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From Progressive Planning to Progressive Urbanism: Planning's Progressive Future and the Legacies of Fragmentation

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CONFLUX

FROM PROGRESSIVE PLANNING TO PROGRESSIVE URBANISM

PLANNING'S PROGRESSIVE FUTURE AND THE LEGACIES OF FRAGMENTATION

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PROGRESSING PROGRESSIVISM

PLANNING'S PROGRESSIVE POTENTIAL AND THE TRANSIENCE OF OF PROGRESSIVISMS FRAGMENTED PAST

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Abstract

Since the 1980's numerous urban scholars have taken to proclaiming one city or another as being 'progressive.' Planning websites like American Planning Association, Planetizen or Progressive Planning Magazine are inundated with examples of progressive planning in action. The examples of touted progressive cities are many: Burlington, Berkeley, Cleveland, Boston, L.A., Chicago, Cincinnati, Portland, Minneapolis, Austin, Denver, and Seattle have all been championed as progressive cities. Most of them come with brackets: Boston was progressive [under Mayor Flynn]; Chicago was progressive [under Mayor Washington]; Burlington was progressive [under Mayor Sanders]. There is also no shortage of descriptors about what makes a city progressive: linkage policies, minimum wages, rent control, affirmative action policies, and more recently public transit, mixed-use development, and pro-density growth policies. A more recent articulation of the progressive city tends to use phrases like 'right-thinking,' 'cool,' 'hip,' or 'walkability' and locates progressiveness in its 'urbanity'.

Introduction

Where 'progressivism' was once most directly linked with process and representation, it has since become both fragmented and, for some, also deployed so frequently as to be rendered meaningless. If most anything and everything that planners do is 'progressive,' then the concept does little to elucidate the work of planning and its ends. While one could make a progressive case, both for and against, planning as a profession, our interest here is in the fragmentation of progressive planning and the ways in which planners, community actors, and various interests deploy the progressive terminology in conflicting ways. By focusing on local political conflict that occurs through the planning process, we hope to illuminate the divergent views that have developed within the progressive field.

In our view we see three related but too often fragmented discourses in the progressive city literature(s):

- 'Redistributive' progress, whereby planning exhibits an economic focus on class and racial inequalities and advocates for disadvantaged populations.
- 'Populist' progress, whereby planning demonstrates a political-administration focus on the democratic process, direct participation in governing, and the inclusion of actors typically marginalized in political decision-making. And in recent years especially,
- Urban form progress, whereby planning emphasizes a stronger focus on the built environment of urban places, growth managment policies, and the 'urbanity' of cities.

We therefore first account for specific shortcomings in the literaturre, including problems of public administration, the spatialities of progressive cities, and the broader context of the so-called "slow-growth" city.

Analysis of the Literature:
a Three Pronged Approach

1. The problem of public administration

We claim that the progressive city literature often fails to embed planning practices within the larger framework of public administration or to articulate fully a theory of the powers that a city has to administer and realize its plans. City organizations are often fragmented with specific authorities assigned to different departments and personnel, each with its own control over specific resources. Planning as an organizational function, often within a specified department, is just one of many competing interests seeking to influence and exert control over resources and decision making within a public administration.

2. The spatiality of progressive cities

In addition, our concern with the redistributive and populist progressive city literature is the often stunning silence on the latter half of the phrase Progressive City . Supported by Huxley and Yiftachel's (2000, p. 337) argument for the analysis of opportunities for change "linking specific sites to wider relations of power should be linked to the objects of planning-spatial processes, such as land development, and the built environment, as well as demonstrating the specific effects of planning practices." The City as a spatial process that embeds progressivism within the urban form is a more recent articulation of progressive planning, one that often comes into conflict with the populist and redistributionist articulation. This is a by-product of a spatial profession that, for a time, largely abandoned the spatial heritage of its knowledge and expertise for knowledge and expertise of

process and representation.

3. The "slow-growth" city

Finally we suspect that most planners work in cities, towns or regions who do not share much in common with the cities typically identified in progressive city literature. Progressive City literature typically takes as its locus of study cities in crisis – such as Chicago and Boston – or cities with significant population and employment growth – Austin, San Francisco, and Seattle. We see the crucial moment in these examples as the moment of crisis, which challenges the legitimacy of the governing and economic arrangements and which opens the door for other influential parties, other problem-definitions, and alternative agendas. These moments of crisis are typically characterized by crises of unemployment or deindustrialization (as in Chicago), or those of rapid growth and gentrification (as in Boston).

Contexualizing the Practice of Planners

Most planners do not work in these circumstances. Most planning work is accomplished in a status quo environment with routinized processes and procedures, where growth is slow or steady but unremarkable. In these circumstances, planners are often trying to stimulate growth and development, such that the plans and development regulations can be instantiated through private investment. If no private investment is occurring, planning often becomes as much about the act of planning as about having a plan. This is particularly true in Tacoma where considerable time and resources are spent on actions such as rezoning to prompt growth, environmental impact statements to streamline development, and complying with state or regional land use regulations responding to growth predictions.

