

The Urban Centres and Urban Villages Strategy of Seattle

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Introduction

In today's fast growing world, all levels of government are dealing with the issues of exploding populations and with the various urban issues that shadow increased humanity. Local governments need to deal with increased traffic congestion, suburbanization and its related high infrastructure costs, supplying affordable housing, and numerous employment and transportation issues. Various levels of government are involved with creating a web of nested policies that work together to deal with the issues that will benefit all aspects of society while also grappling with local issues particular to an individual community's.

There are various policy tools that planners have invented to deal with growth issues, some involving specifics with existing policies that already exist; others are novel ideas that best deal with the growth phenomenon more specifically. For instance, there is the concept of urban villages and urban centres. Within this plan, tools may include such instruments as bonuses for developers when they build or develop something that meets the needs of the city or community. There are established incentives and new ones evolving. In some instances, there may be regulatory factors established requiring a certain development agenda or plan that is to be adhered to such as those within the land use bylaws.

This paper will look at the Seattle example and its use of urban villages and urban centres to help guide the fast growth the area is experiencing and has been for the past number of years. The paper will look at some of the planning policies that are in place to deal with its fast pace of growth. First the paper will discuss the policy environment of the Puget Sound area and then of Seattle more specifically in relation to growth management. This will be followed by a description of the concept of urban centres and urban villages followed by an account of their application and function in the Seattle context. The paper will then focus on downtown Seattle and its urban villages to explore in aspects of land use, residential density, employment status, the transportation system, urban design, and public participation. While a thorough comparative study is beyond the scope of the paper, it will conclude with a discussion of what lessons might be transferred to another jurisdiction such as Calgary.

Institutional and Policy Breakdown of Growth Management Affecting Seattle

The Washington State Government created the Growth Management Act (GMA) in 1990 to guide the way in which the various levels of government handle growth over the next twenty years. In response, the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) was formed. The PSRC is made up of 65 of the 81 cities in the four counties comprising the Puget Sound area: King, Kitsap, Pierce and Snohomish. There are also other statutory members within the PSRC. The PSRC created Vision 2020 in 1993 as the region's growth management strategy to meet the objectives laid out in the GMA. Vision 2020 included a growth management strategy for transportation policies (Land Use Planning Policies and Regulations, J3; Puget Sound Regional Review, 1998, p. 1). The Regional Council monitors growth to ensure the goals and objectives of the GMA are respected. King County's Updated Comprehensive Plan (1994) deals mostly with its unincorporated areas. However, King County municipalities cooperated with Seattle for any inter-municipal issues.

In keeping with the guidelines of the GMA and Vision 2020, the City of Seattle created its Comprehensive Plan in 1994 to 'guide' the city's growth through basic policy decisions within a flexible framework allowing action to adapt to 'real conditions over time' (City of Seattle, 1990). The Plan took account of public opinion and respected the values of Seattleites to define priorities the Plan should maintain and enhance.

State and regional policies are established to control growth and urban sprawl. Regulatory consistency and jurisdictional cooperation are imperative for the success of managing growth effectively (Caruthers, 2002a,b). John Caruthers (2002a) tells how important local government are to make the process of a state growth management strategy work (p. 394-395). Local governments "represent the outlet for land use regulation" (p. 395) as does the Seattle Comprehensive Plan (2001). More specific land use policies are also set out in the Downtown Centre Neighbourhood Plan (1999) catering to specific neighbourhood plans within downtown. These Neighbourhood Plans also help to enhance the GMA through public input.

The Seattle Comprehensive Plan includes areas of infrastructure and the urban village strategy. Although there are important aspects of infrastructure worth exploring, this paper will investigate the particulars of the urban centre and urban village strategy to see how it has helped Seattle deal with growth and revitalization of the downtown neighbourhoods in the older areas in the city. Before getting into the details of the urban centres and urban villages, a look at Figure 1 provides an overview of the institutional framework and policy framework. These institutions and policies are an

example of a conjoint framework, as Caruthers (2002) asserts, are useful for implementation of the policies through regional planning, land use co-ordination, regulatory consistency, and jurisdictional co-operation (p. 395).

