Abstracts of PPPM Masters’ and Undergraduate Students’ Terminal Projects, Capstone Projects, and Theses
September 2014 – August 2015
Listed alphabetically by student’s last name
This document was updated August 27, 2015

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Keeping Local Economies Safe:
The Role of Economic Development Plans in Hazards Resilience
Sarah Allison
Master of Community and Regional Planning, June 2015

Abstract

When communities are impacted by a natural disaster, damage to the local economy can keep the community in a state of crisis long after the disaster itself. Although this vulnerability has considerable implications for communities, it is unclear which organizations or entities have the responsibility and capacity to address the issue. Economic development and emergency management are often isolated from each other, resulting in emergency plans that do not serve the business community as well as they might otherwise, and economic development plans that do not address business needs related to disasters.

One way to think about strengthening the local economy and reducing its vulnerability to disruption from hazards is through the lens of resilience, or the ability of a system to anticipate, absorb, recover from and adapt to stresses. This study explores the potential role of economic development plans in addressing the resilience of local economies to natural hazards. Through the evaluation of ten economic development plans from a three-county region and supporting interviews, this study analyzes how well economic development plans currently address economic resilience to hazards, and how they might address it in the future. The results indicate that economic development plans have an overall existing alignment with resilience principles that can be built upon both within the plans themselves and through supporting activities.

Planning for Justice: A Case Study in Discourses on Environmental Justice and State Rationale in the City of Eugene
Lokyee Tweety Au
Master of Community and Regional Planning
and Master of Science Environmental Studies, June 2015

Abstract

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and Master of Science Environmental Studies, June 2015

Abstract
Taking basic principles of Environmental Justice and Critical Communicative Planning theories, this study examines local government agencies involved in land use/zoning and air quality in the City of Eugene, with a focus on understanding how agencies address and act on concerns of environmental injustice in the West Eugene area. This study examines the way the “state” engages in discourses regarding inequity that are used as a means to deflect political criticism and maintain social order, effectively insulating its actions from public input or scrutiny. While agency actors publicly indicate their desires for justice and equity in the area, a disconnect remains between conversations and resulting actions. Thus, my research focuses on examining discourses from the ‘top’, where conversations to address inequitable practices in the area occur, but then something happens within the state’s process that results in the perpetuation of the status quo. My research questions include: How do state agencies understand and talk about environmental justice? How do agencies use the discourse they’ve created around EJ to act or not act in addressing the injustices? How do agency actors rationalize the lack of action in response to claims of injustice? Lastly, how does the state protect itself from public scrutiny that results from its inaction in response to claims of injustice?

Regiona1 Governance: Local Planning and Development Implications in Denver, Colorado

Stephen Dobrinich
Master of Community and Regional Planning, June 2015

Abstract

In the absence of broad planning authority the Denver region is taking a bottom-up approach to regional governance. This is best illustrated by the fact that local leaders have signed the Mile High Compact in support of the regional growth plan, Metro Vision. Metro Vision’s designation of ‘urban centers’-areas slated to develop as dense nodes of mixed-use development- is explored as a part of this research project in an effort to explain how and to what extent regional planning influences local programs and policies. In summary, this study seeks to shed light on how regional planning efforts, local planning initiatives, or other outside forces influence the implementation of urban centers in the Denver region.

Fermenting Change: Development in Eugene’s Whiteaker Neighborhood

Aniko Drlik-Muehleck
Master of Community and Regional Planning, June 2015

Abstract

In the past 10 years, craft fermented beverage businesses – breweries, urban wineries, cideries, meaderies, and distilleries – have proliferated in Eugene’s Whiteaker neighborhood. This study documents the changes that have occurred and the community’s perceptions of those changes. Based on these observations, I draw out lessons to help community and economic development practitioners better harness the benefits and mitigate the impacts of neighborhood-scale change. Although the Whiteaker’s transformation has been far from painless, the neighborhood’s experience offers insight into conscientious development. Land use changes have resulted in an emerging economic prosperity without completely undermining the neighborhood’s identity.