Proposing a Renewed Vision of the Physically Progressive City

However, we propose that a city must ensure that progressive planning of the built environment places an emphasis on providing choices that support healthy and sustainable communities. Cities have engaged in planning massive infrastructure investments like freeways that have created highly stratified induced demand for more traffic, and more freedom for a select portion of the citizenry. However, it has also created numerous negative externalities like environmental degradation and wasteful land use. Consequently, planning actions must be undertaken to reverse the effects of these misguided attempts to deconcentrate the power of non motorized proximity within cities. In response to accusations of social engineering, alternatives must be built to reapportion spatiality of value, such as deconcentrating poverty, within a city. The land market within cities enables land use patterns which perpetuate certain lifestyles, such as long auto oriented commutes. The invisible hand of the market may be complex but it can be manipulated.

Analysis and Discussion

Since the 1960's cities and city-regions, and their administration, have taken on a greater role in the economic and social life of their citizens. The twin processes of economic restructuring and fiscal austerity have thinned out the national filter through which local-global scales were once mediated and as a result, cities and regions are more exposed to direct global competition for people, jobs, and resources.

City-regions have become the economic powerhouses that drive national economies. In this context, 'place' matters more than ever. "Where we live has a powerful effect on the choices we have and our capacity to achieve a high quality

of life… [P]lace shapes and constrains our opportunities not only to acquire income and convert it into quality of life but also to become fully functioning members of the economy, society, and polity (Drier et al. 2004)."

Economic segregation, concentrated poverty, and sprawl are all increasing and have tremendous impacts on quality of life and opportunity. These trends reinforce the plight of disadvantaged inner cities, and heighten the costs both environmentally and socially of suburban sprawl. Focusing on the spatial distribution of cities addresses these changes in the urban context and should be a concern of planners.

High unemployment, poverty and population loss are incredible burdens hindering the success of cities. The social contract of working hard to get a head no longer applies when minimum wage won't cover average rent in some areas. While corporate profits and CEO salaries continue to rise, the incomes of average Americans lag behind their increased hours worked.

While new regionalism has had success confronting efficient and environmental development it has struggled to remedy economic and social disparities (Drier et al. 2004). As Clarke and Gaile (1998) note, "this process resulted in a period of experimentation as cities tried out new policy approaches and strategies to respond to these global-national processes." During this period there was a flourishing of new urban and city typologies as authors, academics, and urban theorists attempted to both describe how cities responded to this new terrain as well as to outline new strategies for cities to deploy to better position for the new economic reality.

This literature was both descriptive and normative, attempting to prescribe what type of city a city should become in order to be successful in the new global city hierarchy. Hence, literature on "innovative cities", "creative cities", "global cities", "entrepreneurial cities", and finally "progressive cities." A similar literature arose in terms of specific policy approaches cities should take in responding to ur-

ban problems: "public private partnerships" became a new policy buzzword, "market approaches" were developed and adopted by cities to address market inefficiencies (common examples include tax increment financing, transfer of development rights).

We are interested in the progressive approach to city policy because it entails a substantive policy reorientation. When analyzing the different typologies that are often deployed during this time period, most envoke 'creativity' or 'entrepreneurialism' as though it is an end in itself. Yet, these descriptive terms say nothing about the way in which creativity and entrepreneurialism are being deployed, for what substance, for what purpose, and for whom? A progressive city can still be a creative city, and often is, as well as entrepreneurial or innovative, but the idea of a progressive city puts the substance of the progressive agenda first and foremost and uses creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurialism in the service of the progressive agenda.

The tension arises in determining when an act of planning is progressive even if it is contrary to political will or the desires of the majority of the population. A city's progress should be judged by its redistributive actions. There must be a theory of what the market is in a context of urban form. When modern defense of a market occurs through attempting to monopolize it, efficient use of resources will not be the primary goal of production. As occurred when companies bought and wastefully removed street cars in numerous cities throughout the country to make way for the automobile. The market allowed for private companies to influence the public good under the guise of profit.

We contend that the fragmentation of progressive thought

has resulted in suboptimal outcomes for the progressive agenda and, in fact, has diminished the capacity of progressives to respond to the challenges and problems of city-regions. In our view, a progressive planning theory must do two things: combine the three strains of progressive thought that we have outlined and address the three shortcomings that we find in contemporary progressive planning theory. To build a progressive city, progressive planners must overcome these fragmentations (among progressives and among City Departments) and connect them to a spatial theory of the city that recognizes the persistence of the built environment in constraining future actions and opening up new possibilities for progressive urbanism.

While there is work on good city form as functioning, beautiful, and complex urban environments citing New Urban principles (Talen 2003, p. 38), it stops short of detailing specific steps practicing planners can take to ensure their actions provide progressive outcomes. In our view, the term Progressive City, evokes a static typology that limits the range of interventions for planners. Progressive Urbanism reorients progressivism towards a more dynamic and active understanding of the urban process and the production of cities and city life that is better equipped to overcome the fragmentation of contemporary progressivism.

The rest of this article will proceed as follows:

Section 1 will present a summary of the history of the term 'progressive' from the progressive era to contemporary usage and its application to urban issues.

Section 2 will provide context for the analysis of planning in Washington State, discussing the role of the Growth Management Act in shaping local planning orientations.

Section 3 will develop a case study of the City of Tacoma: Progressive planning in a city of stasis, through a clash of progressivisms: Sperry Ocean Dock and the Shoreline Master Program update.

Section 1: The Progressive Ideal in U.S. Public History

Progressing the idea of progressive planning should begin with an overview of its origins and the evolutionary processes of cities that have shaped and informed the understanding of the term progressive today. In this section, we'll briefly examine how the three strands of progressive planning have developed over the last century. What we find is that progressive movements often come as a response to the some form of social or political dissatisfaction. These responses often utilize the physical structures of cities (urban form) through planning in addition to programmatic or policy based solutions (redistributive and populist).