State Government

**Regional Governments:
Puget Sound Regional Council
King County Council (-) - - -**

Local/Municipal Government

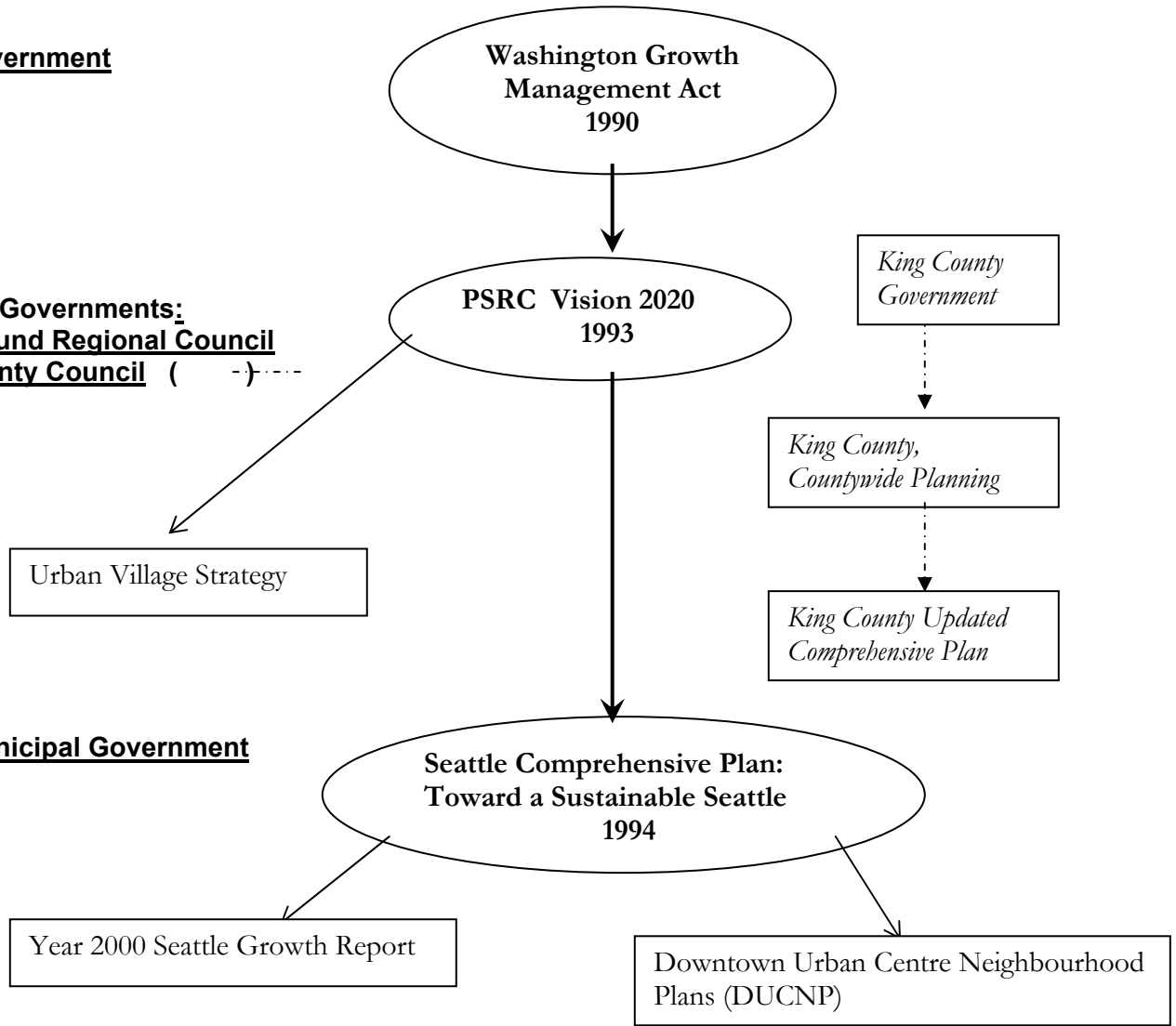


Figure 1. Institutional Levels and Policy Organizational Chart Pertaining to Seattle.

