

New Centers

*Case Studies of New Urbanism
in the
Denver and Portland Metropolitan Regions*

The following report was prepared in the fall of 2006 by Todd Fabozzi of the Capital District Regional Planning Commission, with assistance from Dr. Gene Bunnell of the University at Albany. It was funded in part by The Center For Economic Growth. This report is part of a larger report entitled “Estimating the Fiscal Impact of Alternative Futures for the Capital District.” Figure references are maintained from the original report.

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Introduction

The following case studies show how traditional urban design techniques (New Urbanism) can be utilized to help implement regional smart growth development goals. In the first three examples, all from the Denver, Colorado region, the specific developments were carried out within a single municipality. The final examples, from the Portland, Oregon region, represent a combination of both local and regional design strategies working in concert to shape an entire region.

Three of the following case studies are from the Denver, Colorado region: “Bradburn Village,” which is located in the city of Westminster; “Stapleton,” which is located in the city of Denver; and “Belmar,” which is located in the city of Lakewood. In addition, a fourth case study involves a broader discussion of the Portland, Oregon region, including regional growth policies, a summary of initiatives specific to the city of Portland, and finally, a summary of “Orenco Station,” which is a transit oriented development within the Portland Region located in the city of Hillsboro.

There are a number of design characteristics that each of these case studies have in common: a) master planning; b) large-scale construction; c) mixed-use; d) compact development at village to city-scale densities; e) pedestrian and transit orientation; f) focus on the public realm; and g) incorporation of parks, greenways, open space and/or other environmentally friendly designs and practices.

5.3.1 Bradburn

Bradburn Village is a \$220 million, 120-acre development in the city of Westminster, Colorado (population ~105,000). Westminster is located halfway between Denver and Boulder. Bradburn features four distinct, connected, neighborhoods, nine parks, a commercial core, two recreational centers with swimming pools, and access to 45 miles of open space and regional trails.

At full build-out, Bradburn will include approximately 270 single-family homes, 140 single-family attached townhouses, 310 rental row houses, 33 live/work units and 108 rental apartments located above Main Street retail; there will also be 166,000 sq. ft. of retail/restaurant space, 29,000 sq. ft. of office space and 9,000 sq. ft. of restaurant space in outlying parcels. Construction began in 2002 and there is a five-year timeline for completion. There are 10 different custom builders participating in the construction.

The developer of Bradburn is Continuum Partners, based in Denver, Colorado. CEO Mark Falcone, from Syracuse, New York, founded the company in 1997. Continuum is dedicated

to creating developments that demonstrate the principles of smart growth and New Urbanism. The company's philosophy is that there is a connection between long-term, sustained property value and high-quality urban design.

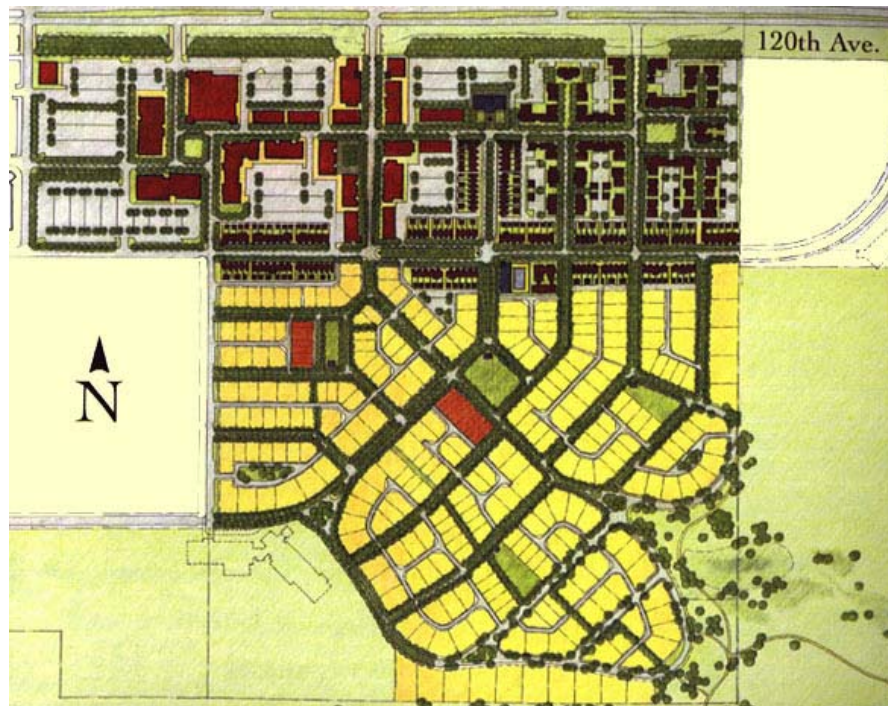
In 1999, Continuum Partners approached the city of Westminster about developing Bradburn Village, in part, because Westminster has gained a reputation for farsighted planning. The city had already identified in its comprehensive plan the desire for mixed-used, pedestrian oriented development. Staff planners and city officials enthusiastically embraced the Bradburn concept. A group of city officials flew to Gaithersburg, Maryland to study the highly regarded Kentlands New Urbanist development. They met with Gaithersburg officials and representatives of the nationally recognized urban design firm DPZ, which designed Kentlands, and ultimately hired the same firm to create the concept plan for Bradburn.

