



Non-traditional Approaches to Public/Private Partnerships

By Paul Krauss, AICP,
Community Development Director,
City of Auburn
President, PSS/APA

To a developer, “public/private partnerships” are viewed as measures a City can undertake to reduce their costs or improve their profits while maybe even meeting some of the goals set by the City. To our electeds and arguably the drafters of GMA, it is often seen as a “silver bullet” — a great sound bite that has the appearance of moving things forward without costing anything. Unfortunately, to planners seeking to actually use the meager tools we have been given and laboring under a constitutional prohibition against the “lending of public funds”, it is a recipe for frustration. Indeed, many economic development of the tools taken for granted by our brethren in other

States, such as tax increment financing, access to bonding programs and more flexible findings to support eminent domain, simply don’t exist in the State of Washington. In fact, pushing the envelop without great care can lead to legal action or censure by the State Auditor. Since I spent the first 18 years of my career working in the Minneapolis area where these tools were commonly used, their absence upon moving to Washington was particularly distressing.

However, when all is said and done, we are planning professionals, dedicated to achieving the best outcomes for our communities. To do less would violate our professional and personal moral codes. Besides,

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Putting Suburbia on a Diet

By Catherine Benotto AIA,
ASLA, LEED AP

Sprawl. With its low density, single use zones and maze of meandering streets that favor cars over pedestrians, sprawl is the planner’s source of all evil. It converts up to 1.2 million acres of farmland, 3 million acres of open space and 60,000 acres of wetland into 2 million homes every year. It contributes directly, or through collateral damage, to a long list of environmental problems that affect the air we breathe, the water we drink and other resources that sustain us. It diminishes our transit opportunities. Worst of all it makes us fat, as recent studies have linked sprawl to the rise of obesity.

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Crofton Springs
Issaquah, WA

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most of us got into this field to leave our world a little better than we found it. Lord knows it wasn't for the money. So that leaves us with using our own initiative and creativity, networking, reliance on creative and dedicated Finance Directors and, ultimately, the services of great legal minds, to do the best we have with the tools at hand. We in Auburn have occasionally pushed the envelope in the service of our City. Hopefully, learning about our experiences will be of value to you and help to promote on-going dialog.

DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING

PROBLEM: Auburn needed an expanded building to house its Municipal Court and Police Department. The problem was cost. With a jail component, City efforts to design a public project were estimated at \$32 million. We generally believe that public bidding and contracting requirements added 30-40% to project costs.

SOLUTION: A developer we knew offered to buy a vacated historic grocery store and convert it to a multi-purpose public safety facility on a lease to own option. As such, with careful structuring by our legal counsel, and by eliminating the jail component through contracting out jail beds to other cities in the state, Auburn was able to obtain a beautiful, award-winning facility for around \$11 million. As a private project, public bid requirements were eliminated. The developer made a profit and our residents benefited from a much-needed building constructed in a highly cost-effective manner.

DOWNTOWN PARKING AND MEDICAL CENTER EXPANSION

PROBLEM: Auburn Regional Medical Center, one of our largest and most important employers and a key to our downtown's renaissance, needed to expand. The City and downtown needed additional parking. The relocation of our court and police to a new building resulted in having virtually an entire city block under city ownership and available for development.

SOLUTION: The City put out requests for bids on the block, stipulating that the winning bidder would need to build a parking garage where the City would own at least 150 stalls. The winning bid was from Auburn Regional Medical Center. They will be building a 300+ car garage to help meet their own needs and a new Oncology Center. It will also put the block back on the tax roles.

TAVERNS IN DOWNTOWN

PROBLEM: Downtown Auburn once contained seven taverns. Remnants of our long-past days as a railroad center, these taverns became the focus of crime and public discomfort. They were a major disincentive to private investment in our downtown. **SOLUTIONS:** This one was tough. We tried repeatedly to involve the State Liquor Board to revoke licenses for criminal activity with limited success. The City began purchasing taverns using a third party. Auburn's City Downtown Plan focused upon these blighting influences and advocated redevelopment. It was believed that public ownership and closure of the taverns could improve redevelopment opportunities. The City purchased one tavern but then the State Auditor's office intervened claiming that the City should have

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made the purchase in public session. The City disagreed with that opinion but chose not to contest it in court and ended the program. The City amended its ordinances to prohibit new taverns in downtown. Restaurants, even those with liquor are acceptable and have been accommodated. Existing taverns became non-conforming. One was vacant for over a year and lost its non-conforming status. The private sector also helped. One tavern was purchased and converted to a restaurant and another one was torn down for new construction. Down to four taverns and counting.

