

From Risky Business to Common Sense: Sustainability, Hegemony, and Urban Policy in Calgary

by

Tom Howard

B.A. (with distinction), University of Calgary, 2010

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

(Geography)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

(Vancouver)

April 2015

© Tom Howard 2015

ABSTRACT

Recent years have seen the City of Calgary adopt a suite of sustainability policies in a bid to shift its received trajectory of sprawling urban development towards eco-conscious alternatives. But where sustainable urban development is typically rendered as a consensus-driven project portending mutual benefits for a given locality, the historical adoption of sustainability policies in Calgary has been characterized by waves of conflict and controversy which have allegedly watered down the City's policy objectives. Rather than evaluating the technical merits of individual policies against 'best practice'-type standards, this thesis argues that the meanings and implications of particular policy paradigms – such as Calgary's move towards sustainability – must be found in both the specific institutional configurations in which policies are formed and the political-economic conditions to which they respond. This thesis explores these institutional pressures and conjunctural forces through a historical analysis of several key moments in the emergence and evolution of sustainability-oriented policy in Calgary. Chapter 1 establishes context for this inquiry, while Chapter 2 formulates a theoretical framework by synthesizing neo-Marxian interpretations of local environmental policy and recent innovations in the field of 'policy mobilities' with the work of Antonio Gramsci, particularly related to his conception of hegemony. Building upon this edifice, Chapter 3 comprises a historical overview of the City's first attempts at sustainability-oriented policy, which I argue are best viewed as a 'fix' for several tensions and contradictions surrounding Calgary's hegemonic development model, which I term 'developer-led suburbanization'. Attempts to reformat and restructure this model through consensual community 'visioning exercises' and 'systems'-based rationalities are considered in Chapter 4, which I explain as a manoeuvre by the City to restore political legitimacy and wrest control over development matters from private sector actors. These narratives converge in my central argument: the historical formation of sustainability policies in Calgary has not been a process of incremental rationalization or evolutionary refinement, but has instead reflected a series of struggles for political leadership within an arrangement that can be best understood through the Gramscian concept of hegemony.

PREFACE

This thesis, including the design, analysis, and presentation of research materials herein, is an original intellectual product of the author. It was approved by the University of British Columbia's Behavioural Research Ethics Board, certificate number H13-01227. Figures 3.5 and 4.5 are Copyright © The City of Calgary, and reprinted with permission.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	ii
Preface	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
List of Tables	vi
List of Figures	vii
Acknowledgements.....	viii
Chapter 1: Sustainability in the City of Contradictions.....	1
1.1 Eco-Politics on the Edge.....	1
1.2 Situating Sustainability.....	7
1.3 Querying the Boomtown.....	13
Chapter 2: Sustainability, Hegemony, and Urban Policy	19
2.1 Sustainability is the Answer! (But What was the Question?)	19
2.2 Local Politics and the ‘Urban Sustainability Fix’	20
2.3 Policy on the Fly: Mobile Constructions of Sustainability	28
2.4 Ideology, Intellectuals, and the Vicissitudes of Hegemony	36
2.5 ‘Fixing’ Hegemony, or, Going Green with Gramsci	45
Chapter 3: Boom Times and Birth Pangs	55
3.1 Lineages of Failure	55
3.2 A Pre-History of Power and Planning in a Prairie Boomtown.....	58
3.3 A Tale of Two Policies.....	64
3.4 Growth Collapsed, Hegemony Emergent.....	68
3.5 Conservative Eighties, Revolutionary Nineties	74
3.6 Roads to Reform.....	81
3.7 Suburbanizing Sustainability	86
3.8 Sustainability Policies and Their (Dis)contents	96
Chapter 4: Greening the Growth Machine	104
4.1 Postmillennial Moves: The Return of Growth and Revival of Sustainability.....	104
4.2 Cities on the Move, Policies on the Make.....	108
4.3 A Pangloss for the Prairies	115
4.4 Imagining Urban Sustainability, Governing Civil Society.....	121

