

Practicing Planner



A Comprehensive Redevelopment Strategy for Pacific Ridge in Des Moines, Washington

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Nothing lasts like a first impression. A handsome prince will give the impression of a pauper if he's dressed in rags. Neighborhoods make first impressions for their communities, and everyone suffers when an entrance to an otherwise pleasant city emotes decline and despair.

One community is taking the first impression lesson to heart by making dramatic changes to its least desirable, but also most visible, neighborhood — all on a shoestring budget. In Des Moines, Washington, the entrance to the Pacific Ridge neighborhood on the old State Route 99, also known as Pacific Highway South (see Figure 1), looks as if no one has invested a dime in more than 30 years. Pacific Highway South has earned its reputation as the place to go for a cheap motel room, budget auto repair, illegal drugs, and prostitutes.



▣ *Figure 1*
Vicinity Map



▣ *Figure 2*
Existing Land Use

The City of Des Moines has crafted an innovative strategy to promote market-driven redevelopment by synthesizing a long-range vision, marketing strategies, creative building regulations, roadway improvements, environmental protection, infrastructure, community policing, and applicant-oriented permitting. Getting a building permit for a good redevelopment project in Pacific Ridge is as easy as making a return at Nordstrom. Developers can choose to build in Des Moines and get their permits in three to six weeks, or build in another city and wait months or years.

BACKGROUND

Des Moines is a bedroom community of 29,000 located between Seattle and Tacoma. (See Figure 1.) The city's waterfront location on Puget Sound provides spectacular views of the water, Mount Rainier, and the Olympic Mountains. The socioeconomic status of Des Moines's residents could be mapped like topography with contour lines running parallel to the water's edge. Million-dollar homes monopolize the shoreline, and housing becomes more affordable as one travels away from Puget Sound. Des Moines's easternmost — and poorest — neighborhood is Pacific Ridge, the subject of this case study. In Pacific Ridge, the dominant land features are run-down buildings and weed-choked parking lots. (See Figure 2.) Buildings were cheaply constructed with nondescript architectural features. Years of deferred maintenance signal emotional and financial resignation.

FACTS OF THE CASE

The Problem

Many communities across America have the vexing problem of gateway neighborhoods that are rundown, unattractive, and dangerous. These neighborhoods are easy to spot: They sprouted along state highways, then were neglected and forgotten as America's attention turned to interstates, suburbs, and air-conditioned shopping malls.

Pacific Ridge is in many ways like those sites in other parts of the United States. It developed incrementally since

the 1930s, and many of the existing buildings pre-date zoning (1958) and the area's annexation to Des Moines in 1974. Antiquated zoning required low-scale buildings set back 60 feet from the street and at least 20 feet from one another.

Since its construction in the 1940s, the five-lane Pacific Highway South has existed without curbs, sidewalks, or driveway limitations. The unrestricted highway shoulder allows vehicles to enter and exit the road at any point (see Figure 3). Safety problems are exacerbated by the lack of crosswalks. Children huddle in the center turn lane while cars zip by in both directions at 50 mph. Landscaping is nonexistent, and business signs are even less attractive than the buildings they identify.

While the cost of housing and retail space around Puget Sound has skyrocketed, Pacific Ridge's affordable rents have kept vacancy rates low. Landlords learned years ago they can rent their properties without the hassle and expense of property maintenance. Because these properties bring in revenue with little effort or overhead, the owners have no incentive to sell or upgrade their lands.

Des Moines accomplished an innovative redevelopment strategy — including building a \$19 million roadway improvement project — with only \$522,000 in city funds plus staff salaries. Other cities looking for ways to improve neighborhoods may find the economic development tools used in the Pacific Ridge neighborhood useful.

In Pacific Ridge, working families move in next to criminals and then become their victims. Statistically, one in every 4.8 residents of Pacific Ridge is the victim of a serious crime. Compared to the rest of Des Moines, crimes in Pacific Ridge are more likely to be assault, domestic violence, malicious mischief, rape, or drug- or vice-related. "Pacific Ridge generates more than twice as many calls for police service as the citywide average," laments police Chief Don Obermiller. Des Moines's first and only police officer killed in the line of duty was making a routine stop in Pacific Ridge when he was murdered.

