

CITY OF TACOMA

University of Washington Tacoma

Urban Studies Program

TCMP 554: Community Development

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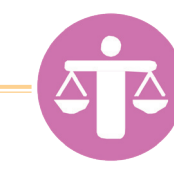
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REVITALIZATION AREA PLANNING TOOLKIT



Introduction

This Livable City Year project represents a collaboration between City of Tacoma staff and graduate students of the University of Washington-Tacoma's Master in Community Planning program. The City of Tacoma asked the students of TCMP 554: Community Development to develop a toolkit for neighborhood revitalization planning efforts that would spotlights best practices, with particular attention paid to community needs. Additionally, students summarized lessons learned from their reviews of existing comprehensive plans. The resulting toolkit uses a sustainable development framework that assumes a triple bottom line approach to evaluation of a community's

growth trajectory, whereby the economic, social, and environmental components of that growth are examined with equal weight.

It is crucial to provide time for public comment following every development proposal potentially given a DNS (determination of nonsignificance) or an EA (environmental assessment).

Findings

Drawing from their research of local media reporting, blogs, City plans, and peer reviewed work, the students developed guiding principles for the Asset-based Community Development Toolkit. They concluded that development should be community-based, socially responsible, resource efficient, and sustainable. They examined the Hilltop Sub-area Plan through this lens, and highlighted concerns with the City of Tacoma's current approaches to "neighborhood revitalization." This included insufficient environmental assessments and associated Environmental Impact Statements (EIS), issues with approaches to cultural preservation and affordable housing, lack of concern about employment opportunities at Hilltop anchor institutions, and low participation of community members in the planning process.

Drawing upon this review, the students built protocols and policy recommendations that focus on strategies to engage the community in asset-based growth and development. These recommendations are built around the seven community capitals: Human, Social, Political, Cultural, Physical, Natural, and Financial.



Credit: Kia Yan (Karen) Lee
Together the seven capitals lead to a sustainable living community.

Recommendations

Three "top-line" protocols emerged from students' review of the seven community capitals. These form the foundation of the Asset-based Community Development Toolkit.

1. Asset Mapping: At the outset of every planning exercise, a community-driven asset mapping process would occur, with separate mapping exercises for each of the seven capitals.

2. Community Liaison Program: At the outset of specific planning actions, a community liaison would be assigned to coordinate

and facilitate communication with the community about planning processes. They would help to bridge existing divides between community members and government officials involved in neighborhood and district development.

3. Environmental Equity Task Force: The task force would identify gaps in current City protocols and policies, and assess how those protocols and policies might negatively affect residents. It would also help departments to better incorporate environmental justice goals into their planning efforts.