intended to slow growth. It was saying, "Look, if we're going to grow, let's figure out how we're going to get people to work. Let's figure out what we're going to do about sewage capacity. Let's figure out how we're going to handle the services that that growth is going to require."

Rita: What role did you play in the passage of the GMA?

Joe: I was Speaker of the House [of Representatives] during that period, and I began meeting with my legislators and talking to them about their thoughts. I had members of the House Democratic Caucus that had far more experience than I in thinking about these issues. So, I ended up assembling a group of six different committee chairmen. There was Busse Nutley chairing Housing, there was Mary Margaret Haugen chairing Local Government, Jennifer Belcher chairing Natural Resources, Ruth Fisher chairing Transportation, Maria Cantwell chairing Economic Development, and Nancy Rust chairing Environmental Affairs. So they began to work, and it was an unusual way to do the legislation. Normally a bill like that would go through one committee. We sent parts of it to each of the six committees to work on. On a policy basis, that was done to give it as comprehensive a look as we could. On a political basis, it was done to confuse our enemies and not give them a real clear target of what to shoot at. So after it came through all those committees, we then put it back together into one piece of legislation.

Rita: So how did you get all the committee chairs to go along with your plan? How did you make that work?

Joe: Well, the truth is, I'm a very good delegator and I really listened a lot and really followed the lead of those committee chairs. I didn't pretend to be a planner. I didn't pretend to have inside information on how we ought to plan for the future and manage growth, so I didn't go to them with a single model that they had to adopt. I went to them and said, "I think we ought to do something. I'd like to help." They agreed, "We'll give you help."

Rita: So were the committee chairs all charged up about the...?

Joe: They became charged up. It was not an automatic. There was initial reaction from some of the chairs, “Well Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, what the hell do you know about this. It’s not your territory, you’ve never worked local government issues. You haven’t worked some of these issues so what are you doing messing around in our bailiwick?”

Rita: So, the chairs were all women. Was that unusual?

Joe: I suppose it was. I’m going to guess 60 to 70 percent of our chairmen were probably women. I didn’t pick them on that basis, it was just sort of the luck of the draw. And I can’t remember if I was the one that labeled them the Steel Magnolias or not. It was a term they chuckled over, but I don’t think they were really thrilled by that term [laughs]. But they were polite and they didn’t lambaste me too much for that. They did happen to be an extraordinarily talented group of people and if you look what they’ve done and what they’ve continued doing—you’ve got a U.S. Senator, you have a member of the state Transportation Commission; Mary Margaret Haugen is a powerful figure in the state chairing the Senate Transportation Committee. So it was a very, very talented group.

Rita: But the story doesn’t end there because we talked to Busse Nutley recently and she told us about the conference committee and their work. So the Steel Magnolias story is part of it, but there’s more to the story.

Joe: Right. The Steel Magnolias really were responsible for getting a pretty solid piece of legislation out of the House of Representatives. We then had to contend with a Republican, pretty conservative, majority in the Senate. It was led by Senator Jeannette Hayner, who was a very strong leader. She was called fondly the Margaret Thatcher of the Washington State Legislature. I would have to say that Senator Hayner was less than thrilled with the legislation. She had a State and Local Government chairperson who was a logical committee to send this to—that was Senator [Bob] McCaslin and he said basically over his dead body would he be passing the bill. So getting anything out of the Senate so that we could go to a conference was a real feat.

Rita: And you’re talking about in 1990?

Joe: 1990. There were a couple of things—this stuff never just happens, you have to have a context for it. In 1989, the fall elections of 1989, there’d been an election in Snohomish County in which a couple of very strong pro-environmental, actually antigrowth, councilmen got elected to the county council.

The Senate Republicans took note of that. There was a staff person that worked for Senator Hayner, very smart, very good guy named John Rico who was kind of like one of the unsung heroes of this. John was Senator Hayner’s political advisor, he was very savvy. He had a lot of national experience. He counseled Senator Hayner that she really needed to pass this. Now John was a conservative Republican, but he said, “Politically, you need to pass this, that if you don’t it could cost us a seat or two,”—cost them [the Republicans] a seat or two—in the Puget Sound region, primarily east of Lake Washington. Those were the districts where they were starting to have a lot of rapid growth and it was not necessarily sitting well with some of the public. So Senator Hayner took his counsel and said, “Okay, we’ve got to do something.” So from her point of view it was partly political and partly damage control, “Alright, we don’t want to make this too onerous.”

