



**URBDP 562: Neighborhood Planning and Community Development**  
**Focus on Planning for the Northgate Urban Center**  
SPRING 2023

**Lecture:** Tuesdays | 6:00 - 8:20 pm

**Instructor:** Richard Conlin, Professor., [rconlin@uw.edu](mailto:rconlin@uw.edu), Tel. 206.499.5793

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Course Description**

This course is an introduction to neighborhood planning and community development in the United States, with a practical focus on reviewing the neighborhood planning work that has been done in the Northgate Urban Center and developing ideas for a future iteration. The purpose of the exercise is to understand and assess the methodology, vision, practicality, and social justice elements of past plans, and to consider the issues around implementation and the realities on the ground over time, and then to provide a thoughtful perspective on the effectiveness and utility of the planning process and how it could be improved. Class participants will: Review the plans that have been developed in the past and consider what has happened in Northgate as a result (or not!) of the planning process. Use this in-depth understanding to inform an evaluation of the utility of the neighborhood planning process in this community and to develop recommendations for the future of planning in Northgate.

### **The course will include the following components:**

Introduction to the concept of neighborhood planning and the relationship between neighborhood services, community organizing, and community development. Overviews of neighborhood planning and community engagement strategies. Learning about the planning process in Northgate and what impact the planning process has had on the development of the neighborhood. Field work on understanding the Northgate community and opportunities for future development. Class work on considering issues of community engagement and social justice in the Northgate area, and how future planning might be able to engage these frameworks more effectively. Work in small groups to create an

evaluation document and to prepare recommendations for a future work plan. The work plans will be presented to the class and to decision makers from the City and community. The course will reference perspectives on broad issues around neighborhood planning and community development, including definitions and historical interpretations of community, neighborhood, and planning; the challenges of developing community engagement; and issues of race and social justice, democracy, decision-making, and difference within the local environment. The core focus of the class will be on the practical skills and approaches to developing a neighborhood plan and to evaluating the shortfalls and accomplishments of neighborhood planning.

Our conversations will be informed by readings available electronically, including academic articles as well as professional writings; reviewing the neighborhood plans that have been developed for the Northgate area; touring the area and understanding the actions that have taken place both as a result of the neighborhood plans and through other actions; learning from the instructor and other community actors the on-the-ground realities of plan implementation; and hearing from and talking with key city staff and community actors. The class will focus on student participation and engagement, and students should be prepared to share their expertise and experience and to engage in active discussions about neighborhood planning strategies, how to analyze and draw conclusions about neighborhood planning, how to conduct community engagement and assess issues of race and social justice, and how to evaluate the past and develop ideas for the future.

### **Project Background and Purpose:**

### **Project Outcomes:**

Assess the effectiveness and outcomes of the neighborhood planning strategies carried out in the Northgate area. Propose a set of steps that could be taken in the future to implement the vision of the Northgate Neighborhood Plans, modify that vision to be more inclusive and reflect current realities, and create a work plan for future activities/planning in the community.

### **Background:**

Under Seattle's Comprehensive Plan ("Towards a Sustainable Seattle"), Urban Centers are intended to be the key areas of job and housing development and growth in the City. The Northgate community is the only designated Urban Center outside of the downtown core

and University District, and, when it was identified as a locus for growth, it was more suburban than urban in its character. At its center was the Northgate Mall, one of the earliest indoor shopping centers in the country. Next to the Mall was the urban scar of Interstate 5, and surrounding the Mall were a collection of residential neighborhoods made up almost exclusively of single family dwellings.

Despite these unprepossessing characteristics, the Seattle City Council initiated the development of a Northgate Area Comprehensive Plan in 1989, designating the area as having the potential for significant growth. The plan produced in 1992 was a precursor and model for Seattle's Neighborhood Planning program, which created 37 neighborhood plans as the key implementation mechanisms for Seattle's strategy to implement the Washington Growth Management Act.

The 1992 plan, however, was only partially adopted by the City Council, and few of its recommendations were acted upon until the early 2000's, when the Council advanced a formal program for adopting the plan and an approval and adoption matrix covering its proposed actions. After a major policy dispute in 2002-2003, the City began moving forward with plan implementation, but the owner of the Northgate Mall continued to resist the City's efforts to create a mixed use community adjacent to the planned light rail station. In recent years, as light rail actually reached the Northgate Station, the area is finally beginning to achieve significant housing development, and the Mall has finally adopted a plan to add housing and other commercial spaces to its retail base.