Paulsson (1994) describes the early progressive movement as a reaction to the agonies of social change. These agonies included, dangerous working conditions, prevalent child labor, crowded tenement housing, and little option for equal access to public resources, socio economic mobility or public participation. However, the progressive reform movements in large part sought to uplift the poor and working class immigrants through collective organization and new public policies, by investigating and publicizing the problems of the poor (Drier 2004). The progressive movement responded with plans such as Whitnall's in Milwaukee, who advocated for decentralization urban form resulting in redistributive planning as part of a broader socialist agenda that had swept through Milwaukee during the early 1900's like the City Conservation movement, with concern for public health and governmental resource protection (Platt 2010).

In addition to FDR's federal initiatives in the 1930's and 1940's, the US Council of Mayors lead by Laguardia spoke out in favor of New York's Public works, slum clearance and low rent public housing programs which became a foundation for the New Deal's Works Progress Administration and Public housing initiatives increasing the federal role in shaping American cities through a redistribution of resources.

In 1966, Model Cities, an ambitious federal aid program was passed by congress as an element of President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty. Model Cities originated from several concerns of the mid-1960's such as widespread urban violence, disillusionment with the Urban Renewal program, and bureaucratic difficulties in the first years of the War on Poverty. This led to calls for reform of federal programs (Hunt 2004). The Model Cities initiative created a new program within the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) intended to improve coordination of existing urban programs and provide additional funds for local plans. The program's goals emphasized comprehensive planning, involving not just rebuilding but also rehabilitation, social service delivery, and citizen participation with a focus on populist reform. Model Cities ended in 1974.

In San Francisco between 1975 and 1991, a strong desire grew to make the city more progressive and responsive to communities around the city (Deleon 1992). Pro-growth political elites wanted to "Manhattanize" in order to bring more jobs and a larger tax base to support the cities increasing social programs, while progressive coalitions argued for a slow-growth approach out of concern for the effect on quality of life for the local neighborhoods. "Citizen initiatives like neighborhood preservation in Berkeley exemplify the shift from trust of the market to trust of the government. Shift from government responsiveness to developers to government responsiveness toward citizens. Leaders in progressive cities used failure of interest group pluralism as justification for redistributive planning.

Progressive thought in the 1980's can be largely summed up by Pierre Clavel and Peter Dreier's ideas. What we find in the literature, with Clavel and Dreier the most articulate, is a strong relationship between redistributive and populist progressivism, whereas urban form progressivism often fails to articulate a relationship to populist or redistributionist progressives. While Talen (1998 p. 22), argues, "In planning, equitable distribution entails locating resources or facilities so that as many different spatially defined social groups as possible benefit." Consequently, in order to be progressive a city must continue to engage in redistributive resource allocation.

Contributions From Clavel

In Clavel's (1986) book, The Progressive City, he described the progressive politics in five American cities: The main features of progressive politics as practiced in these cities included "attacks on the legitimacy of absentee-owned and concentrated private power on the one hand, and on non-representative city councils and city bureaucracies on the other (Clavel 1986)." These case studies led to a basic formulation for the theory of the progressive city as being underpinned by progressive planning as an alternative to private power and citizen participation as an alternative to non-representative city council power. The criticisms to this approach have been clearly articulated: 1. The theory rests on a presumptive 'progressive planning' without developing a theory of progressive planning, and 2. An assumption that citizen participation is inherently aimed towards progressive ends, or non-representative city council power is itself non-progressive. It is easy to formulate a counter scenario, where the City Council, against the wishes of the public, institutes progressive policy that links new private development to public benefits, or where public planners act as mere tech-

nicians in support of private, corporate profiteering.

Clavel (1986) outlined a few techniques and trends – (1) an experimental view of property rights by encouraging municipal cooperation for development projects, allowed them to force local or minority hiring as well as increase regulation and constrain larger firms. (2) Berkeley and Hartford tapped local enthusiasm for collectives and gave preference and support to collectively run organizations. (3) Instituted progressive taxing schemes that favored residents over businesses. (4) Restructured services to reflect progressive values when budgets were being cut (paraprofessionals were substituted for professionals). (5) Berkeley instituted rent controls and Hartford used affirmative action policies, and Santa Monica enacted land development control regulations to protect neighborhoods counteract speculation, and help lower income families. (6) Hartford and Cleveland took a combative advocacy stance against suburban and business interests. (7) Civic participation was encouraged and organized through organization like appointed advisors in Berkeley and Neighborhood service districts in Hartford. (8) Burlington had a highly developed administration capable of negotiating public participation in real estate and economic development.

Roots of progressive urban political leaders represent the poor and city residents against suburban absentee, and property owning factions. They found ways to recast planning as a link between vital citizen grassroots movement and the desires of progressive political leaders to formulate redistributive policies (Clavel 1986). Urban growth coalitions aimed at integration proved to be unstable by the 1960's. Minority in-migration coupled with white middle class out-migration proved too great for these coalitions. A redefinition of urban problems in racial terms changed from a belief that minorities were disadvantaged because of class structure to a belief that an intractable underclass had developed. This was partly due to diminished opportunities for growth and affirmative action policies that mainly benefited already middle class educated minorities. Class mobiliza-

tion can be weak or easily influenced by more powerful factions to increase pressure for more far reaching changes. Contemporary cities improved budgeting procedures and opened up government to the public as the electoral bases as they addressed the economic and social issues of a different age (Clavel 1986).