The idea and definition of urban centres and urban villages

Urban centres and urban villages are areas of focus for new development or redevelopment. They are intended to guide the placement of new residential buildings along with new office towers and in so doing help direct the way the city grows. The urban village strategy is a comprehensive approach

to planning whereby it is directing density of growth in specific areas more conducive to the amount to growth. For instance, the existing single-family areas can be protected while greater density is concentrated in designated urban villages where growth can be accommodated in the city's existing successful urban character. By creating more compact, pedestrian friendly mixed used area throughout the city, Seattle is preserving the single family neighbourhoods, city and county open space, and precious resource land. As Gillham says,

“creating incentive for new development in existing urban and suburban centres, thereby reducing the demand for outward expansion, could be one of the keys to preserving more open space and reducing other impacts of suburbanization ...” (2002, p. 186)

In the *1998 Puget Sound Regional Review* and the *2000 Seattle Growth Report*, urban centers and urban villages are intended as one of the ways that regional and local government are tackling the problem of growth while complying with the GMA. These centres are where a “high concentration of jobs and people will be found”; moreover, these centres will act as transportation hubs for a regional public transportation network (1998, p. 48). Within the 1998 Regional Review, analysis of urban centres was assessed by looking at the building permits and employment records to determine the changes of jobs and housing within the centres.

As the 1998 Puget Sound Regional Review states, one of the goals of the GMA is to “concentrate growth in designated urban areas” (1998, p. 39). Thus Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) were identified in which growth was to occur. Within these UGA, urban centres and urban villages were planned or enhanced. An urban centre is an area of the city to be designate to be a regional centre “with clearly demarcated boundaries, an area not exceeding one and a half square miles (960 acres), and a minimum residential density target” (Land Use Policies and Regulations, 1999, p. J-3).

The 1998 Regional Review says urban centres are unique in their character, history, and development pattern. Some are newer areas of concentration and have yet to attract housing, jobs and to create a pedestrian environment while others have the density to “support mix use activities” (p. 70). Urban centres normally encompass urban villages that develop their own neighbourhood plan. For instance, Downtown Seattle is considered an urban centre while “Belltown, [formerly Denny Regrade], is designated as an ‘urban centre village’ with a ‘primarily residential’ function” within Downtown Seattle’s urban centre. Other urban villages can have other functions assigned to them such as mixed use including both a residential and employment function.

The GMA stipulates that the individual neighbourhoods must address all of the following issues: Land use, housing, capital facilities, and utilities while the Comprehensive Plan added economic development, human development and an environmental component (City of Seattle, 2001, p. vi). The urban village strategy includes dealing with issues related to employment and transportation plans for housing and neighbourhood revitalization. They work on the community level with public input making each village a creation of local wants and needs.

How do urban centre and urban villages work in the Seattle context?

Seattle's central business districts lost its attraction to businesses and residents alike as suburban areas grew. Suburban areas captured a substantial portion of the downtown businesses clientele and a great portion of the residential community. Yet, as Porter indicates, Seattle managed to engage "substantial new private investment and greatly expand their civic infrastructure of governmental and cultural development (1997, p. 205).

There are 21 urban centres within the Puget Sound Region but the following discussion uses three centres to present some numbers and a brief comparison of the centres between 1995 and 1997. There were 1707 residential permits issued in Downtown Seattle, substantially more than any other city in the region (Puget Sound Regional Council, 1998). There were 386 residential permits in First Hill/Capital Hill and 247 in the University District, and about 75 in Seattle Centre. There were approximately 195,000 jobs in Downtown Seattle, just fewer than 30,000 jobs in First Hill/Capital Hill just over 30,000 jobs in the University District. Vision 2020 would like to see 25 employees per acre within the urban centres. These three centres discussed, along with four others, have met this employment target. The comparison also shows that Downtown Seattle is showing some success regarding residential and employment growth.