4.5 Consolidating the Vision.....	130
4.6 “Where Do We Grow From Here?”	135
4.7 Translations and Recuperations.....	142
4.8 Recombinant Sustainability.....	148
Chapter 5: Sustainability Between Two Worlds	154
5.1 Urban Policy Amidst an Interregnum.....	154
5.2 Reflections on Method.....	156
5.3 The Uses of Hegemony and the Problem of Monday Morning	159
Bibliography	162
Appendix A: List of Interviews	179

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1 Calgary's municipal debt, 1980-88.....	75
Table 3.2 City budgets in an austere age, 1991-1995.....	80
Table 4.1 City of Calgary growth projections versus actual growth rates, 1995-2003.....	105

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1 Political-economic pressures and the urban sustainability fix	24
Figure 2.2 The sustainability fix reconfigured.....	47
Figure 2.3 Hegemonic projects and the sustainability fix.....	52
Figure 3.1 Growth in Calgary's development sector (selected years)	62
Figure 3.2 <i>Calgary 2020</i> guideposts.....	77
Figure 3.3 Sustainable community design in comparison	89
Figure 3.4 Policy subfields in the Sustainable Suburbs Study.....	90
Figure 3.5 Visions of sustainability in the Sustainable Suburbs Study.....	90
Figure 3.6 "Some characteristics of a sustainable community"	92
Figure 3.7 Developer-led suburbanization and Calgary's urban sustainability fix.....	99
Figure 4.1 Tax-supported debt per resident, 1985-2001.....	106
Figure 4.2 Urban systems and subsystems in citiesPLUS.....	110
Figure 4.3 Vectors of change in citiesPLUS	111
Figure 4.4 Systems and goals in the <i>Burlington Legacy Project</i>	118
Figure 4.5 Urban systems and 'universal human needs' in imagineCALGARY	128
Figure 4.6 Cartographies of change: alternative growth scenarios in MetroQuest	129
Figure 4.7 Systems, needs, and goals in imagineCALGARY.....	131
Figure 4.8 imagineCALGARY targets	132
Figure 4.9 Housing prices and population growth, 1996-2009	136
Figure 4.10 The City of Calgary's sustainability principles for land use and mobility.....	137

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, and most formally, the support of the Government of Canada's Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and the Department of Geography at the University of British Columbia are gratefully acknowledged.

Over the course of my research, I have benefitted from exchanges with a number of individuals at the University of British Columbia. In addition to those thanked elsewhere, I have been benefitted from the fellowship of Wes Attewell, Juliane Collard, Emilia Kennedy, Adam Mahoney, Sarah Mathisen, Paige Patchin, Carolyn Prouse, Emily Rosenman, Andrew Shmueli, and Jeff Whyte. I was also fortunate to be kept laughing (and given shelter) by Megan Borg, Daryl and Patrycja Drainville, Jordan Lane, Matt Thomey, and Jesse Willis during this work. Thanks are also due to the City of Calgary archivists who, in spite of their employer's absolutely *usurious* copying fees, helped me construct the historical arc of this thesis through their labours.

During various stages of my fieldwork, I was fortunate to receive assistance and advice from Max Foran, Byron Miller, and Alan Smart, all at the University of Calgary. Byron in particular is to be thanked for inspiring my interest in both urban geography and sustainability politics: this research is in many ways the culmination of a spark that he lit nearly a decade prior.

In Vancouver, Jim Glassman assiduously read and provided comments on this thesis, and proved to be an indispensable guide through the labyrinthine twists of the Gramsci's prison notebooks. Jamie Peck provided a surplus of insights and trenchant critiques which have helped this thesis immeasurably. He also offered a seemingly interminable supply of patience and good cheer when they were needed most. The term "supervisor" does a disservice to the support and inspiration he has provided.

The affection and support of my family – Marlene, Matthew, Vanessa, David, and Rachel – has sustained me during this project, and far, far beyond. Elizabeth Locke has provided the deepest reservoirs of love and support, without which the completion of this thesis simply would not have been possible. While the future of sustainability politics in Calgary remains an open question, the question of when this thesis will be complete is finally closed.

