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URBAN WATERFRONTS AND PLANNING FOR INDUSTRY

SCHOOL OF
URBAN STUDIES

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This report contains work produced by the 2019 MACP cohort for their culminating studio project. The culminating studio is a two-term (20-week) course intended to enable students to apply the lessons from their MACP courses to an important community-based project. For 2019, that project was Urban Waterfronts and Planning for Industry.

The Community Planning program and the School of Urban Studies are committed to the potential of academic research to further community interests. In a process of investigation and co-learning, students, faculty, and local partners work to foreground issues and connections that provide opportunities for shared growth and equitable development. In a region that is seeing substantial investment and population increase, there are also widening disparities among different demographic groups, stubborn overall poverty rates, and stagnant or deteriorating environmental conditions (PSRC 2017). These realities require deeper, community-oriented research, analysis, and action. A clearer understanding of the complex challenges facing working waterfronts and the communities they serve will enable local leaders to work proactively with stakeholders, to build strong constituencies for investment, innovation, resource protection, and sustainable growth.

INTRODUCTION

By: Anne Taufen and Mark Pendras, studio co-instructors

THE 2019 STUDIO AND THIS REPORT FOREGROUND TWO MAIN ISSUES.

First, **WE NEED INDUSTRY**. The jobs and economic prosperity that are created through industrial development are essential to the sustainability of this region. People need reliable, living-wage employment in order to provide for themselves and their loved ones; contribute to the local housing, service, and retail economies; make use of their intrinsic capacities; and give back to the communities of which they are a part. Industry is the act of working hard, as well as a certain kind of production and manufacturing economy. People in the South Sound want and need to work. Industry is a big part of this region's past – and for sustainable urban development, it is also our future.

Second, **WE NEED A SHARED VISION** for industrial development that respects, responds to, and sustains communities throughout the city and region. The tideflats and the deep water port are shared public assets. Yesterday's industry will not necessarily support and protect the values that future generations rely upon, as we look to cleaner, innovative, broadly lucrative forms of growth. Elected officials and civic leaders must improve their ability to work with local constituencies, to build shared commitments around the use of resources and creation of opportunities that serve long-term investments in a healthy and prosperous region.

This project grew out of the convergence of research interests from the co-instructors (Anne Taufen and Mark Pendras) and emerging tensions and development related to urban industrial planning on Tacoma's waterfront.

Ultimately, the students worked in teams of 2-3 to address these challenges; their findings are found in the following chapters, and described in some detail below. This introduction provides background and context on the need for industrial planning and sustainable waterfront development,

TIMELINE

FALL 2018

Preliminary outreach, Tacoma Port Commission and NW Seaport Alliance

WINTER 2019

Initial literature review and project team formation
Issue analysis and policy briefs, project proposals

SPRING 2019

Final project teams and draft scope of work set

APRIL 2019

Feedback session with partners, Center for Urban Waters

MAY 2019

Work in individual project teams

JUNE 2019

Public presentation, UW Tacoma

in Tacoma and elsewhere, as well as offering perspective on the costs of failing to sufficiently engage local community constituencies in these investments and decision-making. At the end of this chapter we offer suggestions for next steps that can move the Port, the Tribe, the City, and local stakeholders forward in this regard.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

ARE INDUSTRIAL WATERFRONTS IMPORTANT TO COMMUNITY PLANNING? YES.

The goal of this project is to envision and situate manufacturing and industry as key components of Tacoma's sustainability goals, and in particular the need to support work, environmental equity, and economic innovation as community development in the South Sound. The literature and research are clear; waterfronts are shared public resources, and industrial development is crucial for shared prosperity in urban regions.

Dr. Taufen's research focuses on the urban waterfront as a regional asset, essential to the social and ecological systems of which it is a part. Land use decisions on the urban waterfront have durable and far-reaching effects, benefiting some interests and often excluding others in ways that persist – and potentially preclude new forms of growth and innovation.