CREATIVE LAND ASSEMBLY OVER SURFACE PARKING LOTS

PROBLEM: Land assembly in our downtown has been one of the biggest problems for developers seeking to put projects together. The City owned nine surface parking lots built in the mid-1960's in an early attempt to stabilize our downtown.

SOLUTION: The City has issued an RFP for development proposals, in effect as air rights. Developers will be obligated to maintain the public parking but it could be placed in a structure and built over. The RFP closes at the end of June so success or failure is not yet known. However, it has generated significant interest

ENCOURAGEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT DOWNTOWN

PROBLEM: It costs more to build a project in our downtown than it does to build on a green site, yet our community vision calls for a strong downtown.

SOLUTIONS: Multi-pronged approach. Adopted a Downtown Plan to develop and endorse strategies. Adopted new downtown zoning district that eliminated caps on heights, limited parking require-

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While New Urbanism addresses many of the problems of sprawl by promoting walk-ability and de-emphasizing the visual impact of cars, many of the New Urbanist communities are on greenfield sites and, with an average density of only 4-7 units per acre, do not address saving land and low impact building.

Beyond New Urbanism, a key challenge for community planning these days is satisfying the market's desire for single family homes while still building compactly, devoting less land to infrastructure and without sacrificing quality of life, community interaction, safety and security. These were the goals of Crofton Springs, a community within

Issaquah Highlands, planned and designed by Weber + Thompson for The Dwelling Company.

Crofton Springs comprises of 121 homes on a mere 6 acres with a net density of over 20 units per acre. It achieves this

density with a mix of detached single family homes, carriage houses, duplexes, fourplexes and row houses. All but 20 of these units were sold as grade related fee simple single family units, which makes its density all that more of a challenge and an achievement.

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Crofton Springs
Issaquah, WA

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ments and offered similar developer-friendly measures. Obtained over \$80 million in road and transit improvements that allowed the City to eliminate downtown traffic impact fees. City agreed to assume responsibility for dealing with stormwater on regional basis thus eliminating these direct costs for builders. Undertake major efforts to develop public parking facilities instead of developer-obligated private ones. Adopted 10-year moratorium on property taxes for downtown residential development per new state legislation. Will consider use of sewer and water System Development Charges to offset cost of public improvements.

While our task is by no means easy, it is still possible to support “public/private partnerships” that produce constructive economic development. To do so, we have had to change the definition of the term. With creativity, well thought out plans with community support and the backing of a progressive Council and Mayor, progress is possible. In the last decade we have managed to change Auburn’s image to the point where we are recognized as a rapidly growing, increasingly affluent, can-do community. Still, I still have daydreams about once again selling tax increment bonds. Maybe one day.....

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Crofton Springs’ density takes New Urbanism up a notch, to what the designers coined as Neo Urbanism, where cars are not simply hidden behind the home on alleys but are detached from the lot, where roads are reduced and homes face onto green spaces rather than streets. By not servicing every home with a driveway and garage, the land that would have been occupied by impervious surfaces and cars is converted into larger shared community green spaces – the trade off for having to walk 100 to 150 feet to your parked car.

In addition, the plan uses the alley space for cars more efficiently. Cars for many of the homes are clustered in car court garages abutting the alley. The planners increased density by adding carriage houses over this series of attached garages overlooking shared greens. This idea put “eyes on the car court” and turned what is often considered necessary-wasted space into an efficient and quirky marriage of parking and living.

