

Building Linear Communities The promise of Enhanced Bus Transit

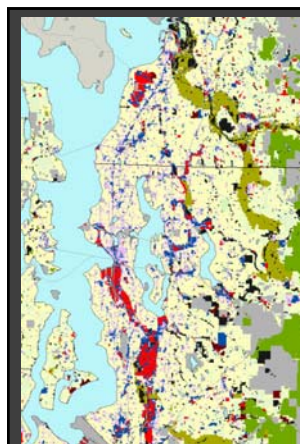
John Owen: Overview of BRT: What it is, how it can be used, potential benefits.

Thera Black: Getting started: Preliminary urban corridor planning in Thurston County.

Allan Giffen: Implementation: Linear community planning in Snohomish County

Joe Tovar: The results: Recent work in Shoreline WA.

October 2011 Washington Oregon APA Conference



The reality is that our land use systems are primarily linear

Challenge 1: Urban corridor redevelopment



Challenge 2: More flexible, lower cost transit

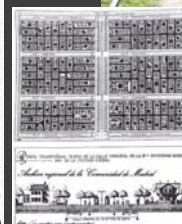


We understand fixed rail transit oriented development, but what about BRT oriented redevelopment?



Older models

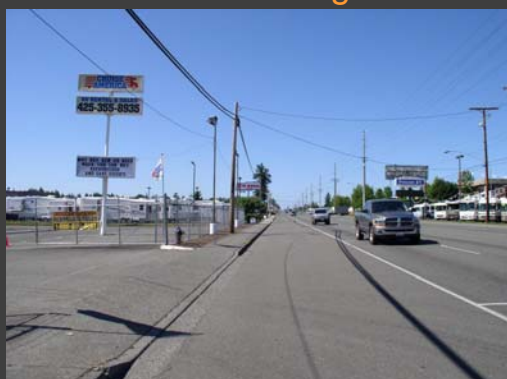
Ciudad Lineal



Streetcar suburbs



But this is often a tougher context



Enhanced Transit + Corridor Redevelopment Linear Community (With livability, efficiency and ridership)



What is Bus Rapid Transit - BRT?

High quality rapid transit system with the appeal of rail, but with a number of potential advantages:

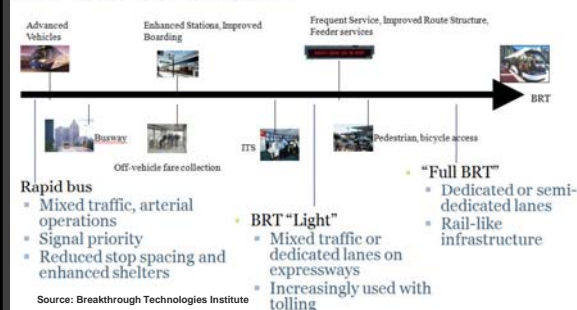
- Flexibility
- Connect activity centers quickly, and cost effectively
- Provide multiple services on a single running way
- Does not require special tracks, electrical systems, etc.
- Can eliminate the need for many transfers

BRT is a Continuum

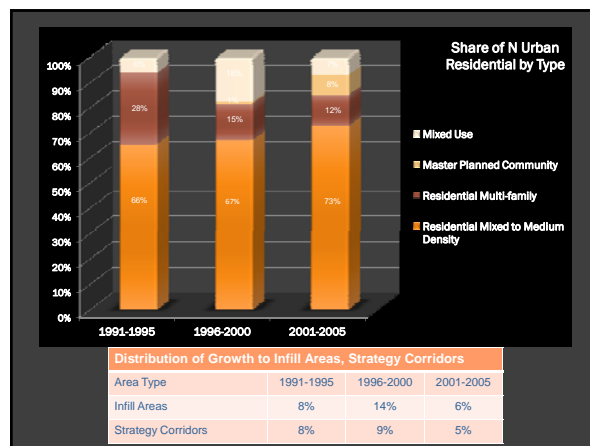


Source: Breakthrough Technologies Institute

BRT is a Continuum



Hence, the term "enhanced transit" is appropriate



Urban Corridors Task Force

Task Force = Elected officials from Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater, Intercity Transit, North Thurston school district, plus citizen and business representatives

Fundamental question:

What will it take for this region's urban corridors and activity centers to better support urban transit services, and how will we get there?