City planning staff hired a design consultant (Van Meter-Williams-Pollack) and worked with Continuum to develop design guidelines that would be applied to this project (and potentially others in the future). The design guidelines were drafted to ensure that this development would be an authentic New Urbanist project that met the specific mixed use, public space, density and pedestrian orientation design goals shared by both the city and the developer. The guidelines were based on Urban Transect theory (a gradient of urban intensity), and include a mix of prescriptive and suggestive principles for overall community design, with numerous illustrations to clarify the guideline's objectives.

Within three months, city officials adopted the new design guidelines and revised their Comprehensive Land Use Plan to accommodate this development. With the new design guidelines, DPZ began the site planning process for the development (See Figure 5.3). The final plan

consisted of 113 pages of blue line prints plus a manual of self-imposed Urban Regulations that control building setbacks, the size of porches, the location of fences, building heights, and garages. These documents did not dictate how buildings were to be designed, but set out the framework and criteria for their

Figure 5.3 Bradburn Concept Plan by DPZ



design.

Parking requirements for the site are as follows: For single family detached homes, two spaces per unit on-site plus one on-street space; for rental row houses, one space per unit plus one on-street; for single family attached dwellings, two spaces for two and three bedroom homes, one space for one bedroom homes plus one on-street or parking lot space per three units; commercial and mixed use areas based on site- and use-specific parking study.

The city of Westminster, as part of its adopted Growth Management Plan, regulates the pace of residential construction within the city. This is done by allocating new water resource connections for various categories of residential development on a competitive basis, which enable developers to earn additional points by producing developments that include desired amenities such as landscaping, recreational facilities, pedestrian/bicycle circulations, public open space or parkland dedications (over and above those required for parks, schools, or other public purposes), view preservation, enhances building appearance, variety of building and housing types, and dedication of rights of way. The Bradburn project was submitted under this process and ultimately approved (May, 2001) as a planned unit development (PUD) using the city's new design guidelines. Under the PUD process, the city-planning staff works closely with the developer to ensure high quality projects and to ensure that city planning goals are satisfied (See Figures 5.4 and 5.5 for examples). According to city planning staff, the city's elected officials, who ultimately approve projects submitted as PUDs, trust their expertise and almost always endorse and back their recommendations. Throughout the process of developing the design guidelines project application, participation by the general public, regional developers, and the local homebuilders associations was encouraged

According to planning officials from the city of Westminster, developments like Bradburn are becoming popular alternatives to sprawling large lot subdivisions in suburban markets. Mixed-used, higher-density, pedestrian oriented developments such as Bradburn also offer a way for the Denver region to combat the impacts of sprawl and preserve open space. Bus service is planned to the site and a planned commuter rail station is within three miles of the site. And at the same time as the city of Westminster is encouraging compact development at Bradburn it has also undertaken, with the strong public support of Westminster voters, an aggressive program of open space acquisition financed by a dedicated local sales tax increase. As of 2006, more than 2,700 acres of open space had been acquired and permanently preserved in addition to 3000 acres of city parkland.

However, this kind of project didn't happen without a significant effort on the part of the city. The city of Westminster needed to adapt its "culture" to permit a project with narrower street sections and a mixture of use and densities, as well as non-traditional infrastructure mechanisms. The developer had to commit to very high quality development standards, and to make an investment in and commitment to building an actual "community," not simply a "subdivision."

Figure 5.4 Bradburn “Main Street”



Figure 5.5 Bradburn Apartments and Village Green



5.3.2 Stapleton

Stapleton, like Bradburn, epitomizes time-honored urban design techniques – walkable, integrated streets connecting a mix of housing types to nearby offices, shops, schools, and parks. The result is a true urban center on land that once was occupied by the Stapleton International Airport.

In 1998, voters in the city of Denver decided to endorse the development of a new Denver International Airport. A year later a group of civic and business leaders created the Stapleton Redevelopment Foundation, which was charged with the task of coordinating the redevelopment of the airport site. There were a variety of opinions about how the site could be redeveloped. While some argued that the site should be developed as a large office park, the community ultimately came to a consensus that the most sustainable way to utilize the site was to develop an integrated new community with the “feel” and function of an old Denver neighborhood. After an extensive community outreach effort, the Foundation produced the “Stapleton Development Plan,” popularly known as the “Green Book,” which established the framework for the Stapleton project: a balance of home and businesses, shopping and dining, industry and greenways, and a mixing of people of different races, professions, interests, and socioeconomic levels.