New Progressives:
The Importance of Urban Form in Prolonging Progressive Coalitions

The living wage movement was a response to economic changes that began in the early 1980s. During the 1960s and 1970s, the minimum wage could maintain a family of three above the poverty line but in the 1970's, the number of "working poor" increased after welfare cuts by the Reagan administration (Swarts and IB Vasi 2006; Chilman and Luce 2004).

While the idea of a living wage has been around since the beginning of the progressive movement, the first living wage law was adopted by Baltimore, in 1994. In 1997, the living wage law, enacted by Los Angeles city council, boosted pay and benefits to employees of private companies with city contracts or subsidies. These first living wage laws in the 1990's ushered in a new era of progressives.

Ideological perspective, the amount of resources a city can command, and the political conditions that brought them into office are all factors that influence the decisions of local officials regarding how to govern. Pro-growth coalitions pushing for physical redevelopment of downtown areas were typically preceded by organizations that could bring together corporate leaders to smooth over differences,

forge a consensus on public policy, marshal support for a pro-growth agenda, and promote local support for a federal urban renewal program. In regards to Villairagosi's LA mayorality of progressive politics, he is seeking, "to be a new kind of pro-business mayor--by redefining a 'healthy business climate' to mean prosperity that is shared by working people, one that lifts the working poor into the middle class (Drier 2005)."

In Clavels recent book, Activists in City Hall (2010), emphasis is placed on social movements and influencing political will in order to achieve greater economic equity by using the tools of city government to deal with problems of poverty, inadequate housing, low-wage jobs, and disenfranchised neighborhoods. Boston and Chicago were led by growth coalitions supporting downtown redevelopment at the expense of deteriorating neighborhoods, until Flynn and Washington respectively challenged that corporate agenda. Emphasis is placed on social movements and influencing political will.

However, as Agnotti (2011) points out, community movements are not necessarily progressive simply because they are neighborhood based, many are conservative and exclusionary. In addition, racial differences have been and continue to be a major stumbling block among working class communities in the United States. In addition, monetary support for social services through linkages is largely ineffective if development is lacking or general growth is slow. While Flynn moderated growth for the benefit of affordable housing and Washington saved manufacturing jobs for blue collar workers, an example progressive entrepreneurialism is missing for cities to strive toward.

Where is the City in City Planning?

But what is the substance of a progressive city? And how does a planner know how to be progressive in their practice,

given the constraints of working in the local public sector? While many pundits tout the progressiveness of a particular city or policy from the '40,000 foot view' – in reality, local planning is murky and knowing how to be progressive and do progressive work is fraught with difficulty. General political context, city size, and municipal expenditures were significant predictors, of progressive city attributes according to research by Swarts and Bogdan Vasi (2006), while grievances, presence of a local ACORN chapter, union density, and form of city government were not significant. Density of non-labor progressive associations and history of progressive activism were major predictors of policy adoption.

What we have not seen is a theory that articulates both the structural and geographical qualities that give rise to 'progressive' cities, by which we mean a theoretical framework that explains not just how cities become progressive but also why those particular cities are the ones that became progressive. With such a theory it may be possible to develop a set of indicators that can identify those cities which are most ripe for progressive developments. Without offering an empirical study of American cities, we do see some general similarities in the literature:

Firstly, progressiveness is typically defined in relation to either an economic crisis, often deindustrialization and loss of employment as in Chicago under Mayor Washington, or in a growth scenario, of jobs and/or population, with concomitant impacts to housing affordability and/or availability, as in Burlington, Boston and L.A. Secondly, the examples tend towards global or primary cities, cities at the top of the regional or global urban hierarchy. Even the 'urban form' progressive cities, such as Chicago under Daley and Emanuel, Portland, Austin, and Seattle, have growth in common, underpinning the pro-density, transit oriented pol-

icies. Likewise, progressive cities tend towards the coastal or rustbelt cities. But this is perhaps too much a generality. Our macro-geographical claim is that populist and redistributionist progressivism is more prevalent in industrial or rust belt cities, whereas urban-form progressivism is more characteristic of coastal cities (Seattle/Portland) and cities in the south (Houston) in a shift from Fordist to Post-Fordist development.

Section 2

Analysis of Planning in Washington State

Many cities fund progressive acts through growth. Often this demand is used as leverage for redistributive linkage policies. However, tension arises in attempting to label a city progressive in the absence of growing population and economy. Even though a city implements these progressive policies supporting and serving minority and dominated groups, if it is unable to implement the projects that make these policies tangible this city must continue to claim shadows of progress, that can easily shift with transient councils and coalitions.

Because these resolutions or policies can easily be withdrawn, for a city to remain progressive it must build progressive ideas into the infrastructure of its boundaries. In addition to providing stability to these progressive desires, political coalitions will be able to form around physical structures of the built environment. Urban for progressives are concerned that simply focusing on participatory processes neglects the connections vital to progressive outcomes that are persistent in the absence of progressive actions. This reflects the difference in defining a city by its people and its form. Even if the current citizenry lacks a desire to serve those of a particular need, if the infrastructure has been sewn into the urban fabric in the past it will have a higher likelihood of surviving into the future and gaining support for similar projects along the way.