Stimulate the evolution of select auto-oriented suburban corridors to people-oriented urban corridors.

Translating Vision into Reality

Define priority corridor

Identify priority districts

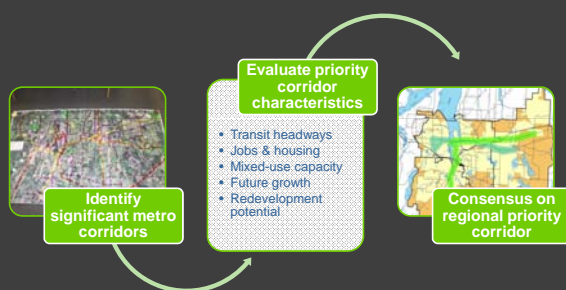
Explore the toolbox

Reach across the counter

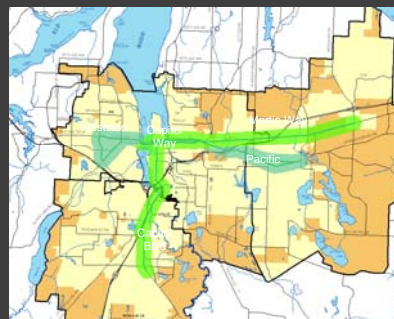
Understand the market

Identify local and regional action steps

1. Define Priority Corridor

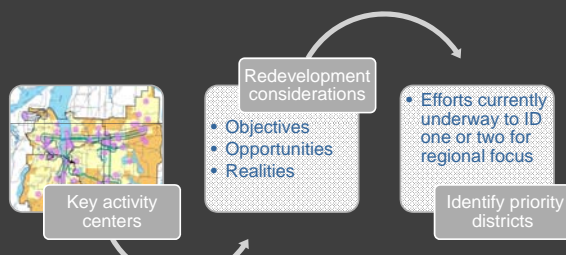


Consensus on Priority Regional Corridor



Capitol Blvd / Capitol Way / 4th / State / Martin Way

2. Identify Priority Districts



Redevelopment Considerations – Realities

- Focus efforts.
 - Some areas are more attractive for redevelopment than others. Start there.
- Economics matter.
 - If it doesn't pencil out, it won't be built. Know the market and work with it.
- Change takes time.
 - Transformation occurs in baby steps. Develop a strategy and stick to it.

Growth is a finite resource. Use it wisely.

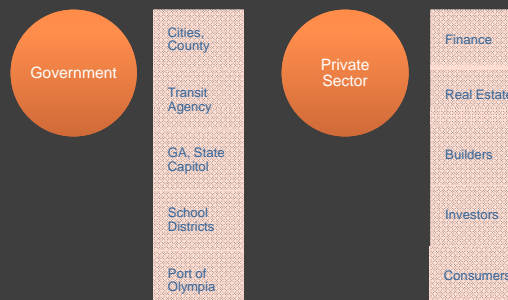
Identify Priority Districts



Narrowing the focus strategically

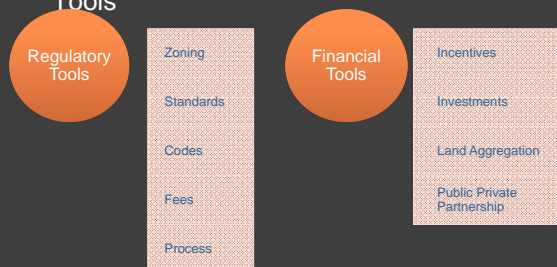
3. Explore the Toolbox

Know the Development Players



Explore the Toolbox

Know the Development Tools



4. Reach Across the Counter



5. Understand the Market

Commercial and Housing Market Analyses

- Demographic changes
- Consumer preferences
- Absorption capacity
- Financial markets
- Puget Sound influences