Dr. Pendas's research on how and why cities create and maintain space for urban industry and why industrial planning is especially important in 'regional second cities' like Tacoma, fueled an interest in exploring and contributing to the current moment of industrial rethinking on Tacoma's urban waterfront. Early conversations with Kurt Beckett, Deputy CEO of the Northwest Seaport Alliance, and Port of Tacoma Commissioners Don Meyer and John McCarthy, confirmed local interest in engaging students in exploratory research on the topic.

The concept of 'exploration' is especially apt here: the project as envisioned was, intentionally, loosely defined and only informally connected with any particular organization, group, agency, or constituency. The key strength of this approach was that it enabled the studio course to focus on a topic (urban industrial planning) that is both of strategic importance to cities and yet simultaneously poorly understood and widely overlooked by planners and development practitioners. In other words, the studio could pursue new knowledge of scholarly

and practical importance that might not otherwise have been requested by any particular local group. That strength was accompanied by several challenges. First, the scholarship on industrial planning, particularly on urban waterfronts, is compelling but relatively thin, which again reflects the need for additional attention to the topic but also limits the guidance available from existing scholarship. Second, while students were encouraged to conduct research in ways that were informed and inspired by scholarship, the lack of formal connection to specific local constituencies introduced a level of uncertainty regarding local relevance and applicability. Finally, these challenges were heightened by the fact that 'urban industrial planning' is increasingly contentious and in many ways divisive, especially in Tacoma at this moment in time as different visions for Tacoma's future compete for support. Students were thus tasked with navigating a new area of inquiry without the benefit of an obvious charge from an established body of scholarship or a local community of practitioners and under conditions of political tension and uncertainty. Navigating these tensions was no easy task and the students deserve recognition for their patience, perseverance, and professionalism.

The studio and report focus attention on the east side of the Thea Foss Waterway, as a symbolic space that reflects some important urban industrial and port/city tensions, which will be discussed briefly below. Located just outside the downtown Tacoma urban core and commercial waterfront, the East Thea Foss, as it is referred to in this report, constitutes a buffer and transitional zone from the heavy industrial and maritime uses of the Port and the light industrial, commercial, and residential land uses of the city. Within the context of urban waterfronts and industrial planning, the task for this studio was to consider how the East Thea Foss might fit within broader visions for the future of industry in the port tideflats subarea.

PROJECT CONTEXT

HOW COULD COMMUNITY PLANNING HELP TACOMA'S INDUSTRIAL FUTURE? BUILDING INCLUSIVE, INFORMED CONSTITUENCIES FOR INDUSTRIAL GROWTH AND SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION.

In April of 2016, after a nearly two-year process that ranged from courtship to controversy to collapse, a proposal to build what would have been the largest methanol plant in the world in the Port of Tacoma, WA, was canceled. That cancellation was closely followed by heightened and renewed tensions over a proposed liquefied natural gas (LNG) plant, interim regulations imposing a moratorium on new industrial land uses in the Port, and the announcement of a new sub-area planning process to review the Port's land use and zoning designations. These developments capture and symbolize the currently evolving landscape of industrial planning on the Tacoma waterfront, a landscape that is emblematic of the tensions many cities face as they attempt to chart their industrial and economic futures. A brief engagement with urban industrial history can help provide some context for these tensions.

For the past several decades, cities in the United States (and other industrialized nations) have struggled to cope with the challenges of deindustrialization and industrial transition. In cities with traditionally strong industrial bases (Detroit, MI; Buffalo, NY; Gary, IN; Youngstown, OH) the transition to a service and information-based economy has been especially difficult (Bluestone and Harrison, 1982; Wolman, et al, (2015). Other cities (San Francisco, CA; Los Angeles, CA; Austin, TX; Seattle, WA), with broader industrial histories and more established foundations in professional services, have been well-positioned to absorb investments redirected to other sectors and industries (Shaw, 2001). Yet, regardless of individual industrial histories, the processes of deindustrialization

and postindustrial transition have resulted in a substantial shift in the character of urban politics and development and, consequently, in urban social conditions across most, if not all, US cities. Under the current post-industrial policy framework, conventional wisdom suggests that in order for cities to secure any positive economic future they must compete for the 'jobs of the future' in such sectors as high-technology, bio-technology, and FIRE (finance, insurance, and real estate).