Lacking a significant retail base or city-owned utilities, Des Moines's revenues come mostly from property and utility taxes and a dwindling number of pass-downs from the state. City employees vigorously pursue grant money to fund local projects and programs. Des Moines has little money to purchase blighted lands or spend on redevelopment, and it has no economic development office or officer. Even so, the city is determined to help bring new investment to the area.



▣ *Figure 3.1*
Pacific Highway South



▣ *Figure 3.2*
Pacific Highway South

Planners secured a \$75,000 grant from the Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development for a \$100,000 study that produced an integrated plan containing land-use policies and regulations, design guidelines, a capital improvement financing plan, a market feasibility analysis, and an environmental impact statement.

Market-Driven Economic Development and a New Vision for Pacific Ridge

It quickly became clear to city leaders that sustainable alternatives were needed to overcome Pacific Ridge's urban problems. Since 1997, several initiatives passed by Washington's voters have reduced tax-based revenue for communities like Des Moines. "Our community not only wanted to upgrade a troubled area, but also to help the city be less reliant upon revenue from outside sources," says Judith Kilgore, Des Moines community development director. To attract investors and investment to the area, the city has worked to change real estate market conditions by focusing on the condition of local streets, zoning regulations, and creating a streamlined permitting process.

Early discussions between the city council, planners, and community members led to a bold, new vision for the neglected neighborhood. To crystallize the thoughts and opinions expressed by city leaders into a cohesive vision, planners prepared illustrations of how the community, Pacific Highway South corridor, and residential areas would

look after redevelopment occurred (see Figures 4, 5, and 6, respectively). These illustrations were used throughout the planning process.

To aid in the detailed discussion of how buildings would be sited and designed, staff members visited other "urban village" communities and returned with slides, maps, and diagrams. By looking at slides of existing mid-rise buildings, participants easily could point to images they wanted to encourage or discourage in Pacific Ridge. Planners used these discussions as the basis for preparing land-use plans, zoning regulations, and design guidelines. For nearly three years, the author devoted approximately 70 percent of his time to make the Pacific Ridge plan a reality. Much of the work was completed during an intensive, full-court-press effort that lasted nine months. These sweeping changes were first discussed in late 1998, and the final legislation was enacted in mid-2001.



▣ *Figure 4*
Overall Vision



▣ *Figure 5*
Vision for Corridor

The market feasibility study predicts that the rate of new construction will be relatively flat for the first 10 years, then increase steadily during the second half of the 20-year period. "Even though we've had little redevelopment activity to date, we still have faith in our feasibility study," city manager Piasecki said. "The national economy is beginning to rebound and we have a long-term perspective about Pacific Ridge. I think builders are waiting for a stronger stock market and for us to complete our highway reconstruction project."

Involving the Public

Because of the drastic changes being considered, planners chose to fully engage the community after some of the basic plans and studies were drafted. Dave Kaplan, a former councilmember and strong proponent of revitalizing Pacific Ridge, lamented, "Knowing when to engage the public is sometimes a difficult decision. Do citizens respond more meaningfully to a blank slate or to preliminary plans? For the scale and scope of redevelopment envisioned for Pacific Ridge, we decided that public involvement would be more meaningful if stakeholders could see both the vision and the ramifications. In hindsight, we made the right call because we had done enough research to have solid answers to questions from the public."

The city's plans for Pacific Ridge include buildings three to 12 stories high and designed for pedestrians, as well as motorists. Transit-oriented development and spectacular views will make new housing attractive to anyone interested in alternatives to the traditional single-family home. New dwellings will be within apartment or condominium buildings, or perhaps townhouse-style construction. The real estate market will reward investors who create buildings designed to look good for generations to come. Over time, the goal is to make Pacific Ridge an attractive and safe place to live.



▣ *Figure 6*
Vision for Residential

"When it comes to land use, our city council has always been very hands on," explains Tony Piasecki, Des Moines city manager. "Rather than delegating this project to the city planning commission, the city council plowed through all of the details themselves. Council members knew the ramifications would be huge, and they wanted to make

sure at the end of the process that they would be knowledgeable and accountable. In other communities, this might not be the best approach, but for Des Moines, it worked."