Downtown Seattle

The Downtown Urban Centre Planning Group (DUCPG), a volunteer organization made up representatives from five downtown urban villages, was organized to update the City of Seattle's 1985 Downtown Land Use and Transportation Plan. The five urban villages within Downtown Seattle are Belltown (Denny Regrade), Denny Triangle, the Commercial Core (Central Business District), Pioneer Square and Chinatown/International District.

Figure 2. Downtown Seattle Map with the Urban Villages, the International District, not shown on the map is southeast of Pioneer Square



Wagoner describes Belltown as a “hot area of residential growth featuring high-end high-rise condominium towers, apartments, galleries, cafes, and offices”. Some of the neighbourhood’s issues focus on protecting older low-rise affordable housing coupled with the provision of open space to support the local residents while providing access to the waterfront. Denny Triangle is described as underdeveloped with surface parking lots that ready to provide the land for new office and residential developments. Within this area there are ambitions to “stimulate a mixed use community, provision of attractive pedestrian streets, and infrastructure capacity” (Wagoner, 1999). Wagoner further explains that King County and the City have an interesting approach to encourage this development, whereby they are applying to “transfer development rights from rural areas to the Triangle”.

The Commercial Core is known as the traditional retail centre of the region including the famous Pike Place Market, a popular local and tourist attraction. The civic centre and many of the other cultural venues like the Seattle Space Needle complement Pike Place Market. The issues faced by this neighbourhood village include maintaining older, historic and small scale buildings while increasing the residential component in the area. Care must also be taken in development decisions given the limited supply of developable land in the area. Pioneer Square is the original downtown Seattle,

which has become a full activity centre for arts and entertainment with development restrictions protecting the historic character of the area. Today's issues include creating sensitive infill development to support new housing including artist's lofts, protection of retailers from nearby stadium congestion, and improved social service delivery to reduce the impacts of homeless population. Also, there is a rehabilitation project planned for the King Street Station, which will be used as the City's Amtrak terminal and also service other transportation functions. Finally, the Chinatown/International District urban village is the "historic gateway for Asian immigrants" with animated neighbourhood restaurants, shops and services 'supporting low-income seniors'. The area also acts as a regional cultural and entertainment district. Again, one of the issues is to increase the residential population by protecting the existing housing, lessening the stadium impacts while maintaining the rich multi-ethnic character of the village. (Ibid.)

Overall goals of the Downtown Urban Centre Neighbourhood Plan parallel the goals that were drawn up for the Downtown Urban Centre in Seattle's Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan intends for the area to be the focus for housing and employment with direct access to a high capacity transit system. The 20 year growth goal is to have 14,700 household and 62,700 jobs in the downtown centre. The Comprehensive Plan also wants the downtown to have a wide range of activities with the majority of these developments found in the region, along with open space such that there is "one acre of open space for every 1,000 households in each urban village plus one acre of open space for every 10,000 jobs" (Downtown Urban Centre Neighbourhood Plan, 1999, p. 8).

The Downtown Urban Centre is to be the *pre-eminent* regional centre for employment, residential, shopping, services, entertainment and culture. Economic development activities will be promoted to retain and attract business while also providing training opportunities for Seattle area residents. Goals specific to the Downtown Urban Centre Neighbourhood Plan include a focus on the urban form by ensuring development respects the natural surroundings of the mountains and views, create a high quality pedestrian oriented street environment, preserving important historic buildings, and protect and enhance the shoreline. Transportation improvements are strongly essential to complement the desired land use patterns while also encouraging transit use, car pooling and bicycle trips.

The following section will identify some of the specifics of the Downtown Plans regarding the prescribed elements of land use, housing, employment, transportation but also, public participation and urban design.