These general trends towards deindustrialization found special expression in port cities, as shipping and transportation innovations transformed the configuration, operation, and location of port activities world-wide. In particular, containerization transformed ports from goods processors—which entailed significant manufacturing and assembly work in addition to the transportation of goods—into primarily goods distributors (Hoyle 2000). As goods distributors, ports became more focused on the logistics of moving goods from one place to another, the dock and yard space needed for proper cargo handling, and the infrastructure required to carry out their distributive function (Hall 2009). There is much more to say about this transformation of ports; but for the purposes of the present project, the point is that such transformations resulted in several important trends: 1) ports needed fewer workers to carry out their goals, 2) ports became increasingly connected with the distant locations to and from which goods were being distributed (and, consequently, less connected to their 'home' locations), and 3) increasingly specialized technological and geographic requirements meant fewer ports could effectively compete in the new world of port operations, resulting in port reductions, closures, and consolidations (Brown 2009, Hall 2009, Hein 2011). Those ports, such as the Port of Tacoma, that effectively weathered this transition and remained vibrant within the new landscape of port competition did so in a context of a fundamentally

altered historic port/city relationship. In short, the new demands on ports introduced new tensions with their associated cities and residents as ports reduced hiring and increased demands and pressures on local built and natural environments in order to compete globally.

Though the Port of Tacoma successfully navigated the economic and technological patterns of deindustrialization and port transition in recent decades, the failure to fully engage local constituencies and demonstrate benefits of global trade networks has taken on greater salience. South Sound residents have become more vocal about the use and beneficiaries of the port-area tideflats, and the emerging tensions and conflicts reflect the extent to which the costs of these global pressures are becoming more pronounced (and less tolerable) locally. Tacoma has maintained an economy and 'gritty' identity on the foundation of port industrial strength, but new concerns about the environmental and opportunity costs associated with that development path have inspired new questions about future possibilities.

The context of deindustrialization, port competition, and economic change might suggest that the time is right for Tacoma to distance itself from its industrial past and instead to embrace and invest in a postindustrial future. The current project rejects that conclusion for the following reasons:

INDUSTRIAL VIABILITY

Despite the finality implied by the term 'deindustrialization', a preponderance of recent research emphasizes the importance of heavy industry and manufacturing to urban economies (Ferm and Jones, 2016; Lester, Kaza, and Kirk, 2013; Luria and Rogers, 2007; Curran, 2007). Changing economic conditions have certainly raised new challenges for industrial interests, but equally challenging have been changing political conditions that disadvantage 'producers' in favor of spaces of 'consumption'. With land uses connected to

professional services coming in on such a strong tide, many city planners have been reluctant to mount a counter-tidal defense of industrial activity and have consequently done a poor job of maintaining space for urban industrial production. This 'blind side' of planning has unnecessarily eroded support for industry (Leigh and Hoelzel, 2012). With the proper care, planning, and nurturing, urban industries can remain viable and make significant contributions to urban economies.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

The steady disintegration of industrial jobs over the past forty years has contributed significantly to economic polarization and social exclusion in US cities (Parker and Rogers, 2001; Hamnett, 2000), as relatively stable, well-paid employment opportunities, with clear job-ladders and the potential for social mobility, for individuals with relatively little formal education or training, have dwindled (Bluestone and Harrison, 1982; Luria and Rogers, 2007). As these jobs have declined and been replaced by the simultaneous expansion of professional services positions beyond the reach of most of this class of worker or else by low-wage service jobs that offer no benefits and little opportunity for growth or advancement, it is not surprising to see cities struggling with social justice questions. Industrial jobs continue to provide job opportunities that can help confront social and economic polarization.