A pro-growth strategy may historically be seen as anti-redistributive because it accommodates the interests of corporate elites while ignoring the interests of residents and neighborhoods. However, as in the case of Tacoma and its aging infrastructure and deferred maintenance, a pattern of development focused on sustaining the infrastructure to support a downtown retail core may in fact benefit the most people, particularly in its ability to facilitate public transportation alternatives, increase the capacity and longevity of public utilities, and offer low income housing options as part of downtown revitalization.

Progressive Growth Management

In Washington State land use planning occurs through two distinct planning regimes: The Growth Management Act and the Shoreline Management Act.

Shoreline Management Act

This legislation was adopted by State-wide referendum in 1972 in order to "prevent the inherent harm in uncoordinated and piecemeal development of the state's shorelines"(source) Explicit in the legislature's intent is also an assertion of the public interest in planning and land use management:

The legislature finds that the shorelines of the state are among the most valuable and fragile of its natural resources and that there is great concern throughout the state relating to their utilization, protection, restoration, and preservation. In addition it finds that ever increasing pressures of additional uses are being placed on the shorelines necessitating

increased coordination in the management and development of the shorelines of the state.

The legislature further finds that much of the shorelines of the state and the uplands adjacent thereto are in private ownership; that unrestricted construction on the privately owned or publicly owned shorelines of the state is not in the best public interest; and therefore, coordinated planning is necessary in order to protect the public interest associated with the shorelines of the state while, at the same time, recognizing and protecting private property rights consistent with the public interest. There is, therefore, a clear and urgent demand for a planned, rational, and concerted effort, jointly performed by federal, state, and local governments, to prevent the inherent harm in an uncoordinated and piecemeal development of the state's shorelines (is this quoted from something?).

Growth Mnagement Act

According to the Washington State Department of Commerce, the foundation of the Growth Management Act is the legislative finding that "uncoordinated and unplanned growth, together with a lack of common goals… pose a threat to the environment, sustainable economic development, and the health, safety, and high quality of life enjoyed by residents of this state. It is in the public interest that citizens, communities, local governments, and the private sector cooperate and coordinate with one another in comprehensive land use planning" (RCW 36.70A.010).

The GMA establishes a blend of State and Local planning authorities.

In theory, the GMA, from a progressive standpoint could provide a vigorous framework for connecting redistributive, populist and urban-form issues, requiring local jurisdictions to consider the relationships between housing, employment, transportation, and environment. In addition, plan policies are to be based on a rational land use process, under-

pinned by Office of Financial Management population forecasts, an assessment of buildable lands and a requirement for 'concurrency' to ensure that urban development occurs where the infrastructure is in place to support it. However, the process of developing local Comprehensive Plans is primarily a local process.

Comprehensive Plan adoption and amendments can be appealed to the Growth Management Hearings Board, prior to going to the court system, but the State does not play a direct role in reviewing comprehensive plan elements for consistency with GMA. For counties and cities participating in the Puget Sound Regional Council, the GMA utilizes a 'carrot' approach – PSRC reviews and certifies consistency with both GMA goals, multi-county planning policies and county-wide planning policies and in return, the participating jurisdictions are eligible to receive transportation funding that is channeled through PSRC for projects supporting the regional transportation plan, Destination 2030.

One of the more controversial elements of the GMA is the use of an Urban Growth Area. Carlson and Dierwechter (2007 p. 211), point out, UGB's attempt to connect urban oriented land development, such as the typical subdivision, to the existing urban fabric. This focus on 'urban growth' is consistent with current urban-form progressivism in the ways it seeks to use land efficiently, promote a pedestrian orientation and conserve natural resources. The problem with the GMA is that imploding growth inwards does not eliminate the trade offs of competing progressing ideologies. So, while the urban growth boundaries are progressive they are not enough, therefore other traditions must be drawn on as well.

Section 3:
A Case Study from Tacoma, Washington

The City of Tacoma is located in the Puget Sound region and has grown up along the deep waters of Commencement Bay, approximately 35 minutes south of Seattle on the I-5 corridor. The City of Tacoma it is not characteristic of the "typical" progressive city in its growth and access to resources. It is experiencing neither the rapid population growth and the related escalation of housing prices and rent, nor is it experiencing an employment crisis. Between 1990 and 2000 the City grew by 9.6%, or around 17,000 people, while the surrounding unincorporated County grew by 19.6%, adding another 115,000 people to the unincorporated county. During this time period, Seattle grew at a comparable rate, but with three times the absolute value, adding 47,000 people. Population growth in Vancouver (209%), Kent (109%) Everett (31%) and Bellevue (28%), were significantly higher, though in some cases driven by annexation.

However, after the recovery in the 1990's, between 2000 and 2010 the City of Tacoma grew by only 2.5%, adding 4800 residents. In 2000 the median house value was $123,000 and median rent was $513. Over the following decade these rose to a median house value of $239,600 and a median rent of $866. While this growth certainly sparked concerns over housing affordability, the City remained much more affordable than comparable cities in the region. Of course, the numbers are affected by the steep value decline at the end of the decade as a result of the global recession. As a result of the recession, median house values had fallen to $190,000 by July of 2012.