This was all before we met for our conference committee. So, we eventually got legislation out of the Senate and it was so widely disparate from what the House had passed that we were very discouraged. We had some kind of negotiations among chairmen and at one point we basically gave up. We had tried to visit with the Senate and we were just making no progress so we kind of—we stopped working on it a little bit. I convinced Senator Hayner that she ought to go to the table with us and it was a lot of very, very difficult negotiation.

There was one other thing—in terms of context, I mentioned the Everett, Snohomish County election. Another thing that happened, interestingly, was we worked on growth management legislation in 1989. It didn't pass and it wasn't nearly as well thought out. The environmentalists, led by David Bricklin, had an initiative of a very stringent, top-down growth management policy. I begged them not to run it, if they'd give us another year legislatively. They said they had to run it then. They filed it right after we passed the first growth management bill in 1990.

One of my staff, Tom Campbell who was one of the architects—was a key staff on this—said, “Why don't you go to Senator Hayner, since Republicans really didn't like the environmental version that was on the initiative, and why don't you see if you can't get her to sign a letter saying that if this initiative doesn't pass that she will support growth management in the Legislature.” Jeannette was very nervous, but I talked to her two or three times and she finally signed this letter which we made good use of in the campaign saying, “Look, we're going to do a more moderate bill.” We didn't have to remind her of her commitment on this, Jeannette really was a person of her word, so that was a factor in passing that legislation in 1991.

Rita: So, tell us about the process for the second bill in 1991, the implementing phase. How did that work in getting that through since the first bill had been passed? Was the second round, with the implementing part for the hearings boards, easier or harder in terms of people being knowledgeable in getting that through?

Joe: In 1991 the bill was also difficult to pass. It got stuck again in the Senate. Another unsung hero was Wayne Ehlers, who was my predecessor as speaker, and he then went on to work for Governor Booth Garner. Wayne Ehlers came to me and just said, “Lookit, we'll involve the Governor to adopt this, we'll do everything we can to get Senate Republicans to the table.” We were very suspicious. Governor Gardner had not been involved in the issue. We had tried to get him involved earlier; he had decided to take a pass on it, so we said we'd rather have no legislation rather than weak legislation. So Wayne Ehlers got it to the table.

One very funny story came out of those negotiations. There'd been a group of local government people, homebuilders, realtors working on a draft of the bill and trying to build consensus. They were really doing good work and they were working very hard. They came up with a bill that my caucus certainly didn't think was very strong. I didn't think it was very strong and for some reason Senator Hayner didn't like it very well.

So the Governor convened us all, he asked this outside group, led by a very good business lobbyist named Dick Ducharme, to come down and kind of report on their report on the consensus they'd reached. And Senator Hayner—who was very close to this business lobbyist and she was much closer to business probably than I was—drew herself up and said to Dick Ducharme, “Well, we're not going to accept your version of this.” And he began to remonstrate with her and she said, “What ever made you think you were a legislator?” [laughter] That was almost the end of that.

I walked out of that meeting in the Governor's Office, and went back upstairs to my office where I could look out on the Capitol steps on the north side of the Capitol. And I looked down there and saw Dick Ducharme in the middle of a group of lobbyists who were—for some reason my recollection was they were mostly younger men and they all had clients that had vital interests in either stalling the legislation or in watering the legislation down. And you could see Dick reporting the outcome of the conversation with Senator Hayner with them. You could just see them start to jump up and down and circle around Ducharme. They were so upset, they were so angry. I was looking down, chuckling at them.

You know, I have much less recollection about the implementing part that we passed in 1991. I don't

remember it being nearly as contentious. I don't remember it having nearly the amount of high drama that the bill in 1990 did. I would think probably in 1991 we may have set up the growth management hearings boards—is that when we did that?

Rita: Right.

Joe: Which has been the most contentious part of the legislation, the role of the growth management hearings boards. When I envisioned what became the growth management hearings boards, my goal was to have a substitute, it was to be a shortcut from sending stuff to the courts. I hoped to have a body of specialty, not courts, but a specialty kind of hearings board that specialized in growth management. And in my naiveté I thought that would speed up the process and keep stuff out of the courts. Growth management hearings boards have since then taken on a life of their own and didn't work exactly the way I envisioned them. We set out to have two hearings boards rather than three and Senator Pat McMullen, a good friend of mine...