I reserve my final words of praise and gratitude for the unnamed and uncounted multitudes working in, on, and outside Calgary's local state to forge a more ecologically defensible and socially just future. Their "optimism of the spirit" recharges my own when it flags, and their rebel spirits move my pen. It is to them that this thesis is dedicated.

CHAPTER 1: SUSTAINABILITY IN THE CITY OF CONTRADICTIONS

1.1 ECO-POLITICS ON THE EDGE

Deep inside the glass office towers beats a Wild West heart: Calgary is a shiny corporate giant with a six-gun justice past. It's a city that's oh-so-proud of its cowboy roots, yet quick to fire up the ol' bulldozer. A city which allows hungry deer easy access to million-dollar lawns. Sprawled between gargantuan mountains and flat-flat-flat farmland, Calgary is a city of contradictions.

JAMES MARTIN¹

[...] a hundred hares do not add up to a horse, a hundred suspicions do not add up to a proof.

ANTONIO GRAMSCI²

At every turn, Calgary presents itself as a landscape of contradiction. Nestled between towering mountain ranges to the west and sweeping expanses of prairie to the east, contrast and disjuncture seem inscribed upon its very physical form: the morning snow blanketing the city on a winter's day may be summarily cleared by afternoon with the welcome arrival of a warming Chinook wind, while a bare patch of old farmland on the urban fringe may join the city's ranks of sprawling subdivisions over the course of a lazy prairie summer. Its urban fabric is restless and dichotomous, split between an expansive patchwork of suburbs ringing a dense, office-choked downtown that is itself traversed by an 'analogous city' of raised walkways which insulate Calgary's business elite from both the city's cantankerous winter climate and the prospect of aleatory, street-level contact with other class groups.³ Although the yawning ennui and listless monotony of these landscapes evoke continuity, the inexorable forward march of Calgary's city limits and spectacular eruption of new downtown construction over recent decades evince the persistent waves of transformation wrought by the whiplash rollercoaster of Calgary's hydrocarbon economy and its propensity to grip the city in paroxysms of spasmodic growth. Rising tides of petrodollars draw flocks of construction cranes ("Calgary's official bird") to crown the downtown skyline

¹ James Martin, *Calgary: Secrets of the City* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1999), 9.

² Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks Volume III*, ed. and trans. Joseph Buttigieg (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 6§204.

³ Trevor Boddy, "Underground and Overhead: Building the Analogous City," in *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space*, ed. Michael Sorkin (New York: Hill and Wong, 1992), 123-153. Among these class groups are a growing homeless population, many of whom have found themselves pushed out of their former residences by the spiraling housing costs which have blossomed in the absence of rent controls in Alberta. Between 1992 and 2008 alone – a period characterized by fitful economic growth matched by a general retreat of social welfare support from Provincial authorities – Calgary's homeless population increased by a staggering 706 percent. See Calgary Homeless Foundation, *Winter 2014: Point-in-Time Count Report*, available at <http://calgaryhomeless.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Winter-2014-PIT-Count-Report.pdf>.

during boom years, while tremors in global energy markets scatter them like crows as such shifts plunge the city into the numbing stasis of recession.⁴ It is a city of contradiction, and a city in motion.

From the outside, this landscape appears as the spatial expression of a particular and peculiar civic identity characterized by conservative social values and seemingly ubiquitous entrepreneurial gusto. While the popular nickname 'Cowtown' betrays a "reputation for redneck, right wing politics," the City's low business taxes and permissive stance towards development have engendered a liberal policy milieu for newcomers with sufficiently deep pockets.⁵ Elsewhere, local place-marketing exercises and image-building projects have developed a stylized Western brand for the city, and the cowboy image evoked in these exercises merges the small-town sociality of prairie homesteaders with the bootstrapping hustle and maverick work ethic of big-city entrepreneurs.⁶ While this rustic image seems to ground local culture in faintly pastoral values, recent showcase developments by world-renowned 'starchitects' Santiago Calatrava and Sir Norman Foster testify that for all of its folksy invocations of frontier life, Calgary is both conscious of its global image and very much open for business.⁷ Merging the built environment with cultural spectacle, local architect Stephanie White has noted that perhaps the most iconic images of Calgary's popular identity are articulated by the wild contours of bucking rodeo broncos and the glistening spires of its downtown office building.⁸ Indeed, in this city where paintings of bucolic prairie scenes proliferate amongst the offices of the very energy firms and development tycoons who subject these landscapes to wrenching dislocations and lasting disfigurements, the twin themes of full-throttle capitalism and nostalgic 'cowboy culture' fuse in a potent (if contradictory) place-narrative.