Should Regional Policies be at the Center of Our Attention?
Evaluating the Impact of the “Urban Center” Designation on Transit-Oriented Development in Denver

Taylor Ethan Eidt
Abstract

In order to curb sprawling development, the Denver Regional Council of Governments and the Regional Transit District are utilizing development models that emphasize compact, mixed use, and transit oriented development. In doing so, they have implemented strategies that seek to address the same issues concurrently. This study evaluates the impacts of the Urban Center designation on the performance of indicators at four Urban Center transit oriented developments, compared with four transit oriented developments that do not have that designation. The goal of this study is to identify if one designation is more impactful on development of the surrounding communities than the other. In summary, this study seeks to evaluate the performance of the Urban Center designation on transit oriented developments in the city of Denver.

Facilitating Suburban Bike-to-Rail: An Evaluation of Municipality-led Efforts to Integrate Bikes with Transit

Bjorn Griepenburg
Master of Community and Regional Planning, June 2015

Abstract

In efforts to reduce automobile reliance and promote compact development patterns near transit, transit agencies and planning departments are coming to recognize the importance of station access modes. Bicycles, in particular, are becoming increasingly integrated; studies suggest that bike-to-rail users will ride up to three miles to access quality regional transit, making it a viable option to replace a considerable proportion of automobile access trips and expand the catchment area far beyond the walking range of one-half mile (Martens 2004). Research on the subject tends to place heavy emphasis on transit agencies’ responsibilities, focusing primarily on bicycle parking and the allowance of bicycles onboard. This means that the roles of agencies that control the streets surrounding transit stations—typically Public Works Departments—have been largely ignored, in spite of the obvious need for legible and attractive bicycle routes in the station surroundings. Using five jurisdictions with Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit stations—which begin service in 2016—this project seeks to create a framework from which planning efforts to facilitate bike-to-rail access can be evaluated. Included within the analysis is a policy review, along with catchment areas that convey destination-based connectivity in bicycle networks. Ultimately, key gaps in the existing and planned bicycle networks are highlighted, helping inform a 'next step' towards project identification and prioritization.

Implementation of the Walking School Bus in Page Elementary: A Survey of Successful Walking School Bus Programs

Nestor Guevara Delgado
Master of Community and Regional Planning, June 2015

Abstract

The rates of children walking to school have declined greatly throughout the past 40 years. In 1969, 48% of children aged 5 to 14 walked or biked to school usually. This value dropped all the way down to 13% of children for the same age group in 2009. Health and social risks have been linked to this decrease in walking to school. Programs have been implemented to address these risks, as well as to increase the percentage on children walking to school. One such a program is the Walking School Bus (WSB), a group of children walking to school accompanied by one or more adults. Recently, a WSB program was implemented in Elizabeth Page Elementary in Springfield, Oregon of which I was a part of the
development. Through my research I seek to understand if there are a series of operational characteristics that are recurring among successful WSB programs. To achieve this I studied a variety of successful WSB programs across the United States, and conducted interviews with the WSB program officials for these schools. Additionally, I examine the funding mechanisms that affect the WSB, and research the potential benefits that successful WSB program can have on children, parents, and the community in general.

Assessing the Economic and Livability of Multi-Use Trails:
A Case Study into the Tammany Trace Rail Trail in St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana

Hagen Thames Hammons
Master of Community and Regional Planning, June 2015

Abstract

There are many qualities that multi-use trails bring to communities which can include increased health aspects, a viable non-motorized transportation option, and a safe recreational corridor. If a trail is planned out and designed sufficiently, then all these qualities will come with the territory, but what is overlooked sometimes is the overall economic impact along with the increased livability that these trails can inevitably bring. This study looks into how a community in automobile-centric south Louisiana has embraced its very own rail-trail as the clear recreational jewel and envy of the region. The study focuses on how the trail has had an economic benefit to the community through correlating feedback from a conducted intercept survey and yearly user numbers, along with determining if the trail has had an effect on adjacent property values. Also, qualitative feedback is presented to show how the trail is a benefit to the quality of life for the region.