Rita: So two, you mean for Eastern Washington and Western Washington?

Joe: Eastern and Western. And Pat McMullen who lived up in Sedro-Wooley proposed a third one. He wanted to have one for Puget Sound, one for the rest of west of the Cascades, and one east of the Cascades. I really think he did it because he had a friend of his that he wanted to get appointed to the growth management hearings boards. And I think, if I remember the story right, he succeeded in getting the hearings board set up for his area, but did not succeed in getting his friend appointed [laughs].

Rita: What is your most interesting memory of the dynamics of the events leading to the enactment of the Growth Management Act?

Joe: Well, I told the story at the Governor's Office because I get a big kick out of that. Well, I remember some of the fairly intense debates that I had in my office with the committee chairmen as we really wrestled to form these six disparate parts into a coherent whole. So, the idea that I was going to divide up the bill among six different committee chairmen was conceptually a pretty good idea, but the subject matter didn't always follow script.

So, there was a lot of work, a lot of intense bargaining, a lot of head knocking to get the chairmen to agree to give up parts of what they wanted into a coherent whole. Actually we had agreement, we had a lot even in the House, House Democrats, who were very anxious about the legislation and who were sure that it was going to be the end of our majority. Turned out they were wrong, we went ahead and built a stronger majority.

Rita: So how much did growth management increase the membership of the Democratic Caucus?

Joe: Well, I'd have to look and see. It would be hard to say precisely—this will sound funny—but there's not a lot that the state Legislature does that the public pays very much attention to. The actions of the state Legislature are not quite below the radar scope. I'd be hard-pressed to say that they gave us a lot of seats on that particular issue, but that would be hard to measure. I'm pretty certain it didn't cost us any seats. I don't know that I could point to a seat where it made a dramatic difference. Although if I look back on it, I'd find one, but I haven't thought about it for a long time.

Rita: Why do you think the Growth Management Act became law?

Joe: Because of the emerging growth pressures. Because of the political vise, the political position the Republicans were in—they wanted to be seen as dealing with the issue. And because a lot of people like myself just thought it was the right thing to do.

Tape 1, Side 2

Rita: What in the political climate led to the passage of the GMA?

Joe: Well, I talked about a couple of those—the Snohomish County election, the environmental community’s misguided attempt with their ballot initiative, and the state was starting to go through significant growth pressure so everything kind of lined up.

Rita: So, it was the growth pressure from the public that was part of it.

Joe: Absolutely. The public was starting to feel the impact of growth. By 1990 we had come out of the horrible recession in this state of the early 1980s, and we were beginning to get almost unprecedented growth. It was creating pressure and pressure on our infrastructure—on our roads, on our schools and the public wasn’t all that keen to have more growth, which would make matters worse. Once people were here, they weren’t sure they wanted more.

Rita: Why did you feel so strongly about growth management that you would hold up the passage of the gas tax?

Joe: Well, you just use every tool that you have at your command. I spent so much time and so much energy working on this issue that I just thought it was time to get it done. So I was going to use any tools that I could, any leverage that I could.

Rita: So then tell us about that leverage. Who were the people who wanted the gas tax?

Joe: Sure, you bet. The proponents of growth—developers, homebuilders—clearly understood that if they wanted to keep growing that you had to build more roads. So they were then and usually are strong proponents of building more roads and highways, as I have been over my career. I said, “Money for those is not the only issue. You’re going to have to do some planning at the same time.” So there was a real connection there and they knew that if they didn’t come to the table on the planning part of it, they weren’t going to get the money just to build roads. That was the connection there, the leverage there.

Rita: What was the opposition to the Growth Management Act and how were the people who were opposed accommodated?

Joe: Well, some weren’t. Some we just had to roll over the top of. Statewide homebuilders actually were supportive. They were very reluctant and they were very tough, but we had their support. Local governments were very concerned, although local governments were very funny because they thought it was going to—to some degree—infringe upon their ability to plan.

However, many local government officials would talk to me in a not public setting and say, “You’re doing the right thing. We cannot take the pressure from the local building and development communities in our areas. We need the state to back us up. We need somebody to be a bad guy. We need somebody to blame.” The local governments were very much at the table. Realtors were deathly opposed to it. They were the most conservative group and basically thought it was socialism.