Market Feasibility

Early on, planners dedicated some of their precious funds to a market feasibility study. "The community deserves a redevelopment plan based upon economic realities, not just wishful thinking," Kilgore said. The economist's report concluded that the Pacific Ridge vision could become a reality in a 20-year period. During that time, Pacific Ridge's population is anticipated to increase from 3,600 to 8,800 people. Housing will be the strongest market, partly because the Washington State Growth Management Act requires new housing to be located in urban areas where services are readily available.

While up to 6,900 new jobs could be housed in the commercial buildings planned as a part of the Pacific Ridge redevelopment, the economist concluded that Pacific Ridge will never compete with regional shopping centers to the north and south. Instead, retail and office space will support Pacific Ridge's new residents and businesses choosing to locate near Seattle-Tacoma International Airport.

Once preliminary plans and studies were ready, public participation was encouraged via direct mailings, media coverage, and televised meetings. Announcements included conversational language and artists' sketches (see Figures 4, 5, and 6) so that public involvement would be based upon the issues rather than confusion over bureaucratic jargon. For two years, information and updates were included in every city newsletter and brochure. Ultimately, there was very little opposition because existing conditions are so atrocious, because everyone knew something about Pacific Ridge, and because the proposed up-zoning was designed to increase property values. Even people who ultimately would be displaced agreed maintaining the status quo was not a good idea.

Some homeowners were concerned that property taxes would skyrocket once the new zoning was in place. However, those residents were relieved to learn that county tax collectors rely upon sales trends and that property assessments would increase only after land transactions demonstrate a clear trend toward higher values.

Land-Use Plan and Zoning Regulations

Land-use policies and zoning regulations were crafted to increase land values and create a new, compact community. The maximum allowable building height was increased from 35 to 55, 85, or 120 feet. Building height is allowed to increase from west to east so that all properties will have a view of Puget Sound. Also, the 55-foot buildings at the west edge of Pacific Ridge provide a good transition from low-rise single-family and multifamily residential areas in the adjoining neighborhood.

Not only were building heights increased in Pacific Ridge, but a minimum building height requirement of 35 feet also was enacted. This requirement testifies to the city's commitment to the Pacific Ridge vision, and it precludes the perpetuation of small buildings and building additions that would reinforce current market conditions.

New land-use policies and zoning regulations are designed to create a community that embodies neotraditional, smart growth, and transit-oriented development concepts. Mixed use is allowed, and new buildings will be located at or near the public sidewalk, just steps away from new bus stops and high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes. Onsite parking may be within, or to the side or rear of the structure. No maximum residential densities or floor area ratios are specified. Instead, land-use intensity is limited directly by the maximum building envelope and indirectly limited by onsite parking requirements.

Pacific Ridge's proximity to Sea-Tac Airport (see Figure 1) brings economic impetus for hotels, motels, and commercial parking lots. Des Moines hopes to create a neighborhood based upon permanence rather than transience. The city adopted limits on the number of hotels and hotel rooms allowed in Pacific Ridge. Motels and park-and-fly lots are prohibited. As a way to promote long-term residency and above-average building design, Pacific Ridge's residential zoning includes mandatory onsite recreation areas and minimum floor-to-ceiling heights and offers development bonuses when condominium plats are created. Fast-food restaurants are allowed only in conjunction with a permitted land use.

Gentrification and Displacement

City officials acknowledge that the Pacific Ridge plan generally encourages gentrification and that some displacement of lower-income residents and businesses may occur. Those most affected are the tenants of the four manufactured home parks in Pacific Ridge. Older manufactured homes cannot easily be moved to another park, and Washington state courts have neutralized laws enacted to protect manufactured home park residents. Federal

Aviation Administration (FAA) guidelines call for the closure of manufactured home parks near airports, because these structures cannot be retrofitted with sound insulation. Sea-Tac Airport is buying and closing other manufactured home parks in the area to move the manufactured homes away from the airport.

