Urban master plans and their effect on urban lands in Iran

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Abstract

After 1933, when the act for the construction and expansion of streets was approved, most of the city routes were widened in order to resolve the problems that resulted from the removal of goods and vehicle mobilities in the old structure of the cities. The concept of urban land then changed.

After the street system plans were made, the urban land became a matter of importance in human life.

When the master plans were prepared and implemented in 1964, the value of the city lands increased considerably.

Nowadays in Iran, most of the master plans are not flexible and this leads to such problems as an increase in the value of private real estates and deprivation of some districts from the required services. It is possible to solve many problems with flexible plans, on the other hand, since the profit land uses make added value, then such values can be expanded for non-profit ones such as parks, libraries, public spaces, schools etc.

In this paper we study the effective factors that have increased the price of lands in Iran. We illustrate that fixed urban plans have given false added values to the lands for which profitable land usage is determined. In this paper we also suggest that flexible urban plans rather than fixed urban ones can be useful.
1 Introduction

The beginning of city planning in Iran goes back to 1933. The city planning activities in Iran have only been limited to the extension and widening of streets. This activities along with the establishment of high buildings gave a new shape to the cities in Iran. Following the networking plans in 1955 and preparing the guide, detailed and master plans for the development and construction programs in Iran, improvment in the texture of the cities and city lands became a matter of importance for the urban settlers.

Environmental and beautiful geographical landscapes are among the important factors in producing the added value of city lands. Due to this problem, a question is posed why the value of some urban neighborhoods in Iran, in spite of their nice environmental and geographical conditions are less that the other ones?

To answer this question, at first, one should study the roles of city lands in past and present and then go through the roles of construction and Development plans in giving value to the lands. Such steps taken, it is possible to get the favourite result.

2 City lands: present and past

People used to select a tract of land to build a house to live in. This was the common practice before the city plans were made. The cities expanded organically and structural texture of the city formed non harmoniously.

The city lands then had not been valued. The measures taken between 1951 to 1971 in city planning are as follows [1]:
- To construct wide street and squares.
- To demolish old sectors and cemeteries.
- To transform cleared areas into green spaces.
- To construct belt and ring roads.
- To improve city roads in structure.

All items above, are regarded as a turning point in the history of city planning in Iran. The 4th and 5th development plans more or less focused on the conditions of cities. Investors inclined to get more profits from city lands. During the implementation of plans of development, there was an increase in the profits gained from constructing buildings.

Ever since the consideration of land and housing as commodities,
many problems arose in the cities of Iran. Centralization of facilities, opportunities and investments in cities, and stop in the process of rural development, and implementing the plans of development in cities caused the price of city lands to increase. It goes without saying that surplus value in different cities varied due to their rank-size in urban hierarchy. There has been increasing number of population in urban areas and city changed to be a safe place for migrants. Such people, because of unemployment and the lack of satistactory income, found the city as a source of earning living [2].

3 Fixed urban plans and giving value to the city land

Most of the cities in Iran enjoy the old urban nuclei, and such nucleus have increasingly centralized after the earliest squares and streets were constructed. Such concentration have hindered the urban establishments and facilities to be set up [2].

During acceleration in the process of urban development in last decades, to gain access to road ways had been regarded as a factor of land quality. This, in turn, have led to more expensiveness of surrounding lands.

As city plans developed, two main questions arose:
● distribution of land uses.
● determination of urban density based on the standard of city planning.

Determining land use has assigned different rates for the city lands and this rate which may fluctuate, for example, the lands allocated for comercial land use are more costly than the lands used for non-profit purpose (housing, green space,...). In this way, fixation of profit land uses, in city planning caused the plan and city economics to face with problems and dangers.

Studies show that, the lands allocated for public uses may not be possessed by the relevant organization for a long time. This problem is due to disconformity between the city plans and budgeting process, on the other side, the matter of land possession will remain uncertain. Thus, there will be a certain economical injustice in urban planning. Some Iranian citizens will benefit from it and some may sustain a loss! Some parts of the cities may not gain access to urban services, because some public land uses in the city are not implemented.

Assigning the present invariable land uses in Iran will make many problems. In this way, landlord whenever he wishes, can raise the price of
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his lands or he may not use the land allocated for comercial land uses.