This class will look at that history in the context of the concept and evolution of neighborhood planning, and the class will be asked to consider and analyze the planning process, evaluate its achievements, identify issues and problems, and recommend a course of action for the future of the Northgate neighborhoods.

This class will consider questions such as:

What is the ability of city government to affect change in areas where property owners do not share the vision?

Is a neighborhood plan the right mechanism for advancing a new community?

Who makes decisions about these things, and who participates in community processes?

What is the reality of transit oriented development?

How can cities integrate renovation and new development with affordability and existing communities without evoking 'gentrification'?

What are the strengths and shortcomings of a neighborhood village strategy? Is there a better way to encourage new housing development? Can an urban village strategy be integrated with a more expansive approach?

What methods of community engagement could be used to most effectively inform such decisions?

Cities must create/pioneer innovative approaches to establish new pathways for civic engagement and listening to traditionally underrepresented communities in order to shape future city decisionmaking. And this decision making must find ways to create low carbon, affordable communities that will accommodate the mandates of a growth management strategy in a way that embraces the commitment to race and social justice (RSJ), diversity/equity/inclusion (DEI). How can all this be accomplished through democratic decision making?

### Course Expectations: Being Prepared to Participate

This is a seminar course, which means first and foremost that you must be prepared to participate. This means having read the assigned readings and completed the assigned tasks before class. It may also mean going beyond what is assigned to explore an issue or question further than it is taken in the syllabus. Being prepared also means having thought critically about the assigned readings. It is important to ask questions of the readings and to try to extend them by applying them to a site, comparing them to other readings, or in some other manner exploring their limits as well as their utility.

### Learning Objectives

Understand fundamental concepts inherent in neighborhood planning, including community, neighborhood, and civic engagement in a democratic context. Understand the institutional, political, and policy frameworks in which neighborhood planning and community development occur, and the social and cultural contexts within which neighborhood planning takes place. Learn how to apply these concepts and related tools by completing this project to analyze the evolution of the Northgate Urban Center and suggest feasible paths to a better future.

### Grading

Grades will be based on the draft (40%) and final (40%) plan developed through small group work, and a final paper that summarizes learnings from the course (20%). The draft plan and presentation are due by midnight Monday, May 22 (Week 9). The final plan is due by midnight Monday, June 5 (Finals Week). The final paper/project is due by midnight Friday, June 9 (Finals Week). Assignments should be submitted on the Canvas site or electronically to [HYPERLINK "mailto:rconlin@uw.edu" rconlin@uw.edu](mailto:rconlin@uw.edu).

### Assignment Descriptions

Evaluating the Northgate planning process and recommending a course for the future. For this assignment, students will work in groups of 3-5 to analyze the history of neighborhood planning in Northgate, discuss the community engagement and democratic decision making, consider the RSJ/DEI implications that can be drawn from this example, and identify the positive and negative outcomes that have flowed from this process. Each group will then propose a strategy for the future that will guide and produce outcomes that reflect the core values of democratic engagement, climate friendly transit oriented urban development, and RSJ/DEI. This report will be presented in draft form for review and comment by the class and instructor. Students will then have approximately two weeks to revise and extend the draft into a final and more formal document. How can a democratically derived plan committed to social justice and to sustainable and carbon positive development be advanced for Northgate?

*Final Paper:* The final paper is intended to provide an opportunity for individual work on the materials presented and developed in the class. It should be in the range of 3-5 pages, 1000-1500 words, and should be a reflection on and critique of the concepts and materials from the class. The paper should respond to the following:

What is the utility of neighborhood planning in shaping the future of cities and communities? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the neighborhood planning approach? How do the concepts of neighborhood planning relate to the saga of the Northgate Plan? What policy implications can be drawn from this assessment?

This is intended to be an expression of your opinion and a critique of the materials presented and the experience of the class. Opinions should be substantiated and backed up by examples and illustrations from the class readings and activities, appropriately footnoted where necessary.

## Assessment

All assignments will be evaluated on the basis of their creativity, insight, thoughtfulness, writing quality, thoroughness, and depth, as well as the quality and professionalism of the product. The draft reports will be evaluated on the basis of their completeness, appropriateness, relevance to the assignment, and comprehensive approach to the subject. The final reports will be evaluated on the basis of how well the team responded to critiques and suggestions provided in class and by the instructor, with special attention to areas that required more depth or content. The final paper will be evaluated on the strength and documentation of the perspective presented, and on the paper's reflection of a range of perspectives and materials presented in the class.

All class members are expected to fully participate and to complete all individual and group work assignments. This class is an innovative approach to teaching about neighborhood planning, and it is the expectation of the instructor that all students will achieve strong results in the assessment.