6. Identify Local & Regional Action Steps

Modest Measures Augment the status quo

- Property Inventory
- Education Process

Moderate Measures Work within existing the framework

- Infrastructure Investments
- Planned Action EIS
- Revamp Impact Fees
- Land Acquisition Strategy

Mighty Measures Redefine the framework

- Legislative Agenda
- Community Lending Pool
- Corridor Development Commission

Linear Community Planning in Snohomish County WA

Evergreen Way – Highway 99
A work in Progress



Swift BRT Line

- 17 miles – 15 stops
- Bus every 10 minutes at peak
- Fast ticketing & boarding
- Bicyclists walk their bikes onto the bus
- 45 min travel time vs. 71 min regular transit
- \$28.5 M & 4 years to build
- Ridership exceeds projections and rising



Multi-Jurisdiction Corridor Plan

- Did not start as a coordinated effort
- BRT line located in or near 6 jurisdictions
- BRT forced us to look at our own land use plans
- Lynnwood adopted plan this year
- Everett will adopt plan in early 2012



Everett's 1978 Evergreen Way Plan

- Widen from 5 to 7 lanes
- 6.5 foot wide sidewalks each side
- New traffic signals
- Did not address land use or streetscape
- Built in 1980–90's

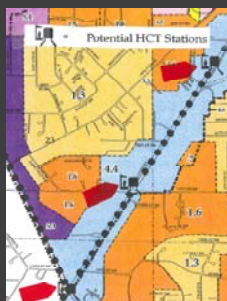
Before

After



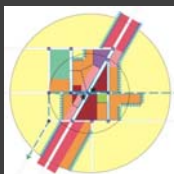
Everett's Existing Policies

- Designated "Mixed-Use Commercial-Multi-Family"
- Redevelop - mix of commercial and multi-family residential
- Provide high level of transit service to support land uses
- Promote high density around transit stations
- Adopt pedestrian oriented design standards
- Improve overall aesthetic character of corridor



Redevelopment Strategy = Linear Community

1. Pedestrian friendly mixed-use nodes around BRT stations
2. Plan the station areas to accommodate local services
3. Easy ped access to shops and services
4. Convenient transit access to services within the corridor



Pedestrian & bicycle access

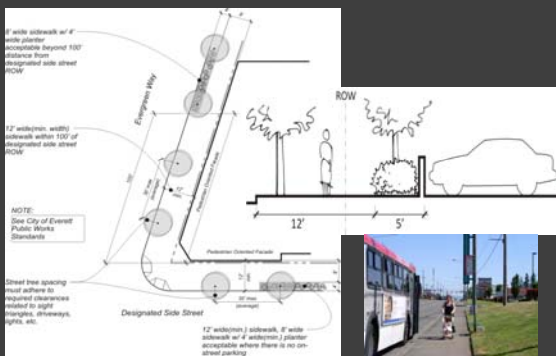


**Remove
Impediments
and Improve
Connections to
Neighborhoods**

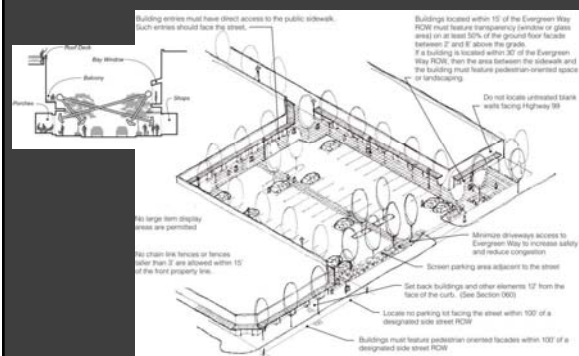
Public improvements: Local streets



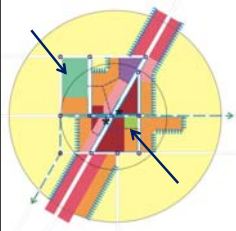
Streetscape Standards



Site and Building Design Standards



Attractions and amenities



New parks

Connection to Schools

Existing Resources



New Standards - Rezone of Entire Corridor within Everett

- 2 new zone districts
- Underlying E-1 zone
- Mixed Use Overlay around BRT stations for Transit Oriented Development
- Improved design standards (site, building, signs, landscaping)