While there was a generous amount of shared green space, individual private lots were reduced to the minimum. Many detached homes had lots as small as 2400 sf and the at-

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Crofton Springs
Issaquah, WA

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Recaps of the Spring '05 APA Brown Bags

By Steve Ladd, AICP
Brown Bag Coordinator

Planning Philosophy 4/20/05

What is your most cherished belief with regard to planning? Will it stand up to empirical examination? This brown bag was years in the making, and transpired unpredictably. None of the scheduled speakers were able to attend, but your brown bag coordinator summarized three essays by Rich Carson, and a professor with a background in land development stole the show.

Mr. Carson attributes Oregon's Measure 37 to elitist environmentalism. While communist China was realizing its errors, and becoming prosperous, Oregon was centralizing its planning authority, and alienating its citizens. Rich also takes shots at New Urbanism, calling its products "feel-good faux-towns which feign urbanity." Rich questions the supposed evil of automobiles and "snout houses," and condemns all social engineering.

UW professor George Rolfe filled in for Hilda Blanco with a penetrating analysis of land market interventions. He considers planning to be theory-based and insufficiently monitored for practical results. For example, a government incentive for affordable housing may benefit only the landowner. The market is smart, but backward-looking. It only knows how to replicate. Planners are forward-looking, but

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tached homes' middle units were as small as 1000 sf. Designing smaller homes on smaller lots takes more skill to ensure efficient use of space and privacy between units. Creating a strong sense of place was the trade-off for the increased density. Homes not only abutted open space on two sides, but many of the cottages lined a 'stream' of cleaned storm water running downhill through the middle of the site.

Not orienting homes directly towards streets violated a near code requirement for New Urbanism. However, the social aspects of fostering community through front porches on shared green spaces were directly in line with the tenets of New Urbanism.

Continually weighing on the designers and developers was the question of what the market's response would be to the smaller lots, remote parking and an emphasis on walking. However, once a critical mass of houses was built and the community started taking shape with completed garden spaces, the charm factor of Crofton Springs began to emerge. Buyers could see how they were exchanging quick access parking for abundant green spaces, fewer cars, friendly relations with their neighbors



Crofton Springs Garden Cottages
Issaquah, WA

photo by Benjamin Benachneider

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and safer places for their children to play. The market took off, and the community sold out.

By rethinking, stretching and massaging the traditional tenets of community planning, planners and designers have ample opportunities to create healthy, safe communities. Bringing a fresh eye to community planning and a focus on healthy density – still maintaining a level of individual privacy – will go a long way towards protecting our farmland, our wetland, our health, and, most importantly, our waistlines.

Catherine Benotto, AIA, ASLA, LEED AP is an architect, landscape architect and associate at Weber + Thompson where she specializes in Master Planning.

prey to unintended side effects. George advocates land development regulations and joint ventures only if done right. In Vancouver B.C., for example, the government initiated a False Creek development that the private sector said was impossible, but once it was proven feasible the private sector jumped in with both feet. The effective planner will teach her elected officials how to take community development risks that pay off.

Planners have the fire in their belly, but they need to understand the market too. Your brown bag coordinator recommends *Basic Economics, A Citizen's Guide to the Economy* by Thomas Sowell.

Gown to Town: UW planning projects in partnership with communities

4/27/05

Any public sector planner with a vexing community issue should consider commissioning a UW Dept. of Urban Design and Planning studio project. For the cost of expenses only, the UW can provide 5-15 willing graduate students. Their work is detailed and professional, as evidenced by **Hot Redevelopment Projects** 5/4/05

Any of these three large, intensely urban redevelopment projects could have taken the whole hour. We received poignant vignettes of the Greenbridge project, near White Center, the Redmond Former Coast Guard Site project, and two redevelopment projects on privately-owned sites in Tacoma's Hilltop. Speakers Anna Nelson, Jeff Foster, Terry Shirk, and Tom Eanes captured the principal lessons of such projects as follows.

