

China's Land Use Planning: Issues and Responses

HE Ge^{[a],*}

^[a] College of Economics and Management of Sichuan Agricultural University, Chengdu 611130, China.

*Corresponding author.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to present the issues in china's LUP, and then some suggestion is put forward to improve it.

Key words: Land use planning; Land management; Land use; China

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INTRODUCTION

Land use planning (LUP) is one phase of the over-all field of city and regional planning. Essentially it involves the study of past and present land uses in a community, a projection of the needs of services to numbers of people, and finally a written, graphic and visual proposal of how the total land space might be most economical and fairly divided among foreseeable uses. LUP serves a variety of purposes: control of the spatial structure of residential development; regulation of building types; regulation of land use; amenities by fiat. Chinese government has paid importance on LUP since the land law was firstly made in 1986. And there are three editors of LUP has been made in last decades. Objectively speaking, the LUP had achieved many performances in protecting farmland, controlling urban sprawl, increasing land use efficiency etc. However, some issues in China's LUP has caused it failure in regulating land use. So, this study aims at analysis of the issues in the LUP and put forward to some suggestion to improve it so as to it can play a scientific role in land

use management in the context of Chinese economic transformation.

1. THE MAIN ISSUES IN CHINA USE PLANNING

1.1 The Time Gaps Between Making and Implement the LUP

In China, there are two or more years' time gaps between making and implement the land use planning. That means we need to spend two or more years making land use planning. So the foundational data, such as population, economy growth rate, types of land use and land area may be collected two or more years ago. Once the planning starts to implement, the situations are mostly possible change. For example, when the second editor LUP over the period of 1997-2010 was making, the Southeast Asian financial crisis happened. Planners gave the smaller economic growth expectation. But the fact showed that the economy growth rate is far more than the forecast in the land use planning. Over the period of 1998-2003, the GDP growth rate is 7.8%, 7.2%, 8.4%, 7.2%, 8.9% and 10.0%, respectively. It is one of the most fast economic growth periods since the reforming and open-up policy. That means if the government had supplied the land according to the land use planning, it would be difficult to satisfy the land requirement for economy development. So, the time lag between making and implement the LUP can't make LUP itself play its role as proper.

1.2 The Conflict Between the Fixity of the LUP and the Complexity of Economic Development

On one hand, the LUP can't be changeable during the covered period in view of its seriousness. Or, it is time-consuming to change the LUP in order to be suit for the economic development. The land law in china regulate that the LUP can't be changed in any name once it is

approved. It showed that china's LUP is very serious in control land use. On the other hand, the economic development is complex, affected by multiple factors, such as some disasters of emergency, the economic policy, the goal of the policy and the international economic environment. So, it is hard for the LUP to forecast accurately the land demand in the next years. For instance, no one can forecast there is an earthquake in 2008 in Sichuan province. The earthquake not only caused huge economic damages, but also led to many infrastructures, such as highways, bridges and buildings destruct. After the earthquake, Chinese government unveiled a 4 trillion yuan economic stimulus package to stimulate economic growth and domestic demand. Obviously, this added difficulty to implement the LUP because the central and local governments' investment programs have demand for more land. In all, there is a sharp conflict between the fixity of the LUP and the complexity of economic development.

1.3 Being Short of Basic Work Before Making LUP

Firstly, the basic data especially all kinds of land use area can't get. Although the central government spent a big money to investigate the land resource, on one hand, the planner can't get the data immediately; on the other hand, the data is not so useful because it is changed before making it known. Chinese central government has carried out serious arable land protection policy but the local government aimed at the economic development. The economic development is based on the requirement for land, maybe arable land; the local governors had no choice but depend on acquisition arable land and didn't report it to central government. If the gap between the reality and the investigation, the governor may drop out from their position so they interpolate cheat before reporting the investigation result. Under this circumstance, the data fail to make the land use planning. Secondly, the data for the economic growth rate is not so informational. China has aimed at economic development for many years and the senior officers judge whether his subordinates could be promoted or not mainly by how many GDP is produced in his term. In this context, the local governors always exaggerate the economic growth rate. But the planner must depend on those data for forecast the land demand. Obviously, the result can't be scientific. Thirdly, the basic research on LUP is scarcity. The LUP has stemmed from planning economy, the main measure or approach has applied for almost thirty years. But the situation has greatly changed, the usage of land is diversity. The current LUP system can't be suitable for the changed circumstance because of being short of basic research.

2. RESPONSES TO ISSUE OF CHINA'S LUP

2.1 Replace the Technique of Making LUP

Firstly, marketing mechanism should be more taken when the LUPs is making. Although China has transformed from planning economy to marketing economy, the mode of LUP are mainly planning economy. This situation should be greatly changed in context of marketing economy. For instance, LUP should be conceptual rather than be operational. That means planner should told people what can do or can't in the LUP. As for how many land or how much the land should be decided by the market. Secondly, the process of making LUP should make more public participation. In the first stage, when the planner gather the data for making LUP, the public should participate by supplying more useful information such as the land's best usage, location and property right. In the second stage, when the planners make the LUP, the public should participate by give the planner's advise or suggestion on the LUP. When the third stage of the LUP, the public should participate by making it known and the most important is different department, different benefit groups, such as governments, farmers and potential land user should express fully arguments in the LUPs. Thirdly, the new technique such as GIS, RS and GPS should be more taken when the LUPs are making. To make the LUPs more actual and informational, planners should be taken some high technology to make the LUPs more scientific although these technologies are expensive and difficult to understand.

2.2 Reforming the Mode of Land Use from Extensive to Intensive

For China, intensive use land resources especially urban land resources is the fundamental to satisfy all sector's the land demand seeing as China is huge country with many people while few land. Firstly, the changeable benchmarking should be made in order to improve the efficiency of land use. Only this mode of land use can achieve or excess the benchmarking, the land should be supplied. Otherwise, it should be denied. Secondly, the potential efficiency of land use should be evaluated before making the LUPs. And this evaluated should be based on the different situation seeing as different economical development levels ask different efficiency. Moreover, the potential efficiency is different from the actual efficiency; the planner should fully take into account how much it can come into reality in the covering years of the LUPs. Finally, to achieve the goal of intensive use land, integrating with the demand and the stock among different land uses. So, the planner still need forecast different

sectors, such as agricultural sectors, industrial sectors and educational sectors the demand for land use. Then the land use transformation among different uses should be fully taken into account. And the goal of land demand should be forecasted with considering the potential land use efficient improvement.

2.3 Balance Benefits Among Different Groups

In essence, the LUPs is a tool by which land use benefits are distributed among different groups. To realize their benefits maximum, each group would like to distribute more land resources by the LUPs. But land resources is a kind of public goods, completely allocating the land resources by market mechanism is not the best one to satisfy the whole society's well-being. So, the planner should balance among different groups. Especially

China is a developing country. On one hand, the farmers have weak forces to protect their land in the context of the property right of rural land is ambiguous. On the other hand, China should mainly support by itself in term of food safety. So, the LUPs should pose more serious regulation on the farmland transformation into construction land to protect farmland.

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