Pace Calgary's reputation as both a heartland for Canadian conservatism and a "hotbed for neoliberal policy experimentation," the very concept of sustainability would appear contrarian, if not

⁴ Beverly Sandalack and Andrei Nicolai, *The Calgary Project: Urban Form/Urban Life* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2006), 105.

⁵ Byron Miller and Alan Smart, "Ascending the Main Stage? Calgary in the Multilevel Governance Drama," in *Sites of Governance: Multilevel Governance and Policymaking in Canada's Big Cities*, ed. Robert Young and Martin Horak (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012), 26-52. See also Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly, "Civic Culture in Calgary: The Oil and Developers' Land," in *Comparative Civic Culture: The Role of Local Culture in Urban Policy-Making*, ed. Laura Reese and Raymond Rosenfeld (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 295-326.

⁶ The most notable of these exercises is the Calgary Stampede, a lucrative annual rodeo, festival, and celebration of Calgary's cowboy heritage. Although the Wild-West history celebrated by this event is largely apocryphal, and built on a highly problematic relation to local First Nations populations, it nevertheless forms a powerful marketing pitch with performative effects on the shape of local culture. See Max Foran, ed., *Icon, Brand, Myth: The Calgary Stampede*, ed. Max Foran (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 2008).

⁷ See Alan Smart and Alina Tanasescu, "On Wanting to be a Global City: Global Rankings and Urban Governance in Calgary," in *City-Regions in Prospect? Exploring the Meeting Points Between Place and Practice*, ed. Kevin E. Jones, Alex Lord, and Rob Shields (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014).

⁸ *Unbuilt Calgary: A History of the City that Might Have Been* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2012), 41.

outright anathematic, against the city's dominant political tendencies.⁹ Nevertheless, after languishing for years before critical (and occasionally hostile) audiences in the backstage recesses of municipal planning offices, the concept has gradually emerged as a recurring character in Calgary's policymaking and politicking circuits, even playing a starring role in a number of high-profile, high-stakes political dramas in recent years. After making its small-stage debut in a series of policy exercises held in the early 1990s – most notably including the ill-fated Sustainable Suburbs Study in 1995 – sustainability burst into the limelight of public scrutiny in 2009 when the City of Calgary unveiled Plan-It Calgary, a long-range municipal planning framework based upon a 'triple bottom line' approach to sustainability which promised a delicate balancing act between social, environmental, and economic goals.¹⁰ Compared to earlier rehearsals and experimental productions of the concept, Plan-It represented the most comprehensive extension of sustainability precepts into urban policy to date, promising to cement the concept as the basis for all future decisions regarding urban development.

Inspiration for Plan-It's somewhat unlikely green perspectives and policy solutions was in turn drawn from imagineCALGARY, a multi-year community visioning project which consulted an estimated 18,000 citizens to infer what sort of city they wished to inhabit.¹¹ In contrast to received wisdom about Calgary's conservative, market-oriented political culture, this plan presented a totalizing, long-term vision for development which focused upon reordering city life along more environmentally defensible and socially equitable lines. As an attempt to provide policy support for the vision projected by imagineCALGARY, Plan-It contained provisions for raising urban densities, providing greater mobility options for pedestrians, cyclists, and public transit users, promoting aesthetically pleasing and eco-friendly design and architecture, facilitating easier access to parks and other green spaces, and encouraging the integration of complimentary land-uses into 'complete communities' furnishing the everyday needs of residents within a comfortable walking distance.¹² Like imagineCALGARY, this plan diverged from earlier efforts such as the Sustainable Suburbs Study in terms of its broad scope and its high degree of public visibility. In the terms of celebrated planning theorist and sustainability advocate

⁹ Byron Miller, "Modes of Governance, Modes of Resistance: Contesting Neoliberalism in Calgary," in *Contesting Neoliberalism: Urban Frontiers*, ed. Helga Leitner, Jamie Peck, and Eric Sheppard (New York: Guilford Press, 2007), 223; see also Alan Smart, "Restructuring in a North American City: Labour Markets and Political Economy in Calgary," in *Plural Globalities in Multiple Localities: New World Borders*, ed. Martha Rees and Josephine Smart (Lanham: University Press of America, 2001), 167-193.