Compared to other cities in the region, Tacoma's growth has been steady, neither showing large fluctuations nor any movement as a result of annexation of additional urban growth area. In addition, Tacoma is low in the regional urban hierarchy, with only 14,000 firms compared to Seattle's 125,000. It also has a low concentration of government offices and lacks a research university. Yet PSRC allocations still called for 127,000 additional residents by 2040.

Most of the literature we find about progressive cities looks at larger cities with larger resources, larger problems, and larger opportunities to create progressive actions. Tacoma, because of its position as a second city, slow population growth, and average assets, makes it more applicable to many of the other second tier cities in the United States.
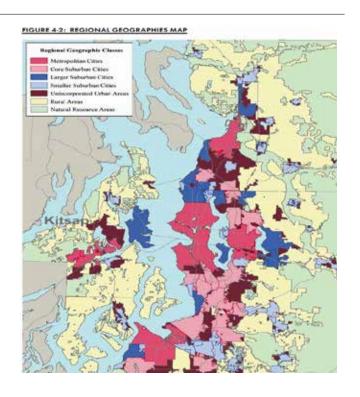
A clash of progressivisms:
Sperry Ocean Dock and the Shoreline Master Program Update

The Tacoma Shoreline Master Program (SMP) includes goals, policies and development regulations for all shoreline areas in the City of Tacoma including Commencement Bay and its waterways, the Tacoma Narrows, Puyallup River and Wapato Lake. The Shoreline Master Program implements the overarching goals of the Shoreline Management Act: to protect the environmental resources of State waters, ensure a sufficient land supply for water-dependent uses, and to promote public access and water-enjoyment opportunities. While the SMP policy element is considered an element of the Comprehensive Plan, it is also set apart from other Comprehensive Plan elements because it is subject to the State Department of Ecology review and approval.

In 2007 the City of Tacoma launched an update of the Shoreline Master Program and set in motion a conflict of progressivisms. The principle actors in this drama were the City of Tacoma, Port of Tacoma, Chamber of Commerce Shoreline Task Force and a community activist organization called 'Walk the Waterfront'. The spark that ignited this confrontation was a permit application that sought to

expand a Navy Reserve operation along the waterfront in close proximity to some of Tacoma's most desirable neighborhoods and treasured waterfront recreation areas.

[Map 1]

FIGURE 4-2: REGIONAL GEOGRAPHIES MAP

Context

Sperry Ocean Dock is a lay-berth facility, located along the Schuster Parkway shoreline, between the Thea Foss Waterway and Ruston Way, two prominent recreation and public-enjoyment shoreline areas. Schuster Parkway, the S-7 Shoreline District is an active industrial area fronting on deep water and bisected by the mainline BNSF railroad. Current uses include a grain terminal and docking for two Ready Reserve vessels.

The 1.5 mile long district sits between two shoreline districts to the north and south that have undergone a transformation from past industrial use into attractive urban waterfronts lined with parks, and interspersed with restaurants and a mix of uses. It has been a long-term City vision to connect these two urban waterfronts with waterfront esplanade. Schuster Parkway presents a major impediment to that vision.

The existing uses and railroad prevent safe access along the water's edge. The configuration of Schuster Parkway, a multilane arterial providing primary access from the interstate to north end residential areas has no existing sidewalk on the water's side. A narrow sidewalk and hillside trail are available on the landward side. The Parkway is a highly traveled roadway with a 40 mph speed limit that is not conducive to pedestrian and bicycle use.

In 2008, Sperry Ocean Dock submitted a permit to the City Building and Land Use Services Division to expand the lay-berth facility to accommodate two additional Ready Reserve Vessels as well as to reposition a mooring dolphin and to provide additional parking. In conjunction with the new development Sperry representatives proposed to remove dilapidated overwater structures and creosote pilings, enhancing the near-shore area that is used as a migratory route for salmonids in Commencement Bay and improving water quality. The project was considered a huge environmental win by City and State environmental agencies as well as a local advocacy group Citizens for a Healthy Bay (Source).

City permit staff conducted a public meeting on the Sperry permit, in accordance with City permit procedures. Planners still expected a routine permit process, but in fact, the permit was met with a hostile neighborhood audience. Neighborhood opposition was organized by prominent business and community leaders who wished to stop the Sperry expansion, and who also happened to live along the top of the bluff above the Sperry Ocean Dock site.
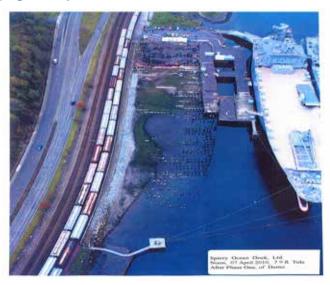
Opposition

Opposition was typically articulated in terms of view impacts and noise and air pollution generated by the engines of the twin ships, but quickly morphed into something broader: a referendum on the future of industry in the City of Tacoma and an advocacy for a 'new economy' based on attracting skilled and creative classes through public amenities. The opposition coalesced in the formation of two groups (with significant crossover): Walk the Waterfront, whose purpose was to advocate for public recreation and access to the shoreline; and Stop the Ships, whose mission was to displace Sperry Ocean Dock. Under intense neighborhood and public pressure, Sperry re-scoped their permit and backed off the proposed expansion.

What began as an effort to stop expansion of the Navy Reserve facility, had shifted into an effort to relocate the ships, under the auspice of changing port geography. The neighborhood groups launched a two prong strategy: 1. Appealing the permit issued by the City for the revised and contracted scope of work, and 2. Identifying the Shoreline Master Program update as a vehicle for changing the City's policy approach to Schuster Parkway and the industrial uses.