URBAN SUSTAINABILITY

There is no question that a long history of unregulated heavy industry has contributed to a toxic legacy that continues to compromise the health and safety of urban environments. Nevertheless, urban industrial futures need not mirror industrial pasts. Improved production technologies (embedded in the concept of 'Industry 4.0', discussed in Chapter 7) enable cleaner

PROJECT CONTEXT (CONTINUED)

production methods, with fewer environmental externalities. Furthermore, 'deindustrialization' in the United States has never implied a reduced reliance on industrial production. On the contrary, the production and consumption of industrially produced goods has increased exponentially in recent decades (Samuelson, 2013; Federal Reserve, 2019; Naim, 2014); what has changed is the location of industrial production. Maintaining local industrial production is one way to maintain awareness of and responsibility for the goods being produced. Doing so, however, will require planners to confront overly simplistic assumptions about what constitutes urban sustainability and to consider the role of industry in planning for 'smart growth' (Leigh and Hoelzel, 2012).

The project also points relentlessly towards the need for improved trust, communication, and understanding between the constituencies involved in port sub-area planning. The people whose taxes and local environmental resources are being allocated to industrial development investments, need to be reasonably resigned to the trade-offs, possibilities, and challenges involved. It is not for the policy makers to independently pursue new industrial fixes; for support to be stable and implementation to be successful, local communities must be connected to and involved in the process (Pressman and Wildavsky 1973, 1984). While this is a longstanding area of interest and emphasis for planners (Arnstein 1969, Forester 1989, Healey 1997, Forester 1999), there are no easy answers when it comes to building institutional and interpersonal networks of inclusion, learning, and reciprocity (Quick and Feldman 2011).

The work conducted by MACP students in this studio project started from an assertion that maintaining space for industry on Tacoma's urban waterfront is desirable; different groups then identified and pursued research plans that explored different dimensions of urban industrial planning relevant to the specific Tacoma context.

FOR THIS REPORT, THE STUDENT RESEARCH PROJECTS HAVE BEEN ORGANIZED INTO THE FOLLOWING CHAPTERS:

CHAPTER ONE INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Reviews the intersecting rights and responsibilities of the Port of Tacoma, Puyallup Tribe of Indians, and City of Tacoma in the tideflats

CHAPTER TWO LAND, WATER, AND TRANSPORT USE

Documents land use, transport, water use, and property use on the East Side of the Thea Foss Waterway

CHAPTER THREE PLACE ATTACHMENT IN RELATION TO URBAN WATERFRONTS AND PLANNING FOR INDUSTRY

Shows how community-focused emotions, behaviors, and cognitions of place attachment influence industrial development

CHAPTER FOUR HISTORICAL TENSIONS: MOVING FORWARD WITH PUBLIC SUPPORT

Identifies conflict themes that have repeatedly surfaced over time with respect to development in the tideflats

CHAPTER FIVE PUBLIC ACCESS AND INDUSTRIAL SHORELINES

Explores co-existence of industrial shoreline use and public waterway access

CHAPTER SIX ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Defines and promotes Industry 4.0 as a great opportunity for the Port of Tacoma – cleaner, more equitable, more sustainable

CHAPTER SEVEN ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Identifies actionable projects to counter environmental gentrification through stewardship, opportunity, inclusion, awareness

KEY POINTS

ONE

While each chapter explores a unique dimension of industrial planning on the Tacoma tideflats, several recurring themes that unite the chapters are worth noting: Creating and maintaining space for urban industry is central to the vision for sustainability advanced by this report. Displacing industrial production from the urban landscape does not reduce local demand for or reliance on heavy industry; it just renders such practices invisible. Maintaining local industrial production encourages ownership of and responsibility for industrial practices while simultaneously preserving middle income jobs that provide opportunities for social and economic mobility. (Economic Development; Environmental Health)

TWO

Despite the benefits of maintaining urban industry, damaging environmental legacies and ongoing negative perceptions of industry fuel distrust and resistance among local populations. Industrial advocates must therefore acknowledge and address the historical tensions that shape planning interests in the port subarea. Ignoring or avoiding such tensions will undermine industrial planning efforts; instead this report highlights the importance of visible efforts to confront the problems of the past and to invest in more socially, environmentally, and economically productive futures. (Place Attachment; Historical Tensions; Public Access)

THREE

Engaging community stakeholders, understanding shared future needs, and building strong

constituencies for industrial land use and development are essential to supporting maritime industrial economies, and protecting the natural resources of the region. Civic engagement is not a matter of pushing out information and gathering public comments; it is an ongoing investment in shaping a shared vision for growth that includes and supports people throughout the city and region. Sustainable programs and projects provide opportunities for continual learning on all sides; foreground the interests of tribal, African-American, and immigrant constituencies; build stable and visible industrial employment options for women; and create child-centered spaces and activities (Institutional Arrangements; Land, Water, and Transport Use)

The MA program in Community Planning conducts academic research to serve community interests. The 2019 studio and this report indicate important areas for additional study and focused investment, to better steward this shared place.