Land Use

Key land use strategies are clearly detailed in Wagoner's (1999) paper "Planning Downtown Seattle, Neighbourhoods and Urban Centre". There is a considerable emphasis on bonuses, which gives the developer development privileges if they build something that is sought after in the neighbourhood plans. By creating incentives to increase housing units, especially for households earning 50-80% of median income and low to low-moderate income housing there is a greater likelihood this type of housing will be built. Further, there are incentives through bonusable public benefit features, such as open spaces that will reflect neighbourhood plans and provide support to housing for social services and support for child care services. There are also incentive for providing grocery stores and other service amenities. Moreover, the Plan emphasizes creating affordable housing through incentives like increasing the maximum floor area ratio (FAR) for commercial and mixed use projects and the innovative Transfer of Development Rights system that allows a developer the buy the development rights for a "certified rural propert[y] to sites in specified downtown areas" (City of Seattle, 2001, p. NP-71).

Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) are further outlined in the Downtown Urban Centre Neighbourhood Plan under Land Use Policy LU-23 (1999, p. 47). TDRs allow variation in building scale, the preservation of buildings, and other uses that are 'scarce public benefit'. They are especially important for encouraging low income housing, preserving Seattle's landmarks in the Downtown area; in particular those threatened by development pressures. TDRs will also with generate compatible in-fills in the historic districts, retain varied building scale, and lastly, create more open space.

Housing

An objective of the DUCPG is to foster a diverse housing mix that will accommodate 27,000 residents by 2014. According to the Downtown Urban Centre Neighbourhood Plan (1999), housing density increase is one of the objectives of all the downtown urban villages (p. 60). Emphasized in the policies are the words *incentives, commitment, and liveability*. Policies revolve around 1) "incentives to stimulate construction of low and low-moderate income housing downtown", 2) "the commitment to downtown housing development", and 3) "increase liveability of downtown as a neighbourhood", as well as developing new models for downtown housing and ensuring affordability to all (Ibid., p. 60-62).

Some of the implementation guidelines to stimulate the construction of low and low-moderate income housing include *incentives* like super bonuses, which increase the allowable FAR for any commercial

and mixed use development or tax abatement especially for projects that contain at least one third of unit affordable for families with only 80% of median income. There are also low interest loans for renovation to existing low and low-moderate income households downtown. The DUCPG is committed to supporting housing evidenced by the appointment of a housing facilitator to *champion* and *expedite* housing projects while also marketing to downtown developers to foster projects and streamline approval through the city (DUCNP, 1999, p. 60).

To increase the *liveability* of downtown as a neighbourhood, the city will invest in facilities, residential parking structures, green streets and other amenities that will make the area attractive to residents and developers. With the attempt of achieving 24 hour neighbourhoods, the city will be more responsive with their respective services departments. For instance, efforts will be made to keep the streets and alleys clean, enforce noise ordinances, and generally keep residents safe. New residential models will be implemented by including “a housing component in all light rail station area development” such as high density developments (Ibid., p. 61). Community land trusts, and limited equity housing partnership programs could be used to fashion new residential models. New residential models will be implemented by including “a housing component in all light rail station area development” such as high density developments (Ibid., p. 61). Community land trusts, and limited equity housing partnership programs could be used to fashion new residential models.

Employment

The Neighbourhood Plan and the Comprehensive Plan want to encourage employment opportunities within the urban centre and broken down more specifically to the urban villages based on the assumption that the villages will contain good connections to mass transit. Also, with housing being fostered in these areas, employer will have a good chance of capturing employees who are not interested in long commutes to outlying areas. For instance, Immunex Corporation, a biotech firm, has chosen to stay downtown because “the downtown location offers many amenities for their well educated, urbanite employees; the urban setting on the waterfront is highly desirable” (City of Vancouver Discussion Paper, High-tech Industry in the Urban Context, p. 20). Furthermore, the City wants the company to remain downtown because it is a high paying industry sector, it is a clean industry, and thus can increase tax revenue.

