

BUILDING LEGALLY DEFENSIBLE GROWTH MANAGEMENT
IN A COASTAL COMMUNITY: THE SANIBEL EXPERIENCE

by

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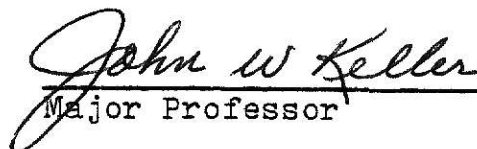
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

After two hundred years of progrowth attitudes by local governments, many American communities stopped encouraging growth for growth's sake in the 1960's and started trying to manage private development to achieve public goals.¹ The traditional approach to growth was that growth was desirable and indicated prosperity, or the growth ethic of bigger is better. The suburban growth rates of the fifties and sixties began affecting communities unaccustomed to rapid growth. These communities became concerned about their quality of life and in many cases wanted to preserve the "small town character" of their communities when confronted with growth pressures. Combined with this was a new environmental awareness with many communities afraid that more growth would have negative effects on their air and water quality.

New attitudes toward managing growth have not come about solely because of a change in the mood of the American people. Underlying these new attitudes have been large-scale shifts in national population distribution and unprecedented growth pressures on suburban and exurban areas. In 1970, for the first time in U.S. history, more people lived in the suburban rings of metropolitan areas than in the central cities or in rural