Over the long term, manufactured homes are not considered adequate housing for the area. Planners don't mind displacing habitual criminals, but they do want to help law-abiding individuals and families stay in town. Luckily, Des Moines has a relatively large number of affordable apartments and homes outside Pacific Ridge, and there are thousands of affordable dwellings in adjoining communities. Numerous housing advocacy groups and agencies serve the area. Since it is unknown when market forces will actually bring about redevelopment, city staff intends to minimize displacement impacts on a case-by-case basis.

Design Guidelines

Detailed design guidelines (see excerpts in Figures 7 and 8) were prepared to serve three purposes. First, the design guidelines help communicate the city's intent and values regarding new construction in Pacific Ridge. This information will help designers get it right the first time and prevent costly revisions and delays. Likewise, attention to detail in the guidelines aids city staff as it evaluates a project's consistency with the Pacific Ridge vision.

Second, the design guidelines include elements that collectively promote enduring quality and a strong sense of pride. The design guidelines require, without prescribing any particular architectural vernacular, that designers and city staff sweat the details to ensure that each new building is a positive addition to the community. The city hopes that well-designed buildings will look great for generations to come.

Third, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles are included in the design guidelines to discourage criminal activity. Factors such as exterior lighting, elimination of areas of concealment, access management, security cameras, and the appropriate design of building entrances will help keep crime away from new construction.



▣ *Figure 7*
Design Guidelines



▣ *Figure 8*
Design Guidelines

Environmental and Facilities Analyses

An environmental impact statement (EIS) was prepared to assess the potential impacts that may accompany build-out of the Pacific Ridge vision. The EIS was prepared by Des Moines to satisfy Washington's State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), which requires that cities evaluate and mitigate environmental impacts for each new development. Conducting an EIS during the planning stage helps local government and applicants for permits, while also protecting the natural environment. Traffic and utility issues were studied in particular detail. The EIS also investigated potential impacts on area schools using the local school district's forecasting models. The EIS addresses both the broader policy issues associated with a subarea plan and project-specific analysis for the benefit of future permit applicants.

Traffic congestion was the most alarming impact identified. A number of street system improvements were recommended in the EIS to expand capacity. The information in the EIS enables the city's traffic engineers to better predict when and where transportation system improvements will be needed (see additional discussion below). The plans of utility providers easily can incorporate the assumptions and findings used in the EIS. In all, everyone knows upfront how the area will evolve, and it is easy to create mitigation and fee programs that allow growth to pay for growth without an excruciating permit experience. The mitigation and utility hookup fees required by the city are straight-forward and equitable. As discussed in the following section, the EIS enabled the city to streamline its permit review process.

Expedited Permit Review

With the Pacific Ridge redevelopment (subarea) plan and the advance identification of impacts and mitigation requirements via the EIS, city planners addressed the two most common complaints about permitting: delays and uncertainty. Now, city staff stand ready to expedite permits for Pacific Ridge. Such permits can be issued by the city in a matter of days.

The expedited permit approach fits nicely with the goals of Washington's Growth Management Act and the Regulatory Reform Act to develop detailed land-use plans, make zoning requirements consistent with those plans, and remove roadblocks in the permitting process for developments that are consistent with adopted plans and regulations.

Perhaps more important locally, the expedited permit relieves potential delays arising from Washington's SEPA, which requires evaluation and mitigation of environmental impacts on a project-by-project basis. Permit applicants loathe SEPA because of the costs of environmental studies and the two to 12 months needed to complete the SEPA review process. They also fear the appeal opportunities provided under SEPA and are frustrated that mitigation requirements are not known until the end of the SEPA process, thus making it difficult to determine project costs.

To virtually eliminate the hassles, costs, delays, and uncertainties of SEPA, Des Moines conducted project-level environmental analysis for all construction envisioned by the Pacific Ridge plan, allowing applicants to skip SEPA. In other words, more analysis was done at the planning stage so that less is needed at the permitting stage. Consultant services for this project-level SEPA study, including the transportation mitigation program discussed below, cost \$50,000. Expedited permitting can benefit communities with or without state mandates for comprehensive planning and environmental review.