As part of the Shoreline Master Program Update, Walk the Waterfront and Stop the Ships mobilized to change the intent for the shoreline area to emphasize non-industrial, recreational uses, to make the existing industrial uses non-conforming, and to require a public access esplanade that would link the Thea Foss esplanade and Ruston Way promenade.

Public support for improved public access was widespread through the public process. In support of their policy positions they leveraged arguments consistent with 'urban form progressivism,' emphasizing walk-ability and the corollary public health benefits and leveraging New
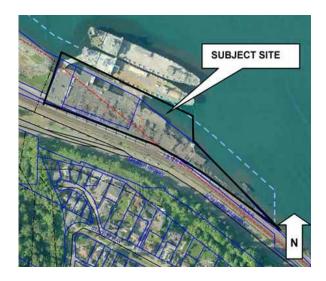
[Figure 1]

Sperry Ocean Dock existing conditions

Economy arguments: That quality of life factors play a more important role in attracting skilled labor and new firms, as opposed to 'antiquated' factors like location cost. In addition, these groups mobilized anti-privatization arguments, espousing the public nature of the waters of the state and the desire to make the waterfront accessible to all of the citizen's and not just a limited number of industrial uses and employees.

These arguments carried a strong populist message – that the water's of the state belong to everyone and should be accessible to all people of all abilities and not held in the exclusive ownership of a few people.

(1)"Tacoma would be astounded at how many jobs would be created when Thea Foss esplanade is connected to Ruston Way. (2)"An uninterrupted waterfront path would make Tacoma a more attractive place to work and live for families." (3)"We believe Tacoma's waterfront should be open

[Figure 2]

Proposed expansion of the Sperry Ocean Dock

and accessible to all of our citizens to increase our quality of life and to take full advantage of our unique location as a Puget Sound city (Metro Parks Board of Commissioners)."

In response, the Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber of Commerce organized a Shoreline Task Force to stake out a common interest and position on the S-7 Shoreline District.

What emerged from these discussions was a different form of progressivism, though no less populist. Rather than focusing exclusively on Sperry Ocean Dock the Task Force broadened their concerns to encompass all industrial activities on the waterfront, making the issue a referendum on the future of industrial activities in Commencement Bay, citing a 'domino effect' that could have ramifications for all port/industrial users on the shoreline. The Task Force brought together representatives from the Port of Tacoma, Simpson Tacoma Kraft, unions, commercial/industrial realtors, etc. and was able to galvanize union support.

The Task Force, like Clavel (2010) in regards to Mayor Washington's manufacturing centers in Chicago, argued that local, family wage jobs is what underpinned local prosperity and was of a greater benefit to the community than the livability of adjacent neighborhoods and walkability of the shoreline. They highlighted the traditional multiplier effects of union jobs including homeownership, consumer buying power, and improved tax base. Of particular note, the Task Force members were critical of the service industry jobs that were created along Ruston Way and the Foss Waterway, where former industrial areas had been converted over time to restaurants and retail establishments because these jobs tend to be non-union, more flexible, with lower pay and benefit packages.

A key difference in this case —Ruston Way and the west side of the Foss had been abandoned by industry, left with vacant, contaminated building sites and dilapidated structures that the public sector purchased. The City of Tacoma had taken the responsibility for remediating these properties and returning them to a mix of public and private uses including public parks, walkways, and docks as well as mixed-use residential and commercial development. In these cases the service jobs did not directly displace industrial jobs, but rather the City recouped some employment out of waterfront areas that had been left behind by industry. On the other hand, the Schuster Parkway shoreline was and remains an active port industrial shoreline. With industrial uses still operating along the shoreline, proposals to rezone the properties are understood by the property owners and Chamber Task Force as a threat to purposefully displace those uses and those jobs. Meaning, industry and union jobs are considered as 'undesirable' by the City. Throughout the public process there were two key issues relating to Sperry:

1. The Efficacy of Mixed-Use Development

One of the central issues surrounding Sperry Ocean Dock was whether industrial uses could be a viable component of a mixed-use concept. Mixed-use is a planning concept that is almost sacrosanct in contemporary planning. In Chicago, the Planned Manufacturing Districts provided an example of how industry could be incorporated into the fabric of the City and under Mayor Washington, DPD staff articulated a need to maintain neighborhood manufacturing jobs. In Tacoma, there was a strong consensus around Sperry Ocean Dock that 'people places' and 'industrial places' could not and should not be co-located – they were inherently incompatible.

Walk the Waterfront and Stop the Ships argued for the relocation of industrial activities into the port/tide flats and suggested that the City draw a line down the middle of the Thea Foss Waterway separating the public sphere from the industrial sphere. The Chamber Shoreline Task Force argued that Sperry Ocean Dock was part of the port industrial area and that the line should be drawn to reflect that. The Task Force conflated public access and public walkways as a new form of gentrification that would increase the pressure on industrial uses to relocate through nuisance complaints and interference with industrial operations. Both sides agreed that some form of buffer was needed but both sides had a different idea of how the buffer should be provided.