Some of these groups change over time. And I’d be quick to say the realtors, over the last several years, in my perception, have been pretty perceptive and pretty progressive and stepped up on a lot of issues, but at that point they were very opposed. They were so opposed that they never really got to the table. If you don’t go to the table, you don’t get your needs accommodated and kind of get rolled over.

Rita: So, what about the Association of Washington Business (AWB)?

Joe: You know, I cannot remember if AWB was as opposed. They probably opposed it then. Do you know,

have you talked to anybody...?

Rita: No, but we're going to.

Joe: Good. I would think that AWB probably opposed this, although I think they were at the table and I'd be surprised if they supported this... People like the homebuilders who worked hard on it even if they were opposing us, they were at the table and they got a lot of accommodation. Groups that weren't at the table didn't get much accommodation.

Rita: So were there any compromises in terms of how things were...

Joe: Huge. Huge compromises. I suspect that in the back of my mind was an Oregon-type model. It was what I had the most experience with, living across the river from Oregon. Oregon is a very top-down model. It's very strong—the state sets the standards, actually does, and an organization called LCDC (Land Conservation and Development Commission) does a lot of the planning. That was the orientation I had going into this.

I was persuaded by people in Olympia, both on a policy basis and on a political reality basis, that we didn't really want to be that top-down, we wanted a more bottom-up planning.

So, the Growth Management Act really is not a very prescriptive act, at least as we intended. As you know, it requires local governments to plan. It gives them 13 goals that they have to plan for—we don't tell them how to plan, we don't even tell them what the standards are. We just say you have to plan—you have to adopt what kind of growth you think you're going to have and then you have to plan for the infrastructure. So our bill became much less prescriptive, much less top-down than the Oregon model that I think we were looking at.

One story as I was looking at Oregon was... About the first person that I talked to outside my staff and legislators was a fellow named Stafford Hansell, who had been a Republican Senator from Oregon, and he was there when Oregon passed their LCDC legislation. He wasn't the architect of the LCDC, but he was their first chairman. When I knew him he was chairman of the Columbia River Gorge Commission. So I asked what advice he had and he had two really good pieces of advice, both of which have come back to haunt us in different ways.

The first was, he said, "When you have areas to do your planning, don't pick on areas of the state where there's no growth. Those areas are pretty conservative. If they're not experiencing any growing pains, don't make them plan yet." That made sense to me. He said, "Those areas are just going to cause you more trouble."

And he said, "You also need to set up a strong watchdog organization since state government is probably not able to police this accurately, so you need a strong watchdog group." And I took his advice to heart. I went down to Oregon and talked to the 1000 Friends of Oregon. We went to the Bullitt's [Foundation] and helped set up a companion group in Washington, the 1000 Friends of Washington who just recently became Futurewise. Again, it was a land use group; it wasn't to be an environmental group. It was to be a group that studied and provided expert level of staffing on growth issues and to make sure that we were holding local governments' feet to the fire to make sure they were planning correctly. I think to some degree that group, again which was a planning group, a land use group, has become kind of an antigrowth group—that has been my sense of that. It didn't work out exactly as we anticipated.

The more funnier outcome was we didn't require in 1990, nor 1991, local governments with less growth—I can't remember what the threshold was—but basically if they weren't growing we didn't require them to plan. There's no requirement, though we did give them the opportunity to opt in to growth management

if they wanted money for planning. I was shocked when some of the most conservative and rural counties in the state opted into this and they're still complaining; but it was by their decision. Some of those counties still aren't growing; their populations are flat or still shrinking.

Basically, the planners and staff in those counties went to their county commissioners and said, "Boss, here's a way to get some money from the state." And I think we made \$35 or \$40 million available for the first chunk of that planning. That money was just too strong a bait and the county commissioners went after it and opted in. So they still blame me for their troubles with growth management; it wasn't me! [laughs] I didn't think you ought to opt in to start with.

Rita: So, you talked about "we" formed this citizens' group.

Joe: Yeah.

Rita: So, who do you mean by "we"?

Joe: I think Tom Campbell was active. We had some connections—I had, and Tom had, some connection to the Bullett family. I think Mike McCormick might have been part of the original group. We formed it when I was still in the Legislature so we got the grant from Bullett's to form 1000 Friends and were involved in picking a board. I didn't serve on the board because I was still in the Legislature.