The Commencement Bay tideflats are a significant regional resource that has helped to define the Puget Sound culturally, economically, environmentally, and socially. Many communities have a stake in its future. As understandings are built and planning decisions are made, there are ways in which research and collaboration can help. With targeted support, the School of Urban Studies and its programs in community planning, geospatial science, urban design, and sustainable urban development can build upon this preliminary studio, potentially in collaboration with other units on campus (Engineering, Business, Environmental Science and others).

NEXT STEPS

PROJECT	ELEMENTS	BASED ON	RATIONALE
Wheeler Osgood Catalyst I: GSI demonstration project	Community-engaged design; locally-based construction.	Ch 7	Visible, accessible, symbolic investment; builds from work initiated by the Port and the City.
Wheeler Osgood Catalyst II: Post-Consumer Recycling and Fabrication	Community-engaged design; locally-based construction.	Ch 7	Visible, accessible, symbolic investment; builds from work initiated by the Port and the City.
Industrial Land Use Study	Clear articulation of existing and potential industrial spaces.	Ch 2	Widely accepted best practice for effective urban industrial planning.
Community Based Research: Interviews, Analysis, Findings	Close, careful, and deliberate review of community input and attitudes.	Ch 3 Ch 4	Needed for understanding and addressing historical and ongoing tensions and for enabling positive and inclusive place attachment.
Public Access Case Examples	Additional examples of public in industrial areas and how those examples were achieved.	Ch 5	Strengthens understandings of how public access increases support for and facilitates ongoing industrial activity.
Tideflats Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA): overview	Clear articulation of the various parties involved in local industrial planning efforts and decision making authority.	Ch 1	Confusion about and misunderstanding of planning processes and authority can fuel unproductive tensions and conflicts.
Community recreation facility on the Foss	Tangible vision for increasing public access to the waterway for recreational and cultural purposes.	Ongoing Research	Access to the waterway can provide linkages between current and historical cultures and identities.
Industrial Advocacy Working Group	Building constituencies and responsibilities for the advancement of industry on Tacoma's waterfront; enabling a productive industrial ecosystem.	Ch 6	Effective industrial planning requires advocates to take ownership and responsibility for facilitating connections and relationships and for articulating the role of industry in sustainable, creative, and inclusive cities.
Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) options	Exploring the potential for transit oriented development to support industrial activities.	Ongoing Research	To ensure social and environmental gains, TOD can be extended beyond commercial and residential developments to include industrial sectors.

MACP PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Master of Arts in Community Planning degree is designed to develop civic leaders who are equipped to make change in networks of public and private actors, helping to create more just, sustainable, and livable urban futures. This degree is premised on the following ideas:

1. “Community” is not a singular concept; moreover, less visible and under-resourced urban publics are often in need of specific forms of investment and support in order to engage the political process;
2. “Planning” is about enacting urban socio-spatial futures, through a variety of different professional roles; as such it happens in a number of different organizational settings and job titles;
3. The ways that people act and the social structures within which they are able to act are co-constituted; one creates and re-creates the other, and effective change agents use existing structures to generate new forms of action, and/or take singular, strategic actions to enable, demand, or elicit structural change.

Graduates will be prepared to be competent collaborative professionals who work with and empower community constituents, influencing processes of policy formation, resource generation, community change, and urban development. The program’s emphasis on urban social issues, community development, and urban problem solving, and its commitment to training students to think critically and creatively, to work collaboratively in the interest of creating sustainable communities and to effectively communicate knowledge in a variety of ways is a direct expression of the UW Tacoma mission as a higher education institution.