Figure 5.6 Stapleton Site at the Start of Construction



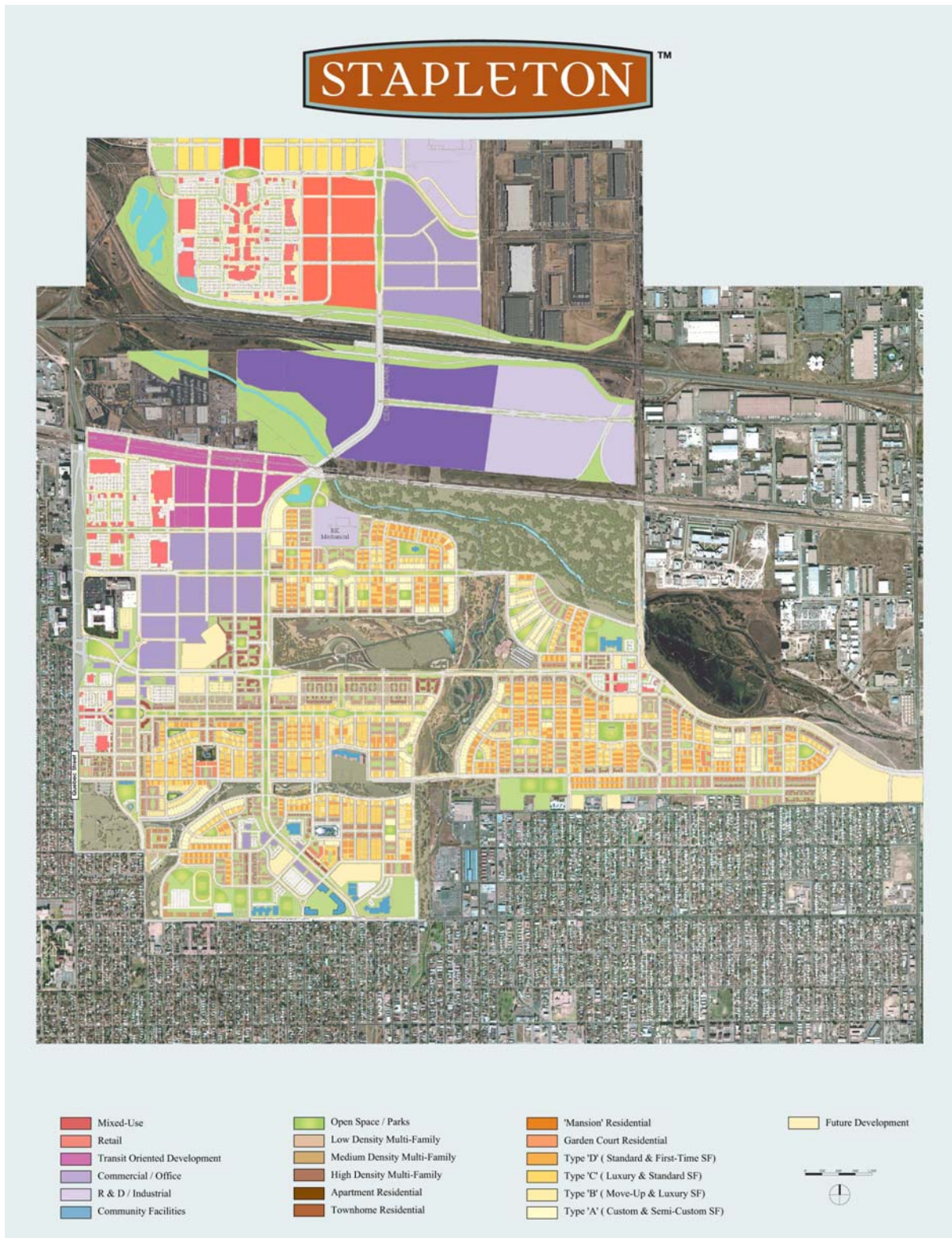
Located at the Eastern edge of Denver, approximately 10 minutes from downtown, the 4,700-acre site is one of the largest urban redevelopment projects in the nation (See Figure 5.6). Construction on the site began in 2001. As of the summer of 2006, Stapleton's population had grown to approximately 7,000 residents. There are 12,000 homes and apartments planned for full build-out (including affordable "workforce" housing), as well as 3 million square feet of retail space, 10 million square feet of office space, six schools, and 1,100 acres of parks and open space. Ultimately, approximately 30,000 residents and 35,000 workers will be accommodated at full build out (which will take approximately 15 years for residential and 20 years for office and retail).

In 1998, Forest City Enterprises was selected as the master developer. Working with the nationally renowned regional planner Peter Calthorpe, a master plan was developed for the site layout (See Figure 5.8). The plan was driven by the need to create integrated, mixed use, walkable neighborhoods with easy access to both retail activity centers and open space. The site is not only internally integrated, but is also integrated into the existing urban fabric of the city of Denver. The site design was conceived as an extension of the city grid, so that many existing city streets were extended through the site and the names were retained. Moreover, the site will be serviced by the region's future light rail network with a station stop planned for the site.