1) Political and financial support are key. The first two projects were on public land and financed largely by grants, representing massive commitment by elected officials. 2) Regulatory flexibility is also paramount: zoning rules had to be rewritten in all three cases! 3) Finding the right mix of housing types and affordability was a common theme. 4) Planners had to battle City engineers to approve narrower streets and fewer parking spaces. 5) Public involvement is crucial: over 100 public meetings were needed to grease the skids for the 1000-unit Greenbridge project. In the end, almost no one objected! Such projects are successes not only for the stakeholders, but for all Puget Sound planners who draw inspiration from them.

True Urbanism: Demographics, Density, and Design

5/11/05

Mark Hinshaw is a regional asset whose insights on urbanism are gaining national renown. Now a book is in the works, and brown baggers got first peak into the subject matter. The nation is entering the 4-S era: singles, single-head households, seniors, and startups (young couples). The 4 Ss are now the majority, and they want new forms of housing. Seniors are living longer, have more money, and don't want to be isolated, though they may no longer be able to drive. We can only meet their needs though civilized high density. Mixed use projects are becoming common in even smaller cities. Store-front sidewalks are in the public realm: the developer may pay for the pedestrian amenities, but the community controls the space. Design review

is mainstream. Non-profits provide affordable housing. "Five over two" construction (two lower floors of concrete, five upper of wood) has made mid-rise housing more affordable. When developers say, "There's no market for that," they often mean, "I'm not in that market." So find someone who is, or bring in a developer from outside the region. Have your city assemble the land and "prime the pump" if that's what it takes. The world is changing, largely for the good. Be part of the change.

Public Health and the Built Environment

5/18/05

A hundred years ago, squalid living conditions in dense cities spawned two fields: urban planning and public health. This brown bag commemorates their common birth. The new common threat is unhealthy lifestyles. Public Health of Seattle and King County has tackled this by encouraging developers to include public health amenities such as smoke-free buildings and walking paths. Developers say they are willing to do so in exchanges for regulatory incentives such as density bonuses and faster permitting. In an interesting reversal of causality, whereas density once caused epidemics, it now makes people healthier by allowing them to walk rather than drive.

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New Feature

Job Announcements

Associate Planner- Review development proposals and prepare recommendations for planning boards and the City Council. Assist with preparation of annual updates of the City's comprehensive Plan under the provisions of the Growth Management Act. Perform a variety of long-range and current planning duties. Graduation from an accredited four year college or university with a degree in Urban Planning or closely related field, AND two years experience in municipal or regional land use planning, including preparation of development plan elements, land use policies, federal, state and local regulations, environmental analysis, zoning implementation, plan review and permit processing, OR any equivalent combination of education and/or experience substituting a master's degree for up to one year of required experience.

Resume, application and cover letter due at Monroe City Hall, 806 W Main Street, Monroe, WA 98272 by 5:00pm, Friday, 7/15/05. Application available upon request. 360-794-7400, email scarpenter@ci.monroe.wa.us or view posting at www.ci.monroe.wa.us. EOE.

Planner / Urban Designer - Arai Jackson Ellison Murakami has an immediate opening for a full time Planner / Urban Designer. We are seeking a creative individual with a strong interest in Urban Design to work in a collaborative architectural environment. The successful candidate will be exposed to a wide variety of project types including Community Master Planning, Urban Design for Transportation Systems, Facility Master Planning, and Re-Use / Infill Development Project Analysis.

Minimum Requirements: 1) Bachelor of Arts or Sciences from an accredited four-year college or university with a degree in Architecture, Urban Planning, Geography, or a closely related field; AND 2) three (3) years of demonstrated professional experience. An advanced degree would substitute for one of the required years of experience. A working knowledge of Washington State Growth Management Act and solid GIS skills are required. Familiarity with Adobe graphic programs (Illustrator, Photoshop, InDesign), Mac OS, and 3D visualization skills are a strong plus. The successful candidate will have excellent analytical, writing, interpersonal, and time management skills.

Please e-mail your resume to Alyson Moffat at amoffat@araijackson.com or fax to 206-323-8518. ADA/EOE



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For story ideas or suggestions please contact Michelle Whitfield, Newsletter Editor at mmwhitfield@gmail.com or 206- 852 - 7825. Article Submittal Deadlines are March 15, June 15, September 15, and December 15.