Interurban Trail System



- 3.25 miles, part of a 25 mile regional trail system
- Mostly within Seattle City Light right of way
- Signs and minor structures evoke old Interurban Electric Railway
- Iconic bike/pedestrian bridge crosses Aurora Avenue

SR 99/Aurora from auto dominated commercial strip monoculture



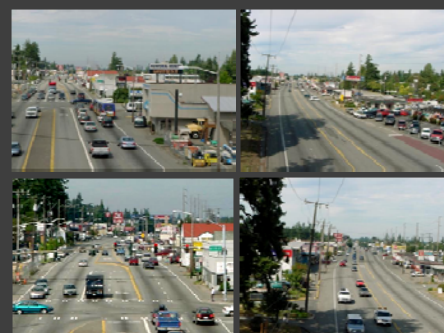
To a new reality of multi-modal, mixed use "centers" and nodes



**City of Shoreline
Town Center Subarea Plan**
Adopted by City Council July 25, 2011



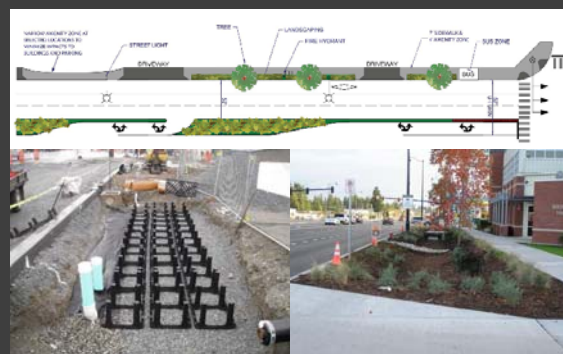
BEFORE: Mile 2 of Aurora through the "Town Center" area



AFTER: Mile 2 of the Aurora project through Town Center: undergrounded utilities, new light standards, landscaped medians, BRT lanes



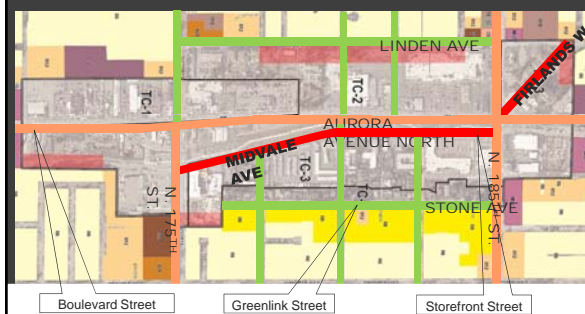
Aurora project's green infrastructure



The Business Access/Transit lanes in Aurora will accommodate Bus Rapid Transit service with 10 minute headways at peak hour



Town Center Organizing concepts:
four sub-districts and three street types



Retro-fitting suburbia – growing a land use pattern of mixed use, mid-rise urban form served by multiple modes of transportation

Policy TC-2 Create a safe, attractive, and walkable Town Center that links mixed use, mid-rise buildings, a broad range of housing choices, major civic amenities, public gathering places, and bus rapid transit service.



Policy TC-19 Develop the park at Town Center as a memorable, green, open space and link it to the City Hall Civic Center. Program both of these spaces for celebrations, public gatherings, and informal "third places."



Fig. 14 Farmers' markets and community events are several possible part uses

Policy TC-20 Celebrate the heritage of the community through preservation, education, and interpretation of artifacts and places in or near Town Center.



Lessons

- Think regionally
- Collaboration between local governments, stakeholders and transit agencies
- Transit options that fit the context and that can grow
- Special regulations and guidelines are necessary
- Try for at least 1,000 du in $\frac{1}{4}$ mi around key nodes

Lessons

- Focus on cross streets and address corridor edge conditions
- If possible, transform the context through street and open space improvements.
- Making it happen will take time
- Though examples are still emerging, the notion of a “linear community” holds a lot of promise

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