In support of their position 'Walk the Waterfront' and 'Stop the Ships' frequently cited the City Club report "Dome to Defiance" as a blueprint for achieving a continuous 'people's waterfront' stretching for the Tacoma Dome to Point Defiance. The study was cited in support of the proposed displacement of industrial activity along Schuster Parkway. In fact, the report very clearly articulated a vision of a mixed-use waterfront where people-centered recreation and enjoyment activities were co-located with industrial uses. As a sign of how far this concept had fallen in the public's mind, the study was used to promote the segregation of

[Figure 3]

Redeveloped Thea Foss Waterway pedestrian access

uses along the shoreline and to demonstrate the incompatibility of public use and industry.

In the midst of these viewpoints was a third viewpoint, that of design. These few articulated the view that on a site specific scale issues of public safety, Homeland Security concerns, environmental impacts, and industrial operations could be addressed through the design of public access. This view maintained that the promise of mixed-use could still be accomplished through sensitive design approaches and that 'inherent' incompatibilities were not inherent at all.

2. The Efficacy of Industrial Employment

Community groups attempted to turn the process into a referendum on the future of industrial employment in Tacoma. A common refrain from Walk the Waterfront and Stop the Ships was that the widening of the Panama Canal would weaken the Port of Tacoma in relation to its competition from other ports on the East Coast as well as its competition with West Coast Ports, including Long Beach and Prince Rupert. In addition, the City of Tacoma had developed a Waterfront Lands Analysis in 2009 that had expected that container terminal expansion would result in the full build-out of shoreline industrial lands

within 20 years.

The recession, however, had a devastating impact on the Port of Tacoma's terminal expansion plans, which were suspended indefinitely, and which resulted in over 750 acres of vacant industrial lands in the port/tide flats without plans for imminent use. The expansion of the Panama Canal, the recession and the amount of vacant land in the port/tide flats were all utilized as part of a narrative that 1. The industrial sector was contracting, and 2. That as a result, there was capacity in the port/tide flats to accommodate the shrinking demand for industrial uses and therefore, 3. Schuster Parkway could be converted to non-industrial uses without jeopardizing the industrial sector.

It is easy to dismiss the arguments presented by both groups as rhetorical flourishes or hyperbole designed to 'win' while masking their underlying interests. For the 'Walk the Waterfront' and 'Stop the Ships' groups, it is entirely likely that the motivation was a much more self interested desire to force out one business that was a perceived blight on their waterfront views. On the other hand, it is unlikely that the rezone of one industrial property, located on the outskirts of the port/tide flats would realistically cause a domino effect, wherein the public's ability to walk or bike adjacent to industrial uses will gradually result in the displacement of industry. But to dismiss their arguments as a result of their motivations does a disservice to the legitimacy of their main points. It is a common and lazy ad hominem fallacy to say "X argument is not legitimate, because the person is Y."

Of particular concern to the Planning Commission was how to interpret the public interest in this particular case, given that the Shoreline Management Act and the Washington Administrative Code give priority to water-dependent uses while also allowing local flexibility to pursue the goals and aspirations of the local community.

Based on the review of public comment and with consideration given to the characteristics of the Schuster Parkway shoreline, including existing uses, water depths, topography, proximity to residential neighborhoods, and upland land supply, the Commission directed staff to expand the 'urban-conservancy' designation to the southern bound-

[Map 2]

Schuster Parkway Public Access Alternatives

ary of the Sperry Ocean Dock property.

In our view, this is the point of the case study as well as the idea that ties the paper together. While both sides may use "progressive" arguments to support their views, the truly progressive action may be a compromise based on design principles, that accommodate the desires of all parties involved) progressive planning isn't just one thing, it's a combination of issues that can compete conflict or clash, progressivism has to do with intentions and is shaped by their view of what a city should be. It meets the desires of the whole community as well as the environment.

Conclusion:

Progressing Progressivism:
Lessons from the City of Tacoma

Placing progressivism through a geography of planning becomes an increasingly important aspect of shaping the built environment. While New Urbanists may be primarily design focused, they have the advantage of relevance in the fact that they are still practicing and actively building urban realms. It doesn't mean that they do any better job of making unique places, in fact two of their communities side by side will often be just as indistinguishable as two "placeless" suburbs, one just may be a little more comfortable to walk around in. However, in all cases the unique knowledge of local residents will shape they sense of place ascribed to a geographic location. Just because there are preferences for, or recognitions of a certain type of urbanism doesn't mean that those identities are equitable to all.

The limits of advocacy planning are found in its origins and connect to broad social movements that kept the community in charge. Advocacy planning helped institutionalize community participation in planning particularly in the public sphere. Participation provides a smokescreen behind which real decisions are made by those who have always made them. As development becomes privatized there are

fewer political pressure points. Advocacy planning tends to be representative rather than participatory democracy. Planning should leave the community not just with products but an increased capacity to meet future needs, and the goal should be to bring previously marginalized voices in to the conversation and organizing the unorganized (Kennedy, 2012).

While the currents in planning theory don't always intersect, there must be a way to make these ideas converge and conflux. The argument that the Comprehensive Plan is used as an expression of the "Planning" Department is continually

used as evidence of Tacoma's progressive policies, however there is a large gap in the theory of the plan and the action of the implementation. While some theorists tend to be focused on political economy and the tradition of verbs (actions), There is also a noun tradition that shouldn't be overlooked. Attempts at recovering this place-making tradition may represent this new noun way of thinking. What we make influences how people live, it's not just the process we go through in planning cities, interacting in the building process also shapes how we experience cities.

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