¹⁰ Officially, Plan-It – sometimes spelled 'Plan It' – is an umbrella term for two complementary plans covering land use (the Municipal Development Plan) and transportation (the Calgary Transportation Plan). For lexical simplicity, they are referenced hereafter as 'Plan-It'.

¹¹ City of Calgary, *imagineCALGARY Plan for Long Range Urban Sustainability*, 2006.

¹² City of Calgary, *Municipal Development Plan*, 2009.

Jeff Kenworthy, the plan was not only “based on the best planning principles one can find anywhere in the world today,” but also an exemplary policy model for other “cities grappling with the problematic mix of urban sprawl, car dependence, congestion and the costs of urban development.”¹³

While Plan-It’s feel-good green urbanism celebrated the popular support ostensibly conferred by imagineCALGARY, however, the plan was met with stiff opposition from Calgary’s development and homebuilding industries. Through recurrent and insistent advocacy in local media channels, these actors waged a Homeric public relations siege against the plan, castigating its vision as utopian, its aims as unrealistic, and its proposed regulations as unreasonable.¹⁴ Using the term ‘social engineering’ as both defensive rallying cry and accusatory pejorative, developers pilloried the plan as a moment of nanny-state overreach, and claimed that its regulatory content neglected the real wants and needs of Calgary’s homebuying public. Since Calgarians had demonstrated an historical preference for suburban-style housing, the developers argued, Plan-It’s bias against this form of development (as an *unsustainable* growth model) effectively represented an unwarranted and unfair enlargement of municipal authority into the sacrosanct domain of consumer choice. Furthermore, Calgary’s development interests claimed that the plan would fail *on its own terms*. Rather than balancing social and environmental objectives with economic growth, it was claimed that the Plan-It’s market-distorting regulations would inevitably inflate housing prices and deepen existing social inequalities, and local developers even sponsored a public lecture by Randal O’Toole, a senior fellow at the libertarian CATO institute and self-described ‘antiplanner’, to make this point.¹⁵

After a bitter and highly public feud over Plan-It’s prospective benefits and dangers, the plan was debated in City Council chambers in the summer of 2009. A record number of citizens attended the marathon three-day hearing in which Plan-It was considered, the majority of whom spoke in support of the plan.¹⁶ One local wag aptly lampooned the developers’ red-baiting counter-offensive in the pages of a local newspaper, while touting the plan’s promised outcomes:

Citizens! A spectre haunts our city – the spectre of the Plan It Calgary document. With its easy talk of “high density development” [*sic*], “sustainability” and “public transport,” it devolves our

¹³ Jeff Kenworthy, “Don’t Crucify Public Planning,” *Calgary Herald*, Apr. 3, 2009, A21.

¹⁴ Grace Lui, “What Plan It Are You On?” *Calgary Herald*, May 16, 2009, I1.

¹⁵ Richard White, “Plan It Likely to Hike Prices,” *Calgary Herald*, May 2, 2009, J1.; Kathy McCormick, “US Expert Slams City for ‘Behavioural Planning’” *Calgary Herald*, Mar. 28, 2009, I1

¹⁶ Robert Remington, “City Planning Pits Good Versus Evil,” *Calgary Herald*, June 24, 2009; During public hearings of Council, the City’s procedures allow for citizens address particular agenda items for up to five minutes before Council moves to vote on them.

freethinking populace into acolytes of socialism. If adopted, it will smash the tradition of family homes [sic] and bring on the urban blight known as sprawl withdrawal. Signs of sprawl withdrawal include more vibrant communities, environmentally sound infrastructure and a world-class city. Beware the green menace!¹⁷