Figure 5.7 Stapleton Residential Neighborhoods



Figure 5.8 Stapleton Site Plan (by Forest City Enterprises/Peter Calthorpe)



The city of Denver approved the plan as a Planned Unit Development and adopted the necessary zoning changes along with the design guidelines called for in the “Green Book.” (Chapter 59 of the Denver City Code). The city also entered into a partnership agreement with Forest City to help finance infrastructure costs related to the development. Over \$600 million in regional and local infrastructure improvements are required – costs which will be repaid with revenues provided through tax increment financing. In order to lessen the burden on city planning staff for implementing and overseeing the design, the city made Forest City responsible for plan implementation and the design and layout of roads, utilities and public spaces, and the coordination of over twenty different custom builders (Figures 5.7 and 5.9 through 5.13 illustrate the emerging built environment).

Figure 5.9 Stapleton Residential Neighborhood



Figure 5.10 Mixed-Use in Downtown Stapleton



Figures 5.11 & 5.12 Stapleton Condos



Figure 5.13 Residential Alley



Figure 5.14 Stapleton Greenway and Trail Network



5.3.3 Belmar

While the Stapleton project has utilized traditional urban design techniques to redevelop a former airport, the Belmar project, in Lakewood, Colorado, has utilized these same techniques to redevelop a large shopping mall into a traditional Main Street downtown.

Located twenty miles southwest of Denver in the city of Lakewood (population ~141,000) Belmar occupies the site of the former Villa Italia shopping mall. When the Villa Italia Mall opened in 1966 it was said to be the largest indoor, air-conditioned shopping mall between Chicago and California. The mall began to decline in the early '90s, which led the city of Lakewood to initiate an urban renewal program and begin planning for the redevelopment of the site (See Figure 5.15).

Figure 5.15 Belmar Site after Mall Demolition (from Google Maps)



The city had previously created a small city center cluster of civic buildings, a park, a museum and an arts complex across the street from the mall site and was looking to reinforce this initiative by creating a full-fledged town center by redeveloping the nearly defunct mall. A citizen advisory committee was appointed by Mayor Steve Burkholder to help create the redevelopment vision. The committee sent members out with cameras to take pictures of the kinds of places they liked to shop. Many of the members came back with photos of

traditional downtown areas such as a “LoDo” in Denver and downtown Boulder. The committee believed that building more big-box stores would not help create a true center of civic life for the city. They ultimately decided that the way to pump new life into Lakewood would be to create a vibrant downtown center based on traditional urban design principles.

In 1998, the city approached Continuum Partners (the same developer that developed Bradburn) about redeveloping the site into a traditional mixed-use downtown. In 1999 Continuum began land purchase negotiations, which involved navigating the complicated ownership structure of the mall site (the Stanton Foundation owned the underlying ground and Equitable Life Insurance owned the ground lease and buildings, and a number of tenants remained). It took Continuum several years to complete the necessary transactions to secure the site and to terminate existing leases. Several on-site tenants resisted the redevelopment plan, leading the city of Lakewood to initiate eminent domain proceedings, which led to court proceedings that ultimately upheld the action. Continuum stuck with the project because they believed that quality design based on traditional urban form would prove more sustainable and more profitable in the long run than auto-oriented strip development.

Continuum designed a plan for 105-acre site that included a gridded 22-block traditional downtown with a mix of offices, retail shops, restaurants, loft apartments, condominiums, and public spaces (See Figure 5.16). The \$850 million project will be completed in only seven years. The city of Lakewood utilized its urban renewal district powers to create a metropolitan district, which allowed \$120 million of the infrastructure improvements to be financed through district-issued bonds to be paid off over two decades using a public improvements fee on future retail sales. Another \$40 million in infrastructure and site improvements were financed directly by Continuum. Lakewood also assisted by waiving one-half of the city’s two percent sales tax within the project area and by providing a \$110,000 grant. The city also helped secure a \$1.9 million federal loan to remediate

Figure 5.16 Belmar Three-dimensional Site Plan



contamination caused by former dry cleaning and automotive businesses on the site. The city of Lakewood also had to rezone the entire site to conform to the development plan.

Site construction began in the fall of 2002. The first phase opened in May 2004. At full build-out the site will include over 1.1 million square feet of retail, restaurants, and entertainment venues; 800,000 square feet of office space; 1,300 residences; an event center, a central plaza, and a park. Belmar includes over 9,000 parking spaces in public parking garages, surface lots, and on-street parking.

Belmar's streets, parks, and cultural amenities are designed to encourage walking and promote community interaction by emphasizing the importance of urban public spaces (See Figures 5.17 through 5.19 below). Numerous public events are held at Belmar, including an art-based lecture series, a craft series and workshop, a year-round public art program, a Paris-style street market, a farmers market, an Italian festival, and a holiday tree-lighting event. In a few short years, Belmar, whose mantra is "Enrich your life not your lawn," has been transformed from a mall to a downtown and become the center of Lakewood's civic and cultural life.