Transportation Mitigation and Frontage Improvements

The transportation component of the EIS found that redevelopment of Pacific Ridge would generate an additional 6,800 automobile trips every weekday afternoon. The reconstruction of Pacific Highway South (discussed below) will allow that roadway to carry additional vehicles. However, many of the adjoining streets are not adequate to accommodate higher traffic volumes.

Planners worked with transportation engineers to address this problem in two ways. First, a transportation impact mitigation program was created to ensure that new construction contributes toward capacity-building road projects. Similar to an impact-fee program, the mitigation program identifies and prioritizes local transportation improvement projects and assesses a fee based upon the number of vehicle trips expected to be generated by new construction. Permit applicants are able to know the cost of mitigating transportation impacts before applying for approval.

Second, street improvement standards were prepared for every road in Pacific Ridge. Like the transportation mitigation fee program, developers know exactly what local street frontage improvements will be required before permit applications are submitted. Consultant services for the detailed street development standards cost \$17,000. Together, these two transportation mitigation programs help take the uncertainty out of permit review.

Rebuilding Pacific Highway South

The City of Des Moines has been working for years to completely rebuild Pacific Highway South where it travels through Pacific Ridge. Numerous bus routes travel this roadway. The rebuilt highway will consist of seven lanes: four general-purpose lanes, two HOV lanes, and one center left-turn lane interspersed with a landscaped median. The project includes six- to eight-foot-wide sidewalks and landscaped planters between the curbs and sidewalks. Traffic signals will be added at key intersections, and a signalized pedestrian crossing will be added at a middle point along the longest road segment. New bus pullouts and bus shelters will be installed along the two HOV lanes. A limited number of driveways will consolidate ingress and egress to improve traffic flow and pedestrian safety.

New overhead street lights will make Pacific Ridge more attractive and safe. Overhead utilities will be placed underground. Also, business signs that must be relocated are required to conform to Pacific Ridge's new sign regulations and design guidelines. In some instances, old 30-foot-high pole signs will be replaced with new, monument-style signs. At entrances to the city, new gateway features will be constructed to welcome travelers to both Pacific Ridge and Des Moines. Flags, artwork, civic signs, flower beds, and other images will help create a positive sense of place.

Presently, stormwater from Pacific Highway South flows untreated directly to fish-bearing streams and Puget Sound. A new system of storm drains and catch basins along the roadway will convey stormwater runoff to new detention and treatment facilities designed to improve water quality and reduce flooding downstream.

Community Policing

The Des Moines Police Department has implemented a number of crime-prevention and law-enforcement programs to make Pacific Ridge a safer place to live, work, and play. Block watches, emphasized patrols, and stakeouts are some of the more conventional methods of reducing crime. The police department also has employed "walk-a-cop" events, where concerned residents tour the neighborhood with a police officer to point out specific problem areas. During a "knock and talk," police officers knock on the doors of suspected drug dealers and ask to come in and look around. While this sounds a bit unorthodox, knock and talks usually result in drug dealer arrests.

OUTCOMES

The cumulative effect of the regulatory changes and capital improvements is that the cost of permitting and construction in Pacific Ridge has decreased dramatically. Now, during the first visit to city hall, permit applicants can obtain all the information needed to successfully navigate the permit approval process. Permits for new construction can be issued in less than a month. Fewer, less expensive studies are required because the city already has completed most of that work. Before they even apply, applicants know the cost of environmental mitigation. For properties along Pacific Highway South, frontage improvements are provided by the city as part of the rebuilding of the old state highway.

The Pacific Highway South reconstruction is fully funded, and the project is now in its final design engineering and right-of-way acquisition stage. Construction will begin this year. Des Moines leveraged \$420,000 in local money to secure \$14 million in state and federal transportation improvement grants. The city has applied for \$5 million in additional grant funds to cover worst-case cost estimates. Some of this funding, if needed, may be in the form of loans with interest rates as low as half of one percent. The roadway improvements will dramatically improve the appearance and safety of the area. These improvements are provided at no cost to the adjoining property owners, and balance sheets for private development along the highway will no longer need to include the cost of frontage improvements.