This problem can be studied from two points of view:
1. A surplus value is given to his real estate, while landlord pays anything to the municipality.
2. There will be no comercial services for some city sectors unless the landlord manage to construct buildings in those lands.

Studies made on Iranian cities[3] demonstrates that 5 to 40 percent of lands in legal restricted quarters have been left unconstructed, nevertheless 3 to 20 percent of constructions have been made outside the legal restricted areas. Such problems results from the economic tension which, in turn. They originates from marking the legal city limits.

Marking the legal city limits caused the lands inside the city limit to increase their value and this surplus Value forced the poor citizens to move toward slums involuntarily.

Studies made by Zista Consultant Engineers (ZCE) shows that the offered plans related to comprehensive urban planning in Iran have been put in practice only between 20 to 30 percent. Implementaion of some part of the plan in certain sectors of the city has caused the price of land and buildings to raise and this has led to imbalances in the urban economy.

4 Case study :Ahvaz[4]

Ahvaz is located in the southwest of Iran. It is formed by different city sectors with varisoue aspects. The existence of facilities and city services in one hand and the lack of the facilities on the other hand have led to the distinction between city sectors. Researches made on land use in Iran shows that, residential land use includes 55 to 75 percent of total area of the city.

Ahvaz comprehensive plan has not been noticeably able to change this ratio.

The lack of public land uses in some sectors has lowered the quality and standard of living a lot in the city, and high density of population has brought forth many social problems. Such density along with the shortage of urban services have reduced the economic value of these sections of the city. In contrast, there are other sections, because of the implementation of city development projects, enjoy integrated city texture and such sections naturally have enjoyed more facilities and services.

To find out the effects resulted from the lack of urban plans, this study is focussed on one of the sectors in Ahvaz.
20 Metry Shahrdari sectors in Ahvaz is one of the sectors in Ahvaz. Its population is estimated 7815.

Medium number of each family is 6.6. The researches made by the authors demonstrates that there is a high density of people in this sector. Sixty percent of the lands allocated for settlement. Residential per capita equals 7.3 square metres, while business, educational, clinical and green space per capita equals 5.9 square metres. The shortage of perhead services in this sector has caused the quality of people's life to decrease, thus the price of lands and constructions is much less than the other sectors with better conditions. The price of each construction per square metre equals 8$ to 9$. In contrast to the northern sectors, this ratio is one-fifth. Communication network in this sector appears to be organic and unfit. Unfortunately, no detailed and comprehensive urban plans have been put into practice for this sector. This sector, however, as compared with northern parts of the city has better environment landscapes.

The lack of development urban planning and carelessness of the city managers have caused this sector to remain on its unreal and lower standard and this, in turn has made the price of the lands and buildings in this sector, as compared with other ones, remain lower.

5 Conclusion

To generalize the effects of urban plans equally on urban areas and to economize the plan, we should find essential solution, as follows:
- to absorb the surplus value resulted from the plan.
- to expend the surplus value for city construction.
- to compensate the losses which the citizens suffered.

Substituting the flexible urban plans instead of fixed urban plans will cause the city problems in Iran to decrease. In such plans amount of money out of the surplus value resulted from profit land uses, should be paid by the landlords and landusers to the municipality in order to construct public land uses such as public parks, public buildings, and etc.

Implementing the flexible urban plans will lead to social justice in the cities and it will also cause many city lands not to be remained unused, and required land uses of neighborhood units will be constructed in a short period of time.

What a planner should notice in urban planning are:
- To wipe off disorganized aspects of urban areas.
- To make plans in order to achieve acceptable criteria in such parts of
the city.

Apart from geographical factors, if we look at all urban regions from the same point of view, then the price of city lands will not vary to be high as it is today.

Nowadays, urban planners play vital roles in the future of a city and their function regarded as a matter of importance. In this way, the experts and planners should make those types of plans which lead to all-dimensional development of urban sectors economically, socially, physically ...

To achieve this goal in Iran urban flexible plans are suggested.

Municipality plays a significant role in order to implement such detailed, and comprehensive urban plans which are related to city lands.

Implementing suggested plans with justice, giving priority to deprived and poor areas, paying special attention to urban infrastructures in such sectors will bring forth balances in the economic value of city lands, health, convenience and beauty for the city.

References