Figure 5.17 Shopping at Belmar



Figure 5.18 Mixed Uses at Belmar



Figure 5.19 Public Plaza at Belmar



5.3.4 The Portland, Oregon Region, including the City of Portland and Orenco Station

5.3.4.1 Portland, Oregon

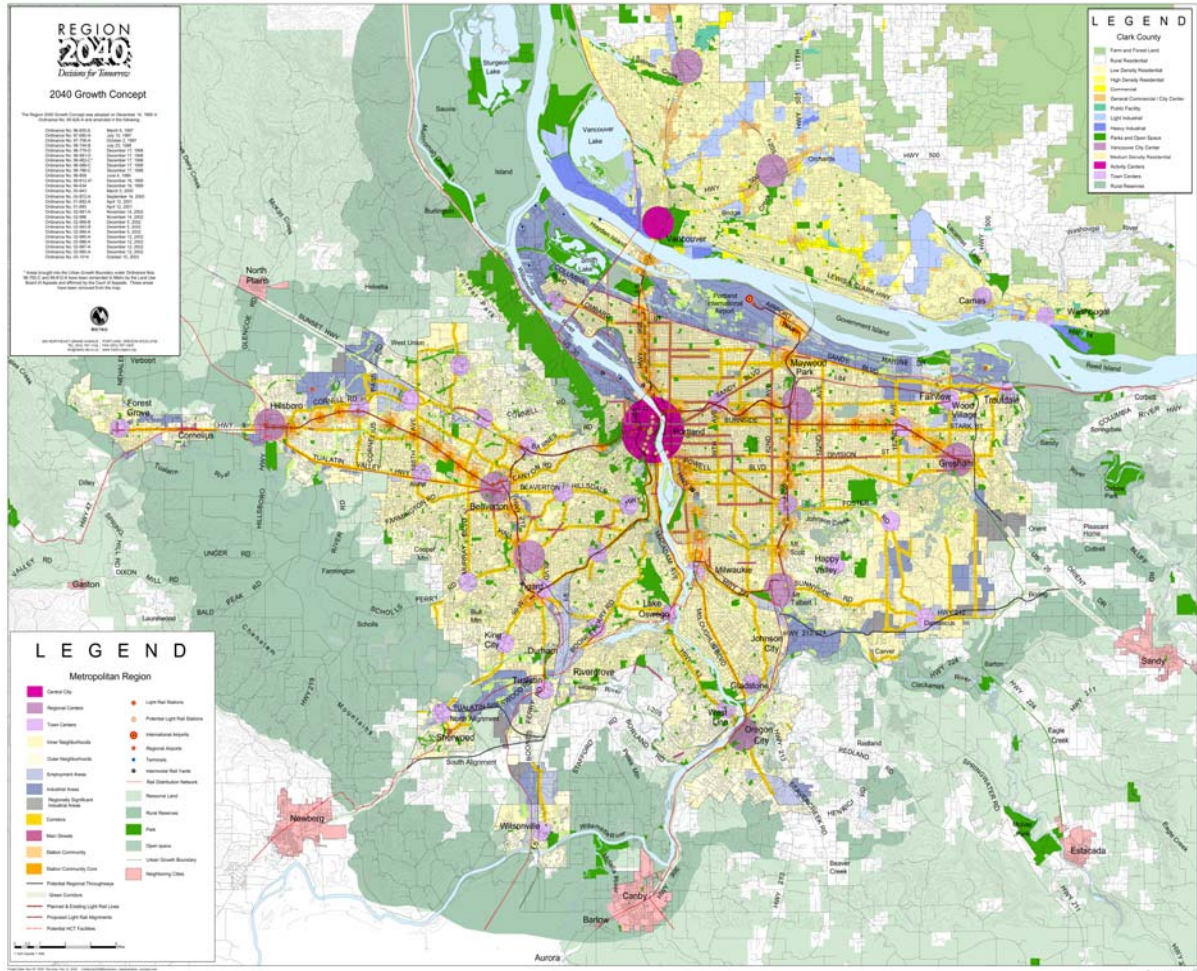
The city of Portland and the Portland region are considered by many planning experts to represent the best examples of city and regional planning in the United States. Following is an overview of state and regional planning initiatives being utilized in the Portland region, followed by a discussion of some important planning initiatives within the city of Portland, particularly within its “Pearl District,” and lastly, a discussion of the Orenco Station development.

In 1973, the Oregon State Legislature adopted the nation’s first statewide land-use planning laws, which required every city and county in Oregon to create a long-range plan addressing future growth and meet statewide goals. The statewide goals are primarily concerned with ensuring the wise use of land and the protection of natural resources. One of the most important aspects of Oregon’s state land use law is that it requires the setting of urban growth boundaries. Urban growth boundaries mark the separation between rural and urban land. The growth boundaries are drawn so as to contain and adequate supply of land to accommodate the expected population growth during a 20-year period.