Even though there is not a lot of new building going on right now, the stage is set for positive change. Regional and national conditions such as the economic recession, the dot.com bust, and the September 11 attacks have without a doubt slowed the revitalization of Pacific Ridge. Also, the looming highway reconstruction project has had the unintended consequence of delaying redevelopment on abutting properties. Right-of-way acquisition always generates questions and concerns, and no one would want to open the doors to a new business and have the street outside torn up for the first year.

The minimum building height of 35 feet has scared off more than one retailer looking for a new franchise site. National chains with cookie-cutter building plans are usually not interested in building second-floor office space. Only time will tell whether this public policy is successful. So far, evidence suggests that without the minimum building height, real estate market conditions would perpetuate the incremental and small-scale construction that gave the Pacific Ridge neighborhood its present character.

Unfortunately, many realtors and appraisers have become reliant upon standard zoning regulations that specify a maximum residential density. An unintended consequence of the city's approach of limiting building size, but not density, is that now property value is more difficult to estimate. Now, in order to determine property value, some basic design work must be done to determine the number of dwellings that could be constructed.

Another downside to the Pacific Ridge plan is that most property owners have unrealistic expectations about the value of their property. Owners point to the new zoning regulations and demand "blue sky" prices. In actuality, land values are increasing only incrementally, and those property values will not match values suggested by Pacific Ridge zoning until these types of buildings have sprouted up throughout the neighborhood.

The next step is the creation of a developer-oriented website for Pacific Ridge. The website will outline Pacific Ridge policies and regulations and provide information about properties available for development or redevelopment. Planners also will create an annotated photo album of actual buildings in other communities that would be suitable for Pacific Ridge. Like the design guidelines, the photo album will be available online and will make the city's vision for new buildings crystal clear.

For now, who would buy an upper-end condominium that looks down over used tire shops and truck canopy sales yards? If the answer is nobody, then mid-rise condominium buildings will not be built any time soon. On the other hand, without some fairly radical influence, present real estate market forces will continue to bring more low-value construction to Pacific Ridge. There have been many feasibility studies for mid-rise buildings done since the new

zoning was adopted, but the type of pioneering development called for in the Pacific Ridge Plan isn't likely to happen while the region's economy is sluggish. Des Moines created an environment where market-driven redevelopment will provide long-term benefits to the entire city by revitalizing the city's least desirable neighborhood.

It just won't happen overnight. Time will tell which components of the Pacific Ridge redevelopment strategy work best. Des Moines already has avoided the worst possible mistake — doing nothing at all.

LESSONS LEARNED

A market study is essential. Redevelopment plans must rely on good forecasts of market potential. Without an assessment of the market potential for new investment, a well-intentioned redevelopment plan is just wishful thinking.

Redevelopment subarea plans are not just about physical change. The Pacific Ridge subarea plan uses physical change to help bring about social and economic change. Des Moines is making it clear that criminals are not welcome in the community. For the long-term benefit of occupants and the city as a whole, dwellings must be built to modern building code requirements, including Des Moines's stringent sound transmission control provisions. It is hoped that commercial buildings will increase property values and bring family-wage jobs to Pacific Ridge, thereby improving socioeconomic conditions.

Local dollars can leverage large amounts of public funds. This case shows how Des Moines spent about \$500,000 but leveraged millions more in roadway improvements as a result of the subarea redevelopment planning effort. Des Moines's success with planning grants was due largely to the innovative and comprehensive approach taken in the planning effort.

An expedited permitting process can strengthen redevelopment prospects. Getting a permit in Pacific Ridge costs thousands of dollars less than the same permit in an adjoining community. Likewise, time frames for permits in Pacific Ridge are days or weeks, not months or years. Des Moines's permitting process gives the city a strategic advantage when developers are studying multiple sites in different jurisdictions.

Addressing permitting constraints in advance can contribute to potential for success. By doing project-specific environmental reviews, the city saved future developers many months of preparation time and perhaps made the difference between whether or not a redevelopment project would occur. Likewise, the transportation mitigation program and street development standards address permit requirements at the pre-application stage. Developers appreciate a swift and certain permit experience.