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Topic	Time	Place	Great speakers!
The CLCs 100-Year Regional Land Use Plan To save 1.26 million acres of forests, farms, and shorelines in Snohomish, King, Pierce, and Kittitas Counties, the CLC is working with community leaders to create The Cascade Agenda: a forecast of land use patterns over the next 100 years.	Noon Wed., July 20	*Renton City Hall, 7 th floor, Council Chambers	John Howell, Chair, & Michelle Connor, Vice President, Cascade Land Conservancy (CLC)
Innovative Residential Design Standards Join in a discussion on development standards for all housing types, with Bellingham's Residential Development Standards Update as the case study. Working with staff and stakeholders, MAKERS crafted them to be easy to use, market-friendly, and conducive to community design goals.	Noon, Wed., July 27	*Renton City Hall, 7 th floor, Council Chambers	Bob Bengford, MAKERS
Urban Design: from Theory to Regulation Vitality cannot be legislated, nor originality thrive under regulation. Yet spatial complexity necessitates coordination. How do we balance expression against control? Organic versus prescriptive growth? A noted lecturer and urbanist discusses how values influence urban design.	Noon, Wed., Aug. 3	*Renton City Hall, 7 th floor, Mayor's Conference Center	Ron Turner AIA, AICP
Two New Tools for Proactive Housing 1) The Innovative Housing Catalog is the 2nd generation of CTED s Affordable by Design showcase program. 2) The Multifamily Feasibility Indicator is software that turns cost and revenue estimates into a pro-forma to test the viability of long-range housing plans.	Noon, Wed., Aug. 10	*Renton City Hall, 7 th floor, Council Chambers	Michael Luis The Housing Partnership
Tree Retention Developers and homeowners want to cut trees. Communities want to retain them. How to balance these public and private interests? Learn about the regulatory and practical aspects of tree retention, replacement plantings, and urban forestry.	Noon, Wed., Aug. 17	*Renton City Hall, 7 th floor, Mayor's Conference Center	Dan Penrose, City of Lakewood, Scott Baker, RCA, Arborist, Tree Solutions Inc.

*From I-405, turn north on SR 167, then go east a half mile on Grady Way. City Hall is at 1055 S. Grady Way, on the right. There is parking in front of the building plus a parking terrace accessible via a ramp. Thanks to Don Erickson for arranging the rooms.



**Puget Sound Section
Washington Chapter**

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Brown Bag Recaps
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What does “include the best available science” mean?

5/25/05

RCW 36.70A.172 says “counties and cities shall include the best available science” in their critical area ordinances. Does that mean they must adopt, for example, DOE’s wetland buffer widths? Jay Derr of Buck & Gordon grapples that question in representing Skagit County, where stream buffers along drainage ditches would impact farmers. Based on recent growth management hearings board appeals, Jay concludes that counties and cities not using the agency science must 1) document the reasons why a conflicting GMA goal or other law dictates otherwise and 2) “adaptively manage” the resource. Skagit County met the first requirement by

documenting the economic impact that buffer setbacks would have on farmers. (Similarly, a city might document that certain biological functions no longer exist along a given stream, and therefore needn’t be protected.) The “adaptive management” requirement is harder. Those not following agency science must monitor the outcome and adjust their management accordingly. Skagit County spend about \$1 million on adaptive management and the hearings board said it wasn’t good enough. There is no clear standard. Jay also noted that a cautious “no-risk” regulatory approach could lack the “nexus” or “rough proportionality” required for constitutionality.

Harry Reinert of King County Dept. of Development and Environmental Services also believes you can balance critical area protection against other GMA goals, such as

urban density and affordable housing. King County’s new critical areas ordinance was years in the making, and very contentious. The farmers and environmentalists liked the new ordinance while rural residents hated it. The County invested heavily in BAS research and used the Department of Ecology’s third wetland buffer option, which takes into account the intensity of the proposed land use and the wetland functions that are present.

The recent legislature passed no bills on the issue, and there’s no consensus on how such a bill should be worded. Jurisdictions are advised to solve their issues politically and avoid appeals as much as possible.