## **WEEKLY SCHEDULE & READINGS**

*Text:* Neighbor Power: Building Community the Seattle Way, Jim Diers, UW Press 2004  
(reserved for class at University Book Store)

Tuesday, March 28 Introductions and overview of class. Presentations on Neighborhood Planning. Discussion of the definition of community and organization of neighborhood planning concepts. Introduction to engagement strategies and concepts.

*Readings:*

Clarence A. Perry. 1929. "The neighborhood unit." Pp 34-60 in Regional Survey of New York and Its Environs, Vol. VII. New York City: Committee on the Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs. Access at: HYPERLINK "https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015027870255&view=1up&seq=11" <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015027870255&view=1up&seq=11> (jump to Page 31)

Allen B. Jacobs. 1985. Looking at Cities. Pp. 1-29. Available online: HYPERLINK ""https://alliance-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=CP71318577630001451&context=L&vid=UW&lang=en\_US&search\_scope=all&adapter=Local%20Search%20Engine&tab=default\_tab&query=any,contains,Looking%20at%20Cities,A%20ND&query=any,contains,Jacobs,AND&sortby=rank&mode=advanced&offset=0" \t "\_blank"  
[https://alliance-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=CP71318577630001451&context=L&vid=UW&lang=en\\_US&search\\_scope=all&adapter=Local%20Search%20Engine&tab=default\\_tab&query=any,contains,Looking%20at%20Cities,A%20ND&query=any,contains,Jacobs,AND&sortby=rank&mode=advanced&offset=0](https://alliance-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=CP71318577630001451&context=L&vid=UW&lang=en_US&search_scope=all&adapter=Local%20Search%20Engine&tab=default_tab&query=any,contains,Looking%20at%20Cities,A%20ND&query=any,contains,Jacobs,AND&sortby=rank&mode=advanced&offset=0)

Herbert J. Rubin and Irene S. Rubin. 2001 "Understanding community". Chapter 5, Pp 97-118 in Community Organizing and Development. On Canvas site.

William M. Rohe. 2009. "From Local to Global: One Hundred Years of Neighborhood Planning" Journal of the American Planning Association, 75:2, 209-230 available online: HYPERLINK "https://www.tandfonline-com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/doi/full/10.1080/01944360902751077"  
<https://www.tandfonline-com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/doi/full/10.1080/01944360902751077>

Tuesday, April 4 Introduction to Seattle and to the Comprehensive Planning process: demographics, organizational context, current approach. Formation of small groups for study purposes, and discussion of steps to be taken to obtain information and begin developing materials for the study.

*Materials to be posted on the Canvas site*

Tuesday, April 11      Note: Date could be flipped with Week 4, depending on logistical issues.

*Readings:*

United States Environmental Protection Agency. 2021. "Smart Growth and Equitable Development" (*On Canvas Site*)

Local and Regional Government Alliance on Race and Equity. 2015. "Equitable Development as a Tool to Advance Racial Equity" (*On Canvas Site*)

Local and Regional Government Alliance on Race and Equity. 2015. "Racial Equity Toolkit" (*On Canvas Site*)

City of Seattle, Office of Planning and Community Development. 2016. *Equitable Development Implementation Plan* (*On Canvas Site*)

Lindsay M. Miller. 2019. "Community-Based Equitable Development: Seattle's Response to Gentrification" *National Civic Review*, 107:4, 36-45 available online (download PDF): HYPERLINK "[https://www-jstor-org.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/stable/10.32543/naticivirevi.107.4.0036?refreqid=excelsior%3Ab780db7e94bf5899f82d20a768917ae9#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www-jstor-org.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/stable/10.32543/naticivirevi.107.4.0036?refreqid=excelsior%3Ab780db7e94bf5899f82d20a768917ae9#metadata_info_tab_contents)"

Willow Lung-Amam, Rolf Pendall, Elijah Knaap. 2019. "Mi Casa no es Su Casa: The Fight for Equitable Transit-Oriented Development in an Inner-Ring Suburb." *Journal of Planning, Education, and Research*, 39:4, 442-455 available online (download PDF): HYPERLINK "<https://journals-sagepub-com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/doi/full/10.1177/0739456X19878248>"

Sherry Arnstein. 1969. "A ladder of citizen participation." *JAIP*, 8:3, July, pp 216-224. Available online: HYPERLINK

"<https://www-tandfonline-com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/doi/full/10.1080/01944363.2018.1559388>"

<https://www-tandfonline-com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/doi/full/10.1080/01944363.2018.1559388>

Jeffrey M. Berry, Kent E. Portney, and Ken Thomson. 1993. Chapter 1, "Participation and democracy," pp.1-17; Chapter 3 "The potential for success," pp. 46-70. *In The Rebirth of Urban Democracy*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution. On Canvas site.