Public Outreach Programs’ Benefits, Challenges, and Lessons Learned:
The Case of Oregon Watershed Councils

Somaly Jaramillo Hurtado
Master of Community and Regional Planning, June 2015

Abstract

Public outreach and education is key in increasing people’s knowledge and awareness about watershed issues and restoration. Watersheds are important ecosystems that provide environmental, social, and economic benefits. However, increasing human activities such as agriculture, use of pesticides in lawns and construction of impervious surfaces are damaging these ecosystems. Outreach programs are being implemented by Oregon watershed councils not only to educate and inform the community about watershed issues, but also to increase people’s participation in watershed activities that aim to improve watersheds health. Nevertheless, there is little information available about the benefits, challenges, and lessons learned from these outreach programs.

The purpose of this study is to describe and analyze the public outreach mechanisms used by Oregon Watershed Councils to create awareness about environmental issues and determine the benefits, challenges, and lessons learned from these mechanisms of public outreach. The research focuses on outreach programs that obtained the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board’s (OWEB) public outreach grant. The documents used by councils to apply for the grant and follow-up interviews with the outreach coordinators of these programs were the two sources of information. The study reveals the relevance of outreach in increasing people’s knowledge about watersheds, the difficulties councils face partnering with
different organizations, funding the programs, and changing people’s misperceptions about outreach, and the educational and environmental outcomes of these outreach programs.

Exploring Community Attitudes Towards Secondary Dwelling Units in Eugene’s University Area Neighborhood

Emily Kettell
Master of Community and Regional Planning, June 2015

Abstract

Eugene’s vibrant neighborhoods are a main contributor to the attractiveness of this city; however, many residents around the University of Oregon feel that the historic charm of their neighborhoods are being threatened by increased density in the form of secondary dwelling units (SDUs), specifically because of student renters. Through a series of interviews, this project forms a comprehensive understanding of the quality of life issues related to increased density in the form of SDUs around the university. After conducting twenty interviews, it is evident that increased density in the form of SDUs does create quality of life issues as a direct result of the student population concentrated in these neighborhoods. While many residents are not opposed to density per se, they are opposed to changes in their neighborhood character as a result of this form of housing. This presentation will describe the quality of life issues related to SDUs, as well as their implications for Eugene’s most historic neighborhoods.

Foster Youth’s Transition to Independence: A Policy and Programs Review and Comparison

Carmen Kuncz
Bachelor of Arts in Planning, Public Policy, and Management, June 2015

Abstract

Most youth who age out of foster care at the age of eighteen will face many hardships as they transition into adulthood and independence without the support from a stable family. Currently, federal legislation gives each state financial support and flexibility to create programs and services for foster youth to prepare them for independence. Services offered to foster youth to help with the transition to independence typically range from life skill training programs, educational financial assistance, housing placement and assistance, and extended foster care. However, the amount and kind of programs offered to foster youth are largely up to the discretion of the state, and states differ in how they have chosen to implement and provide programs and services to foster youth.

Oregon, California, Kentucky, and Wisconsin vary in the ways that they assist youth to live independently. Because of the uniqueness of each states’ transition planning model and services for foster youth, it would be beneficial for state child welfare agencies to seek improvements to their foster care programs through comparison of other states’ programs. The purpose of this thesis is to compare the states listed above and answer the question “Does Oregon provide higher or lower quality services and programs to help prepare aged out foster youth for independent living?”. Through a review and examination of federal legislation, state legislation and programing, and interviews, recommendations for improvement are made for the state of Oregon based on other examined states’ programs and the adoption of programs and services similar to Oregon by the other states.

Keeping Promises: Exploring the Role of Post-Occupancy Evaluation in Landscape Architecture
Andrew Louw  
Master of Community and Regional Planning, November 2014

Abstract

This study deals with the role of post-occupancy evaluation in North American landscape architecture. While social, economic, environmental, and educational performance outcomes are often identified during the pre-design and design stages of landscape architecture projects, most projects lack effective post-occupancy evaluation (POE) to determine if—and how well—the design goals are met. This study is comprised of two parts. First, a descriptive social survey of landscape architecture professionals was used to examine the current state of knowledge, level of use, and perception toward the use of POE within the profession. Second, a case study was used to compare three methods of post-occupancy evaluation—direct observation, intercept surveys, and facilitated volunteer geographic information (F-VGI)—to determine whether new digital tools like F-VGI are effective for aiding in POE. While there is overwhelming agreement that POE is beneficial and helps legitimize the profession of landscape architecture, fewer than half of the survey respondents reported having experience using POE. Because POE remains a voluntary practice among landscape architects, client support, cost, and funding mechanisms are the strongest determinants of whether or not POE is considered. Preliminary analysis of case study data suggest that F-VGI is an effective method of data collection compared to direct observation and intercept surveys if there is adequate recruitment and willingness to accept slower data collection process.