Transportation

As the Downtown Urban Centre Neighbourhood Plan indicates, the transportation network is very complex involving the City, Sound Transit, King County Metre, Washington State Ferries, Amtrak, and other providers. These providers service regional and local commuters and businesses and residents with a wide range of needs requiring the system to be 'strong and flexible' (DUCNP, 1999, p. 67). The main objectives identified include: improving mobility throughout downtown, upgrading pedestrian and bicycle oriented streets and to upgrade parking management programs.

In order to improve mobility, attention is being placed on street function alignment to accommodate the needs of pedestrian, transit, bicycle and the automobile along with improving the coordination of transit hubs. There is a great focus on the Green Streets and the bicycles streets to encourage walking and bicycle traffic according to specific the neighbourhood plans. For management improvements, there will be increased enforcement and fines, which will be used for the neighbourhood projects.



Figure 3. Seattle Traffic



Figure 4. Bus Stop for the preferred form of transportation in urban villages along with walking and bicycling.

Urban Design Policies

Open space planning in the villages should provide a range of active and passive open space in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan as well as the more specific Downtown Urban Centre Neighbourhood Plan. Goals specific to the Downtown Urban Centre neighbourhood Plan include a focus on the urban form by ensuring development respects the natural surroundings of the mountains and views, create a high quality pedestrian oriented street environment, preserving important historic

buildings, and protect and enhance the shoreline. Figure X is an example of restoring a historically significant artefact that will help create a more favourable pedestrian environment.



Figure 5. Pioneer Square Pergola “The pergola, built in 1909, was turned into a twisted, broken heap of cast iron after a truck took a sharp turn at Pioneer Square in January and rammed into it” (Whitley, P., 2001).



Figure 6. A pedestrian oriented street.

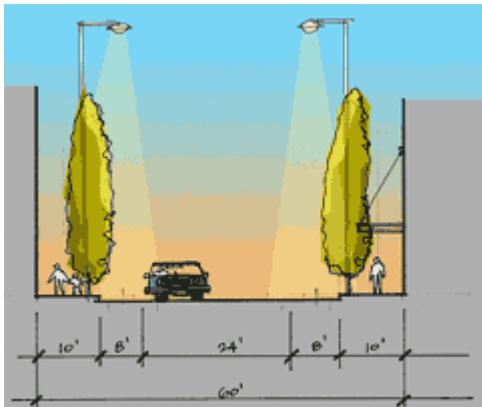


Figure 7. An existing street.

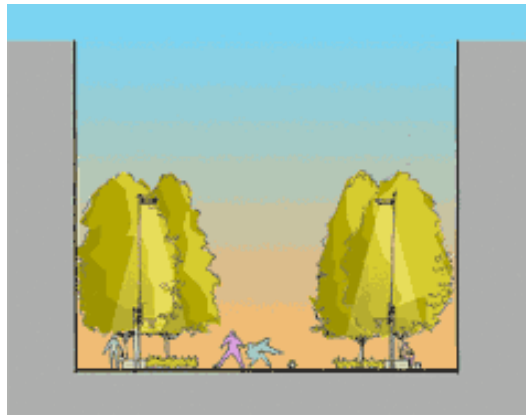


Figure 8. A proposed Green Street.

Figures 7 is an example of a typical contemporary urban street while Figure 8 is an example of a proposed urban Neighbourhood Green Street by Seattle City Design. The new style of Green Street offers flexibility, has recreation potential based on the time of day use, and is curbless.

Public Participation

All the various levels of government that implement comprehensive plans, have involved public input along the way. For instance, the Puget Sound Regional Council includes a public participation element throughout the process and in 1998 King County sought public input through open houses for

the update to their 1994 Plan. The Seattle Comprehensive Plan (1994) was developed over five years including 'discussion and debate' with thousands of Seattle residents. Good use was made of their collective 'creative thinking' while working with City staff and elected officials. The Plan also has a Citizen Participation Plan in accordance with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) detailing public involvement process for the city. The specific Neighbourhood Plans are also created with substantial public involvement.