Adam Lubinsky, Susan S. Fainstein. 2020. Chapter 8, "The Relationship Between Citizen Participation and the Just City: Can More Participation Produce More Equitable Outcomes?" pp. 165-184. In Mickey Lauria, Carissa Schively Slotterback. *"Learning From Arnstein's Ladder"*. New York: Routledge. On Canvas site.

*Background Material: City of Seattle. 2016-2017: Racial Equity Toolkit; Equitable Development Implementation Plan, Financial Strategy; Race and Social Justice Vision and Strategy 2015-2017* On Canvas Site.

Tuesday, April 25      Review of the implementation steps that followed from the 1992 plan and the Great Northgate Crisis of 2002-2003.

*Readings:*

Jim Diers. 2004. "Sustaining communities: the neighborhood planning program" pp 128-140 in *Neighbor Power: Building Community the Seattle Way*.

Carmen Sirianni. 2007. "Neighborhood Planning as Collaborative Democratic Design: The Case of Seattle." *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 73:4, 373-387 available online: HYPERLINK "<https://www-tandfonline-com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/doi/abs/10.1080/01944360708978519>"

<https://www-tandfonline-com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/doi/abs/10.1080/01944360708978519> (download PDF)

*Northgate materials to be posted on the Canvas site.*

Tuesday, May 2      Bringing Northgate to the present: what has happened since the flurry of plan implementation. What should be considered for the future? Who speaks for Northgate? A panel discussion.

*Readings: none*

Tuesday, May 9      Opportunity for workshop/discussion: what have we learned about the Northgate planning process? Discussion of direction for the papers and analysis.

*Readings: none*

Tuesday, May 16      Review and discussion of how to formulate recommendations; opportunity for students to meet in groups.

*Readings: none*

\*\*\* Draft report due at midnight, Monday, May 22 on the Canvas site or HYPERLINK "mailto:rconlin@uw.edu" [rconlin@uw.edu](mailto:rconlin@uw.edu) \*\*\*

Tuesday, May 23      Student groups present analysis and proposed actions; critique and discussion of group presentations and plans

Tuesday, May 30      Does planning work? What are the problems and pitfalls? How is community change best fostered? Where does community engagement fit in? Is the neighborhood still relevant?

*Readings:*

Ann Van Herzele. 2004. "Local knowledge in action: valuing nonprofessional reasoning in planning process." *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 24, 2:197-212. HYPERLINK "https://journals-sagepub-com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/doi/10.1177/0739456X04267723"

<https://journals-sagepub-com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/doi/10.1177/0739456X04267723> (download PDF)

Robert Chaskin. 1999. "A view from the city: local government perspective on neighborhood-based governance in community-building initiatives. Journal of Urban Affairs 21:1 pp 57-78. HYPERLINK

"<https://www-tandfonline-com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/doi/abs/10.1111/0735-2166.0003>"

<https://www-tandfonline-com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/doi/abs/10.1111/0735-2166.0003> (download PDF)

Aaron Wildavsky. 1973. "If planning is everything, maybe it's nothing." Policy Sciences 4:127-153. HYPERLINK "<https://link-springer-com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/article/10.1007/BF01405729>"

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\*\*\*Final plan due at midnight, **Monday, June 6** on the Canvas site or HYPERLINK

"mailto:rconlin@uw.edu" [rconlin@uw.edu](mailto:rconlin@uw.edu) \*\*\*

\*\*\* Reflection paper due at midnight, **Friday, June 10** on the Canvas site or HYPERLINK

"mailto:rconlin@uw.edu" [rconlin@uw.edu](mailto:rconlin@uw.edu) \*\*\*

Week 1	Introduction to Neighborhood Planning
Week 2	The Northgate Community and the 1992 Plan
Week 3	Northgate Urban Center Tour
Week 4	Participation/Race, Social Justice, and Equity
Week 5	Neighborhood plans and Implementation; how do things actually happen?
Week 6	In Class workshop/discussion and problem-solving
Week 7	In Class workshop/discussion and problem-solving
Week 8	Discussion and Formulation of Draft Recommendations
Week 9	Draft Presentations, Discussions and Critique
Week 10	Reflections on Planning and Community
Finals Week	