Network Governance: Interorganizational Collaboration to Address Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Oregon  
Elizabeth Miller  
Master of Community and Regional Planning, August 2015

Abstract

As governmental entities face an increasingly complex political and economic environment, the nonprofit sector is correspondingly taking on roles to fulfill societal needs. Governmental entities are increasingly relying on the nongovernmental sector through interorganizational networks, and thereby are increasingly taking on a role of coordinating and overseeing these networks. The complexity and scope of issues related to the environment are especially challenging to the traditional top-down regulatory framework. Policymakers and agencies charged with implementing policies are often hindered by strong political debate, and lack of power, will, and means. As a result, policymakers are increasingly forced to search for alternative ways to marshal resources to address climate issues and the demands of citizens. Complex issues, such as addressing issues of climate change, often require collective action by goal-oriented networks. Achieving the goals of individual organizations and agencies is not sufficient to address complex issues. Governance of these interorganizational networks is critical for achieving multi-organizational outcomes and for the overall effectiveness of the network.

This study examines the networks that are working to address the issue of Oregon’s greenhouse gas emissions on a state level in an effort to combat the broader issue of climate change. Networks form for a variety of reasons such as gaining legitimacy, resources, capacity, and to better address complex problems. Understanding these networks and how they are governed is important because it allows for better insight as to why networks produce certain outcomes. In exploring these networks, the study assesses the network members, how and by whom the networks are governed, and aims to gain insight into the progress and effectiveness of the networks based upon their structure and governance. Governed efficiently, networks can allow their members to more effectively act as force multipliers in addressing the issue of greenhouse gas emissions, and can furthermore play a large role in government accountability.
Outer Seed Shadow #01: The Cross Pollination of Cultures (OSS#01)

Ana Eréndira Orozco
Master of Community and Regional Planning, December 2014

Abstract

The Outer Seed Shadow #01 (OSS#01) project, a public art instillation, is evaluated to demonstrate how planners and designers should respond to the cross-cultural complexities of today’s U.S. cities. Incorporating Hou’s framework of transcultural placemaking helps shed light on how the outreach project incorporates immigrant ethnic identity, political incorporation, and placemaking to create more inclusive and adaptive communities. OSS#1 is a culturally responsive design planning and landscape outreach tool that has the potential to empower marginalized immigrants. My findings reveal that this process was rewarding to participants, worked as an outreach strategy to reach marginalized populations, and demonstrated increased interest and financial support from the NYC Department of Park and Recreation.

Painting the Picture: The Validity of Walk Score In Addressing Subjective Urban Design Qualities in Built Environment

Daniel Pearce
Master of Community and Regional Planning, June 2015

Abstract

In 2015, one would be hard pressed to find an individual who would disagree with the notion that walkability is good for our us and our cities. Indeed, walkability has been one of the planning discipline’s buzzwords over the past decade or so. Practitioners and academics have sought out new methods and tools for measuring walkability. Walk Score has come to the fore as the go to tool despite the fact that it does not address subjective urban design qualities that have been found to influence walkability. I believe that relying solely on Walk Score alone paints an incomplete picture of walkability, as it is unable to measure walkability at a fine grain and cannot account for differences in the built environment from block to block. Using downtown and suburban neighbourhoods in Detroit and San Francisco, this study seeks to understand if a relationship exists between walkability as measured by Walk Score and subjective urban design qualities measured with the Urban Quality Assessment tool.