A minimum height provision should be considered. In the case of Des Moines, a minimum height requirement of 35 feet is credited with discouraging a retailer from developing a single-story facility that would have perpetuated development characteristics inconsistent with the redevelopment vision. Other communities could consider using a similar tool to discourage low-scale, suburban-style development incompatible with a redevelopment vision.

Citizen participation may not have to occur upfront. In the case of Des Moines, planners and policy makers intentionally decided not to involve the public prior to the creation of the redevelopment vision. While this decision runs counter to conventional wisdom, in this case it worked quite well. When fairly radical changes are being discussed, communities may be wise to find answers to real concerns before the questions are asked publicly.

Redevelopment planners must brace for economic downturns. September 11, the dot.com bust, etc., can dim initial hopes, but confidence is needed that a good redevelopment concept will ultimately prevail. Again, the market study plays an important role in boosting confidence.

Community policing can be integrated into redevelopment efforts. For redevelopment areas where crime is known to be a problem, a community policing strategy such as the innovative programs used in Des Moines might be appropriate. Existing residents and businesses in the area know that the city is committed to protecting, not displacing, them. Also, investors are not particularly interested in sinking millions of dollars into an area where crime is rampant.

Property owner expectations may be too high. A downside to Des Moines's approach to stimulate market conditions in the Pacific Ridge redevelopment area is that property owners may have unrealistic expectations about the value of their land. Property owners seem to be asking purchase prices as if the sites are vacant and surrounded by glimmering mid-rise buildings. These expectations are premature and actually stall new

construction.

Sequencing of land uses is important to redevelopment. If suburban tire stores exist on the adjoining properties, new condominium development is unlikely. Redevelopment planners should find a way to sequence land-use change in a manner that will ensure the ultimate success of the redevelopment vision.

Preserve and capitalize on amenity features. In this case, the redevelopment plan was sensitive to one of the community's amenities — the view of Puget Sound. By establishing phased (or step-up) height regulations that preserve those views, the redevelopment plan will ensure that the community maintains one of its greatest natural strengths and economic assets.

Synopsis of Pacific Ridge's Redevelopment Strategy

| Approach/ Technique | Description | Intended Outcome |
|---|--|--|
| Subarea plan | Establishes new vision for area | Becomes new chapter in city's comprehensive plan. Provides vision and broad policies for redevelopment. |
| Zoning regulations | New zoning regulations adopted specifically for Pacific Ridge | Increase land value by providing new development potential. Standard restrictions such as setbacks and lot coverage are relaxed to create a compact urban village. |
| Increase maximum building height | Maximum building height increased from 35 to 55, 85, or 120 feet | Increase land value by providing new development potential. Capitalize on great views available. |
| Minimum building height | Establishes minimum building height of 35 feet | Preclude small-scale construction that would perpetuate low-value real estate conditions. |
| No maximum residential density | Density/intensity limited by building envelope and onsite parking requirements | Increase land value and encourage larger buildings that in turn will improve real estate conditions. |
| Sign regulations | Lower maximum sign height from 35 to 12 feet. Signs must be architecturally integrated with building | Provide ample but not excessive commercial signage. Monument signs will not be obscured by new street trees. Signs will complement rather than detract from the area's appearance. |
| Design guidelines | Detailed guidelines address site design, buildings, signs, lighting, and crime prevention. | Clarify vision for Pacific Ridge so applicants for permits can get approvals quickly. |
| City-sponsored environmental analysis | Project-level environmental analysis required by state law provided by the city | Encourage new investment by eliminating uncertainty, expense, and delay during permitting. |
| Street development standards | Detailed standards for Pacific Ridge streets | Eliminate uncertainty regarding street frontage improvement requirements. |
| Transportation mitigation program | Transportation impact fee | Eliminate uncertainty regarding mitigation of transportation impacts. |
| Capital financing plan | Analysis of future demand for public facilities/services | Ensure that public facilities/services keep pace with new construction. With the exception of the reconstruction of Pacific Highway South, ensure that "growth pays for growth." |
| Reconstruction of Pacific Highway South | City-sponsored roadway improvement project | Increase land values via safety, efficiency, and aesthetic roadway improvements. Encourage new investment along Pacific Highway South by eliminating street |