I later served, briefly, for maybe a year on the board, but I just didn't—I was recently out of an unsuccessful run for governor. I was still burned out from public service, so I served a year or less and then got off the board. Up until the last six months or so, when they changed the name of the group, I'd been an advisory board member. And so when they changed the name of it, they let me get out of there gracefully.

Rita: Someone made the comment that Joe King rammed through the Growth Management Act. Tell us about that. Is that a good term to describe the process?

Joe: I suspect if you had waited for total consensus and to have 100 percent of the Legislature supportive, we might still be waiting and so it took strong leadership. As I've said I had a great crew and Maria Cantwell was a strong force on this. She not only built in strong policy pieces with the economic development planning goals, but she was very savvy about working with the press. So, we worked all the way through this process to keep the press apprised and again, to try to build public support, but the truth is—if I hadn't built the team, if we hadn't had those chairmen supportive, if I hadn't had the House Democrats supportive, if we hadn't convinced the Senate Republicans that it was the right thing to do, it just would not have happened. So, one person's ability to push a chain through a place doesn't work. You can pull a chain and lead some people, but you can't push a chain through that.

Rita: What was the early process for local governments to begin their work under the Growth Management Act?

Joe: I think it was for them to apply for grants, I assume would be the first implementing thing that they did before they could plan. A lot of local governments set up pretty elaborate public involvement processes. I know in Clark County they had hundreds of people involved in study commissions on this leading to the adoption of the first comprehensive plan. So, it was a lot of public involvement in this. Again, it's a very bottom-up process—that's not necessarily where we started out, but it was where we ended up and that probably makes sense looking back.

Rita: In terms of how the GMA is structured, what do you think are the most important parts of the law?

Joe: Asking, telling, demanding of local governments that they think about the future, that they plan for the

future with the 13 different goals that we have. It just forces people to sit down, hopefully in a community setting, and say, “What kind of community do we want to look like in the future and how do we get there and what are the steps that we take to get it?” There’s a very systematic, rigorous process they have to go through to do it.

Rita: How has the GMA evolved? What significant things has GMA done to meet the goals it was intended to achieve?

Joe: I would point to some examples. Even though I lived in Ellensburg, I maintained an apartment, a condominium, in Belltown in Seattle. I think the resurgence of Belltown and the higher densities are really a reflection of growth management. As you limited urban sprawl—which is very expensive—as you forced local governments to recognize the true cost of urban sprawl, I think that it has forced higher density and I think that you see that happening with higher density in urban communities. It’s still impacting stuff. As of a week ago, Thurston County just declared a moratorium on accepting any new subdivision applications for six months. So, it still absolutely has an impact.

Rita: How has the Growth Management Act changed land use patterns in the state?

Joe: I think there’s a little bit less sprawl. You have higher densities. It hasn’t made planning any easier, planning is always very contentious. I think it has given—in a process sense—county commissioners a process, commissioners who have a very, very difficult job, the hardest political job in this state. They have to make very difficult decisions that impact their neighbors’ livelihoods and that’s always a tough position. They do it in the context of very small hearing rooms where their neighbors are looking them right in the eye.

So, I think it’s given them a tool to deal directly with developers and I think it’s slowed down, it hasn’t stopped, but it’s probably slowed down the rate of sprawl. It has resulted in a lot of infill that just hadn’t happened and it didn’t do that, growth management didn’t do that so much by fiat. It didn’t say, “Thou shalt have no more sprawl,” but it said, “You’ve got to fund the development in urban areas.” And when you make people take a hard look at the costs of funding development in rural areas—they’d been under the impression that it was free—that you just continue to chop the land up without measuring the impact of it. So I think it’s changed it in that sense.

Rita: How has the GMA shaped various communities? Give us some examples of how it’s working at the local level.

Joe: Well, I mentioned Belltown. I think a lot of the Seattle neighborhoods are taking higher densities. I think maybe in Olympia here, some of the development down around the port, the downtown residential housing is starting to emerge. In Vancouver—which was my home when I did growth management—you’re seeing a lot of downtown development. You’re seeing local governments do more to accommodate higher density. You’re seeing smaller lot sizes. You’re seeing what I call “mother-in-law” apartments. And, eventually, you’ll see it force—I think you’ll see it force—more mass transit. We’re just running out roads and places to put roads in some cases.