In 1978, voters within the Portland metropolitan area of Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington Counties approved a ballot measure that established Metro, the nation’s first publicly elected regional government. Among other tasks, Metro was given responsibility for coordinating the land-use plans of the region’s 27 jurisdictions. Metro, as required by state law, established a regional urban growth boundary. The Metro Council is empowered to make binding policy decisions regarding development within the growth boundary. This role was strengthened in 1992 when the region’s voters approved a home rule charter that directed Metro to make regional growth management its primary mission. The charter also required the adoption of a regional vision statement and the adoption of a “Regional Framework Plan,” which is a comprehensive set of regional policies on land use, transportation, water quality, natural areas, and other issues of “regional significance.” In 1995, Metro adopted the 2040 Growth Concept, and in 1996 Metro approved the Urban Growth Management Functional Plan.

One of the most important aspects of the 2040 Growth Concept is the promotion of “centers,” which are compact mixed-use areas of high-density housing, employment, and retail that are pedestrian oriented and well served by both roads and public transit. The advantage of high-density centers is that they use less land per capita, allow easier access between homes, jobs, services and shopping, and promote walking and social interaction as well as facilitate transit use. The 2040 Growth Concept identifies a hierarchy of centers: central Portland (top priority) and numerous regional centers, town centers, station communities and main streets (See Figure 5.20). The Orenco Station site, which will be discussed shortly, is identified in the Growth Concept as a “town center.”

Figure 5.20 Metro Portland 2040 Growth Concept



Another important aspect of Portland’s regional planning is Metro’s Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). As the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Portland region (similar to CDTC in the Capital Region), Metro is required under federal law to plan for future regional transportation needs and expenditures. Metro’s RTP is focused on the integration of land use and transportation, with the primary goal of encouraging less reliance on automobiles through the use of mass transit.

The foundation of Metro’s 2040 Growth Concept, “Centers” initiative, and RTP is the MAX regional light rail system, which forms the spine that supports and connects the centers of development within the region. The MAX system, which is owned and operated by TriMet, the region’s transit agency, was established in the mid 1980’s when the 15-mile Eastside line opened using funds originally earmarked for new highway construction. The eighteen-mile Westside line, which connected downtown Portland with the city of Hillsboro (and points in between) opened in 1998. Additional spokes were added connecting the city to the airport (2001) and the Exposition Center (2004). The city of Portland has also developed a modern

streetcar system, which loops through the central city connecting Downtown, Portland State University and Northwest Portland (See Figure 5.21).

Metro’s 2040 Growth Concept promotes the development of high-density mixed-use centers around transit stations (Transit Oriented Development) because the region has come to agree that this is the most viable way of accommodating the approximately one million new people projected to be added to the Portland region by 2040. However, Metro has found that short-term market demand is often inadequate (from a developers point of view) to support high enough densities in most planned transit nodes outside the city center. Therefore, in order to increase the intensity of development around transit nodes, Metro has underwritten certain costs associated with higher density development – parking garages, firewalls for mixed use buildings and overall land carrying costs – using a combination of local money and federal aid (Federal Transit Administration grants and FLEX STP funds). Metro has also purchased land around transit sites and then resold it to selected developers through joint development agreements in which certain design and density requirements are satisfied.

Figure 5.21 Portland Streetcar



The most important and tangible result of the state, regional and local land use and transportation policies in the Portland region is the ongoing growth and vitality of the city of Portland, proper. The central city is the top priority for development within the Portland region. It is the most important “center” of Metro’s regional centers policy. This has been a long-standing goal for development in the region, and it shows! Unlike most of the cities in the Capital District, Portland has been growing steadily, not declining. There is little visual evidence of abandonment or vacancies. Portland is a round-the-clock city with active street

life, day and night. There is a strong middle-class presence and a strong demand for housing from the full spectrum of price ranges.

The vibrancy of Portland is no accident. It is the result of long standing (since the early 1970s) state policies, regional policies, and local policies that have worked in concert to limit sprawl and promote urban growth and vitality. In addition to strong state and regional planning, regional growth boundaries, and the promotion of light rail, there has been a local focus on urban design techniques that give priority to preservation, pedestrians, public parks, public art and public places. Moreover, in order to reduce regional sprawl, Portland has sought to grow up, not out.

Purposeful planning has had a long legacy in the city Portland. The 1972 Downtown Plan was decades ahead of its time. In an era when many cities were either bulldozing or abandoning downtown,

Figure 5.22 Pioneer Square



Portland's focus was on keeping downtown the principal employment and cultural hub of the region. The 1972 Plan envisioned high-density office and retail corridors crossing in the center of downtown; it sought to create a vibrant pedestrian environment by suggesting that new buildings be built out to the sidewalks, preferably with street level retail, to reproduce a sense of enclosure and generate high levels of sidewalk activity. The plan envisioned a gradient of intensity, similar to what is now called transect zoning, with a high density core that transitions into less dense residential neighborhoods. The plan recommended the creation of several auto-free zones, including a tree-lined transit mall; new urban parks, plazas and recreational open spaces, including riverfront access (See Figure 5.22 & 5.23); two new strategically located downtown parking garages; and new downtown housing. Moreover, the plan sought to revitalize and protect existing residential neighborhoods and preserve historic structures through the creation of historic districts.