From Perceptions to Best Practices: Next Steps for On-Street Bike Parking in Commercial Areas in Eugene, OR

Ross Peizer
Master of Community and Regional Planning, June 2015

Abstract

Quality short-term bike parking has a number of benefits including promoting bicycling as a means of transportation and creating an organized and predictable public streetscape which are both beneficial to businesses. In addition, on-street bike corrals are beneficial in commercial areas where bike parking is encroaching on the pedestrian realm. On-street bike corrals can also provide greater visibility for those driving, walking or bicycling when placed at an intersection. For this study I evaluated Eugene’s bike parking and bike corral efforts and compared them to bike parking and corral programs in Portland and Seattle. To do this I interviewed key staff members in Eugene, Seattle and Portland. I also surveyed business owners and managers at businesses with and without corrals on their block in Eugene and their customers to find out business and customer perceptions of bike parking in Eugene. The six interviews,
24 business surveys and 403 customer surveys I received provided key findings that helped inform five recommendations for Eugene to have a more successful bike parking and corral program based on best practices and business and customer feedback.

**Getting Squeezed: Urban Growth Boundaries, Changes in Housing Affordability, and Affordable Housing Barriers in Oregon and California**

**Evelyn Perdomo**
**Master of Community and Regional Planning, June 2015**

**Abstract**

Many studies have focused on the relationship between Urban Growth Boundaries (UGBs) and home prices. This study explores challenges to the production of affordable housing (for owners and renters) and whether they are intensified by the presence of a UGB. This study examines the extent to which the production of affordable housing, intended for households earning 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI) or less, is keeping up with the growth of low-income households by examining surpluses and deficits of affordable housing units over time. I also explore the barriers that impact the development of affordable housing to identify similarities between Oregon, a growth management state, and California, a non-growth management state.

**Revitalizing A Sense of Place: Placemaking Through the Main Street Four Point Approach**

**Drew W. Pfefferle**
**Master of Community and Regional Planning, June 2015**

**Abstract**

A common sight in the early 1900s, downtowns were seen as a thriving and lively location captured by Norman Rockwell’s iconic Americana paintings. However, that romanticized version of the American downtown is slowly being replaced with vacant and deteriorating main streets across the country. Over the past 50 years, downtowns across America have lost their connection to their communities and become impassive locale to community members. A distinctive sense of place is one of the most important assets a traditional commercial or downtown district has to offer. The Main Street Four Point Approach provides a framework for communities to organize, improve, promote and diversify the economic vitality of their downtown districts. It has been proven an effective economic tool to help communities revitalize their downtown. However it is unclear to what extent, if any, the Main Street Four Point Approach helps communities establishes a sense of place in their downtowns.

**Reclaiming Urban Space: A Study of Arterial Street Redesigns**

**Daniel Reid**
**Master of Community & Regional Planning, March 2015**

**Abstract**

Arterial streets, because of their commonly accepted function of optimizing safe and efficient traffic flow, tend to be automobile-dominated by definition. However, their role as primary linkages among neighborhoods and regions suggests that they can serve a broader function in the internal cohesion of cities. Indeed, many communities are now searching for ways in which arterial streets can provide walkable, inviting, human-scale urban space while also supporting appropriate traffic movement.
Because municipal capital-project budgets tend to be severely constrained, redesign measures must also be cost-effective and produce clear results in the public perception of the affected streets. The purpose of this project is to study how the design of the street cross-section can advance these goals. Specifically, what cross-sectional design strategies best balance the needs of multiple transportation modes with the need for good urban space?

The effort to answer this question focuses on five arterial streets that underwent recent cross-sectional design changes aimed at improving conditions for all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, drivers, business owners, and residents. The costs and benefits of each redesign are analyzed in terms of both economics and urban design, using before-and-after Google Street View images and GIS data.

Examination of Environmental Justice in River Restoration:
Willamette River Basin, OR

Elijah Tome
Master of Community and Regional Planning, June 2015

Abstract

River restoration projects within the Willamette River basin are disproportionately located within privileged compared to marginalized communities. These projects bring tangible and intangible benefits to these communities through improved ecological and morphological conditions of the river system, resulting in an unintended, yet unequal distribution of benefits as a result of river restoration projects. This study analyzes 2010 census data provided by NHGIS integrated with restoration data provided by the Oregon Watershed Restoration Inventory tool available from Oregon Explorer to correlate community marginalization level and frequency of river restoration. Additionally the study provides a repeatable methodological framework integrating ArcGIS 10.2 and SPSS 22 to identify spatial inequities. Planners and restoration practitioners can take this information to ensure an equitable distribution of restoration in the future and ensure that marginalized communities have equal access to healthy and productive river systems in the future.