Rita: How do you view growth management today?

Joe: I think growth management—I guarantee it wasn’t written by God, it didn’t come in a bolt of lightning. It came in a political process, it was born in a political process and I think that it ought to be continually reevaluated, proved, added to. I have never taken the position it was written and we can’t change any of it. I think we have to change with the change of the economy and change with the times.

Rita: So, what do you think of the most important amendments that have been made to the Growth Management Act over the years?

Joe: You know the truth is, I haven't followed the legislative history all that much of growth management. I think there've been some adjustments that I think will be positive to allow, with the right kind of process, large...

Rita: Industries in the rural area.

Joe: ...in the rural areas.

Rita: Right, if no place is available in the urban growth area.

Joe: Yes, exactly.

Rita: And you can meet certain criteria then you can have...

Joe: Thank you for the help. I think that that's a good thing. I think rural areas too often rely on just residential growth, and what some of those rural areas really need is industry to spurt that kind of growth and even their communities.

Tape 2, Side 1

Rita: If another state wanted to adopt a growth management law, what advice would you give them?

Joe: I'd give them some of the same advice that Stafford Hansell gave me. Don't pick any areas of the state that aren't growing. I would give the growth management hearings boards their role, I would be very clear about their role. I think ours have suffered perhaps from having too much latitude. I would give two things to the growth management hearings boards.

I would give them a tighter scope, but maybe more control—I still like to think that the hearings boards can be a substitute for our court system. I still think the original goal of trying to speed up the development process makes sense. In some cases growth management has worked, but what happened in some cases it has been used to stop the development process. But it ended up being just like sprawl—a slow, costly process. It shows up as higher home costs and higher costs of land.

I think I would encourage the use of the kind of a bottom-up process like we have. I would encourage them to use goals. I would caution them to be very careful about concurrency demands. Concurrency is a beguilingly simple concept. What could be more simple than paying for growth as you grow? It was certainly something I fought very hard for, but it has had—often when you make public policy it has consequences you just haven't intended.

Rita: How did CTED (Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development) react to the Growth Management Act?

Joe: Could you give me a little more focus? Do you mean they were vital players with Mike McCormick helping develop the legislation and then they were charged with implementing the legislation. I think they've done a magnificent job. I think they offer a lot of assistance to local government. I think they understand it. Some state agencies might have a no-growth or slow-growth policy—I think CTED from the start understood that they want responsible growth, that we want to fund growth, to the extent we can, as we grow. But I've never sensed they were out to stop the developers. I think they've been very responsible.

Rita: Do you have any additional comments or stories or major points that you'd like to make?

Joe: Oh, I think I've got most of my list in here. I have a certain repertoire of stories surrounding growth management and I think I got them all on tape here. So if I think of anything else, I'll get back to you.

Rita: I think I have an additional question. I'd like to know what your personal interest was in this, why you were really willing to take on such an arduous fight.

Joe: My prime interest when I ran for the Legislature was to work on economic development issues. So how does that translate from economic development into managing growth? And, as I have said, if we were at all successful at stimulating the economy—the truth is the economy was starting to grow whether or not it was our program that was responsible, I don't know, but it had started to grow. But I'd always said that we'd have to get to a point where we'd have to manage that process, and it didn't take a rocket scientist, even in Vancouver, to see the enormous growth that was about to happen and most of that growth was unplanned.

There was a new bridge in Vancouver, the Glenn Jackson Bridge, opening up in Vancouver and tying that to both the airport and to East Portland. The bridge went in, but there was very little thought given to land use and transportation issues other than the bridge. So the impact of it—property was much cheaper in Clark County and property taxes were much lower—was explosive growth in a lot of areas; the planning was very poor. I was trying to anticipate that, trying to head that off and even though I wasn't a planner, it was kind of a common sense idea to me. I really thought that in the long term that it was going to put more people to work—allow our economy to grow and continue to create jobs rather than unplanned growth, which would eventually choke off any growth. If you can't get people to work, you can't grow your economy.

So, I really often came at it from an economic development point of view rather than—as I said a slow growth [point of view]. I don't have a slow-growth bone in my body, but I want to plan it.

Rita: I think that's it. Thank you.

Joe: That was great. Thank you.