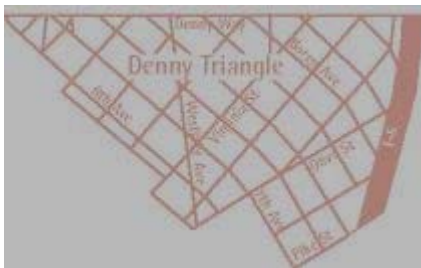
Figure 9. Public Meeting

Seattle's Comprehensive plan also prescribes citizen participation and for a process to be implemented to ensure dialogue between the city and citizens (2001, p. xii). Information should be disseminated in an understandable fashion or residents. Public input will help to refine this plan and the regional plan as time progresses.

Citizens are involved in determining where city levies will be spent helping to foster a sense of ownership to the people of the projects. When citizens have ownership and find their opinions make difference, they tend to take more pride in their communities and involvement is sustained.

Revitalizing Areas of Downtown Neighbourhoods in Seattle

With all the efforts initiated by the various growth management plan mentioned including the Seattle Comprehensive Plan and the Neighbourhood Plans in particular, some initiatives have been successful at bringing life back into the downtown areas. The Seattle Times gives a good illustration with sweeping changes in Denny Triangle. Bill Kossen describes the area as one that has been "left in the dust of downtown and suburban development" (Kossen, 2001). There are plans to turn the area into a mini Manhattan with high density gleaming high-rise buildings full of office, condos, apartments



and hotels. The Comprehensive Plan projects a residential increase from 900 to 5,000 by 2014 with 45,000 employees in the neighbourhood. New developments will include shops, restaurants, and wide sidewalks, as well as the usual amenities that will be essential for future residents. Again, there are incentives to attract developers such as the permitted increase in height of buildings up

to 30% if there is an allowance for residential use in their building. Within Denny Triangle there is also the new Transfer of Development Rights program that allows developers to buy the development

rights for a rural piece of land within the urban growth boundary and use that to exceed the normal height limits (Regional View Newsletter, 2001).

Belltown has been successful in attracting new residents to the downtown area where there is a good public transportation network and many amenities attractive to the working young and the retired and semi-retired people who are choosing to live more centrally. According to the Regional Newsletter (2001), Belltown has 3,000 new housing units with 1,000 more to come; in all, half of the units cater to the low to moderate income bracket. In addition, there are streetscape improvements and art work funded by the city helping to attract residents. There are 20,000 people living in downtown Seattle where there are “lively storefronts, filled with all manner of products, services, food, coffee and entertainment” along with other amenities provided by local government investment (Ibid).



Figure 10. Mix-use tower.
Figure 11. Residences

Figure 10 and 11 are some new types of developments that could go up in Belltown with the right investment and developer.



Financing the Redevelopment

There is evidence showing that once public money is invested in redevelopment projects private funds will complement and expand on the initial redevelopment project. This is so because private investments complement one another. Thus a private art gallery generates business for a coffee bar and the coffee bar attracts patrons to a local movie house, etc. While each private business benefits from such an agglomeration of complementary businesses, none can on their own finance the social infrastructure – parking spaces, improved street lighting, parks, etc – that are needed to cause all of these private businesses to choose to locate in a particular area. Governments thus have a role in

providing this social infrastructure and in this way provide the spark for further private development. One way that municipalities can help finance redevelopment projects is through a method of tax increment financing whereby the tax revenues from new developments pay for redevelopment costs (Porter, 1997, p. 201).

In the 1998 Financial Report, the most current, the City of Seattle has tells that there is a rise in general revenues above the inflation rate. The increased revenue is allowing the city to pay for additional capital expenditures for maintenance, capital improvements like the construction of a new downtown concert hall, operating expenditures in public safety, transportation and parks, increased public services and facilities to low income citizens, and to improvements to the transportation infrastructure. As a side note, the city has received one of the highest ratings from Moody's Investors "on its voter-approved general obligation debt" (Seattle Financial Report, 1998). The Seattle Growth Report (2000) indicates that "major City levies [are] approved by voters [most of which] have focused on investment projects primarily within and just outside of urban villages" (p. 23). On a further local level, the DUCPG has come up with a few other creative financing strategies including the above mentioned transfer of development rights.