The 1972 plan was developed locally with a great deal of public input, which helped forge public ownership and consensus, and led not only to the plans eventual adoption, but also to its near full implementation. A high level of civic engagement in Portland is another one of its signature characteristics. In 1974, at the time when the Downtown Plan was being created and adopted, the city government gave ongoing public participation official status by creating the Office of Neighborhood Associations (ONA). Through the creation of ONA, the

relationship between citizens and city hall (especially the city's Bureau of Planning) was both formalized and financially subsidized by providing a direct liaison between the city and the neighborhood associations, and by providing direct financial support and technical guidance. Although the city provides this support, it does not dictate issues or positions to the associations.

Portland planning was also ahead of its time in its focus on the integration of transportation and land use. Indeed, Portland was looking at the integration of land use and transportation in the early 1970's, with the goal of creating a high-density city that was both walkable and commercially viable, whereas it wasn't until the early 1990's that federal transportation policy officially recognized this relationship. Portland achieved its goal by focusing less on highway building (unlike most other region's at the time) and instead seeking to develop a viable light rail/street car/bus network throughout the city and region. A signature event that illustrates Portland's unique approach was its choice to abandon the East-West Mt. Hood Freeway proposal, which had been approved by the state highway commission, and divert the funds earmarked for the highway proposal toward improving an existing highway and developing a mass transit system. In a somewhat related event, the city decided that same year to tear up the existing Harbor Drive Highway, which separated the downtown from the waterfront, and in its place to create a major waterfront greenway/park (the Tom McCall Park) that instantly became one of Portland's most cherished places (See Figure 5.23).

Figure 5.23 Governor Tom McCall Waterfront Park



5.3.4.2 Portland's Pearl District

Although successful urban planning is evident throughout the city, it is perhaps most obvious in the redevelopment of a mixed warehouse/industrial/rail district adjacent to, and north of, downtown, called the Pearl District. This area is now filled with high-density apartments and condos (3 to 15 stories), most with ground floor retail. Throughout the district there are many restaurants, art galleries, antique shops, and assorted services all within easy walking distance, and the area is fully serviced by the MAX street trolley system. There are also several beautifully designed parks integrated into the district.

Figure 5.24 Pearl District Condo



The Pearl District first became the focus of city planning efforts in the early-1980s. As the rail and manufacturing activities prominent in this area had declined over the previous twenty-five years, the under-utilized buildings and low rents became attractive to artists, antique dealers, and other urban homesteaders looking for inexpensive space conveniently located near downtown. Older warehouses and factories also became attractive for conversion to housing – lower income, at first – and as business incubator startup space. An urban design study in the early-1980s, followed by the 1988 Central City Plan, sought to revitalize this area as a mixed-use neighborhood. Further plans followed, including the 1992 River District Vision Plan and the 1994 River District Development Plan. These planning efforts eventually led to adoption of the River District Urban Renewal Plan, developed by the Portland Development Commission (PDC), and adopted by the city council in 1998.

Figure 5.25 Public Park and New Condo Construction in the Pearl District



An important aspect of the River District Urban Renewal Plan was that it allowed tax increment financing (TIF) to be utilized to pay for street and other infrastructure improvements, trolley lines, and parks within the district over a twenty-year period (See Figure 5.25). The “Lovejoy Ramp” that led to the Broadway Bridge and was considered barrier to downtown connectivity was also torn down as part of the project. Tax increment financing became especially important after several statewide property tax limitation measures were passed in the 1990s. The PDC has also utilized property tax and other incentives to preserve historic buildings and to mandate construction of affordable housing.

The urban renewal district created for the River District/Pearl District covers an 85-block area of over 300 acres, which is expected to accommodate over five thousand new housing units, four new parks, urban trolley access and new commercial and retail development (See Figures 5.24 and 5.25 above).

Most of the goals for the redevelopment of the Pearl District have been met or exceeded. According to the PDC, as of 2000 there were approximated 1,300 residents and 9,000 jobs in the Pearl District. The Commission projects that full build-out will result in about 12,500 residents and 21,000 jobs. As of 2006 approximately 3,500 lofts, condos and apartments had been developed, along with numerous new office and retail establishments. Demand has been so great within this area that price increases are now making it unaffordable for many of the early pioneering artists to remain. Rising property values have also displaced some long-standing industrial uses with high-end housing.

One of the early developments in the Pearl District that set the stage for the how the district would be developed involved a public-private partnership between the PDC and a development company called Hoyt Street Properties (HSP). In exchange for HSP's promise to build residential units at 130+ units per acre and include a substantial portion of low-income housing, the PDC agreed to make several important civic improvements: street grid extensions on developer donated land, the Lovejoy ramp realignment, financial support toward the street trolley development, and park development on developer donated land. HSP has since built over 1000 residential units, both rental and owner occupied, in the district. A number of other developers have also been actively building in partnership with the PDC.

While the early phase of residential development in the Pearl District was in three to five story structures, more recent developments have tended to be in the fifteen-story range. Moreover, the price for market rate units has increased dramatically. Nonetheless, developers utilizing PDC incentives have built nearly 25 percent of the units in the district as mandated "affordable" units.

Although the results of these planning efforts have been extremely successful by most measures, the city continues to refine its planning for the Pearl District. Another plan for the district was adopted in 2001. This plan seeks further progress toward creating a first-class urban setting based around fostering the key attributes of vibrant urbanism: high-density; a broad mix of land uses and activities; interesting, connected, walkable streets; accessible mass transit; a mix of old and new buildings; environmentally sustainable design and green buildings; and inviting, accessible parks and public spaces.

5.3.4.3 Orenco Station

Orenco Station is an approximately 200-acre Transit Oriented Development (TOD) located in city of Hillsboro, 11 miles west of the city Portland, Oregon (1/2 hour by light rail). The site of Orenco Station is designated a "town center" under the Portland's 2040 regional plan. Orenco Station represents the most fully developed "new center" along the MAX line in outer Portland region.

Orenco Station was developed by PacTrust, a Portland real estate company, in partnership with homebuilder Costa Pacific Homes. A team of development experts was formed to work with city of Hillsboro officials and the public to create a vision for the site. A number of design charrettes were held. The vision for Orenco Station was informed by a desire to create both a strong sense of place and an environment conducive to pedestrian activity and public interaction. This vision was initially formulated in the mid 1990's with the knowledge that the site would soon become a node along the Westside line of the MAX network, which opened in 1998. Part of the reason Metro identified the Orenco Station site as a "town center" in the 2040 plan was to encourage development along rail stops and to achieve a better regional balance of jobs to housing. The area around Orenco is surrounded by thousands of high-tech jobs, including a large Intel "chip-fab" site a mile away.

Once the vision was agreed upon, the developers and design team worked with the city of Hillsboro planners to create new, innovative land use regulations for the site, which included standards for mixed-use buildings, narrow streets (20 feet across, with sidewalks throughout), shallow street setbacks (19 feet), accessory units (“granny flats”), live/work homes, and alley-loaded garages. The final site design was created by Fletcher Farr Ayotte and Iverson Associates.

Figure 5.26 Downtown Orenco Station



Ground was broken in 1996 for the initial Orenco Station development. The development includes a mixed-use “downtown” center, a large park and connected residential neighborhoods. In the town center, a combination of retail, offices, apartments and live/work units abut the sidewalk, with on-street parking and additional parking behind the buildings (See Figure 5.26). All told, there are 428 single-family units, 716 townhouses and live/work units (See Figure 5.27), 203 condos and 503 apartments in Orenco Station; there are also approximately 218,000 square feet of retail and 30,000 square feet of office space.

The town center of Orenco Station is roughly a quarter mile north of the MAX station. Up until recently, most of the land between the development site and the train station was vacant, which limited the pedestrian experience and perhaps inhibited some transit use. More recently, however, this has begun to change as several additional residential developments have been built on this vacant land.

Figure 5.27 Combination Townhouse and Live/Work Units



The first residential project in this area, called the Club 1201 condominium complex, is an assembly of ten 21-unit buildings located directly north of the MAX station. This project has a density of approximately 17 units per acre. The design is the least “urban” of those included in Orenco Station, in as much as the units are inward-looking and the street grid is broken in several areas. Adjacent to this development is the “Q Condos” development – 78 urban-style row houses. Across the street from the Q Condos is a luxury apartment complex called Nexus, which was under construction in the summer 2006 and is expected to be completed in early 2007. This project will include 422 upper scale units on about 13 acres, creating a density of about 32 units per acre. The Nexus apartments and the Q Condos together will form an urban streetscape between the Orenco Station Town Center and the MAX station, which should strengthen both the pedestrian and mass transit elements of the overall Orenco Station project (See Figure 5.28 below).

In addition to the original Orenco Station development, and the infill housing leading from this development to the MAX station, there is an additional group of projects immediately south of the MAX station referred to as Orenco Station South. Included in Orenco Station South are 264 garden apartment units arranged in three-story structures of between 12 and 24 units (See Figure 5.29 below). Also adjacent to the garden apartments is a project called Arbor Gardens, which includes 140 three-story urban row homes on narrow lots (20 feet) with alley parking behind, and four hundred single-family homes on relatively narrow lots (between 36 and 46 feet). The houses include front porches, the streets include sidewalks, and there are several parks and play areas integrated into the design.

Figure 5.28 **New Construction between the MAX and Downtown Orenco**



Figure 5.29 **Garden Apartments at Orenco Station South**



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Interviews:

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