Conclusion and Summary

To recap, the 2000 Seattle Growth Report has illustrated the number of ways in which the goals have been met through the plan process of implementing a focus on urban centres and urban villages. The Downtown Urban Centre, more specifically Belltown and the Commercial Core, have been successful in housing growth with the rate reaching 13% of its 20 year growth target (2000 Seattle Growth Report, p. 10). The target is to have 14, 700 units downtown by 2014 and already has a combined 4,864 units built or building permits issued at this time. The Sound Transit light rail corridor has helped downtown attract some of its housing.

There are still improvements to be made in Pioneer Square with respect to housing. The neighbourhood has been slow to attract housing growth, but nevertheless, Pioneer Square's success lies in attracting commercial growth. Unfortunately Pioneer Square is having more difficulty getting the area 'cleaned up' in order to attract investment. This causes it to be included in the slow growing villages in regards to housing.

According to the Regional View Newsletter, there are still many things missing in downtown Seattle like parks, libraries, and community centers, which are essential for liveability of the area for residents

and allows for social interaction (2001). Vancouver is quoted as a good example of downtown liveability, but it is realized that the areas are evolving and getting richer as more investment follows the density.

The urban centre and urban village strategy has been successful in fostering a trend towards centralized housing growth since it is reported that 81% of the active permits are within these areas meeting the objective of the Seattle Comprehensive Plan, which is to encourage majority of growth in the urban centres and villages. Furthermore, the majority of housing has been multifamily also fulfilling the Comprehensive Plan housing objective (Ibid., p. 7). In regards to employment, Downtown also has the highest job growth at 19,000 new jobs in the first five years of the Plan's adoption. It is thought that the strong employment growth in downtown is due to the advantageous role as the region's transportation hub. Job growth has been higher than job growth in Seattle. Overall, the urban centre and urban village strategies are working in Seattle to begin achieving the growth objectives of the Seattle Comprehensive Plan, which in turn is working towards meeting the growth targets set out in the GMA and the objectives of the Puget Sound Regional Council. This demonstrates the cooperation between the different levels of governments' policies are at work within the conjoint framework, which Caruthers has pointed out as being essential to the success of state growth management plan. Washington's Growth Management Act and the conjoint efforts are still relatively young, thus more time will be needed to fully assess the success of the policies. However, at this point Caruthers suggests Washington and all of the institutions will likely follow closely in Oregon's successful foot steps.

Other large cities can utilize some of the strategies that have helped Seattle manage growth such as the urban centres and urban village strategies. Concentrating growth in area where infrastructure already exists and where a critical mass of population can efficiently support public transportation and other important urban elements. As well, by employing some of the policy instrument like bonuses for developer and the innovative transfer of development rights, cities can end up with compact developments and protect their resource open space like farmland or forests, depending on location.

Although Calgary may not have the population base to fully support some of the strategies, it can begin to plan with some of the strategies as the city grows, especially for the downtown and inner city areas. The employment strategy is an attempt to spread employment throughout the city and move the focus away from downtown, thereby, easing the traffic congestion in and out of the core. Most of the employment opportunities remain downtown. Mackenzie Towne and Garrison Woods are examples of town centres; nevertheless, they lack any substantial employment opportunities and are,

therefore, not contributing to reducing traffic flows to downtown Calgary. Mackenzie Towne, Garrison Woods and Crowfoot Centre, another attempt at an employment centre, have not created compact neighbourhoods where all the needs of residents can be met. Furthermore, these attempts are not successfully contributing to growth management. Other than Garrison Woods, the other two centres lie in suburbs and more are being developed further from the centre of the city. With continued efforts in these directions, Calgary is in a position to create a great city where residents have a different lifestyle choice other than strictly automobile reliant. The City is perpetuating sprawling growth by continue to cater to the automobile with new, expense interchanges rather than providing incentive to developer to build brownfield sites, or underdeveloped lands within the inner city. Things could still change for this young, growing city.

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