A good deal of citizen support for the plan was drawn from CivicCamp, a grassroots citizen's movement that had formed the year leading up to Plan-It to support local sustainability initiatives. Despite strong citizen advocacy on behalf of the plan, however, Calgary's Council remained divided after the debate had ended. Indeed, where several members of Council had seemingly sided with developers and taken a public stance against the plan before the final Council vote, it seemed plausible that Council might reject Plan-It altogether. In a last-ditch effort to salvage Plan-It, outgoing Mayor Dave Bronconnier held a closed-door meeting with representatives from Calgary's homebuilding and development industries before a vote on the plan in the fall, wherein Bronconnier agreed to lower the plan's proposed density targets. When the revised plan was put before Council the following day, it passed with unanimous support from Calgary's formerly divided Council.¹⁸

Amidst widespread surprise that the controversial plan had been adopted at all, several of Plan-It's advocates accused the City of unnecessarily diluting the plan's sustainability targets while betraying the public consensus which had been used to construct and legitimize these same targets. Perhaps the most prominent of these voices belonged to Naheed Nenshi, a business professor and founding member of CivicCamp who had emerged as one of Plan-It's biggest advocates in the months leading up to its compromised acceptance by Council. Nenshi characterized Bronconnier's last-minute capitulation as a Faustian bargain which had "gut[ted] the whole thing" and left the plan "no longer worth the paper it's printed on." With less than a year left in his term as mayor, Bronconnier defended Plan-It as a project that would be "refined over time" as the rubric of sustainability would (presumably) become a normal component of business-as-usual development practice.¹⁹

Unmoved by Bronconnier's optimism, Nenshi announced his candidacy for Bronconnier's soon-to-be vacant mayoral seat only months after Plan-It was approved by Council. Like Plan-It, Nenshi seemed an improbable fit for Calgary's (stereo)typically conservative political climate. In contrast to his promises of ecological modernization, investments in arts and culture, and networked, Web 2.0-style

¹⁷ Alec Milne, "Socialist Spectre," *Calgary Herald*, June 29, 2009, A11.

¹⁸ "Developers Win Compromise in City Growth Plan," *CBC News Calgary*, Sept. 28, 2009, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/story/2009/09/28/calgary-plan-it-urban-growth-sprawl-developers-bridges.html> (accessed June 8, 2013)

¹⁹ Kim Guttormson, "City OKs Controversial Urban Design Blueprint," *Calgary Herald*, Sept. 29, 2009, B7.

democracy, local newscaster Barb Higgins and incumbent Council-member Ric McIver ran populist campaigns emphasizing budgetary restraint and fiscal stability.²⁰ McIver in particular had developed a reputation for his budgetary hawkishness and socially conservative ‘pragmatism’ over his nine-year tenure at City Hall, and was one of Plan-It’s most vocal critics on City Council.²¹ Indeed, when Nenshi had commented that Council’s “gutting” of Plan-It was cause for a total overhaul of local government, McIver publically defended status quo policymaking procedures as a “common sense, conservative approach to protecting the interests of Calgarians” while lambasting Nenshi for his own “tax-and-spend” sensibilities.²² Further distinction between Nenshi and his main competitors could also be found in the funding structures of their respective campaigns: while Nenshi campaigned on a shoestring budget, Higgins was able to translate her media presence into an impressive fundraising cache, and McIver received strong support from Calgary’s development community, boasting a campaign donor sheet that, in the words of one local columnist, “read like a catalogue of housing and land developers.”²³

For much of the race, McIver was the clear frontrunner in both electoral polls and media coverage, with Higgins trailing close behind. Until the final weeks of the campaign, Nenshi consistently drew less than half of the support levels of either candidate, and while his self-described “politics in full sentences” and savvy use of social media had drawn some praise from local media, he nevertheless remained a political long-shot.²⁴ History appeared to be on the side of McIver and Higgins, too: Calgary’s previous two mayors had been incumbent Council-members, and their predecessor, in turn, had been a newscaster (working for the same news agency as Higgins, no less). The appearance that Nenshi was swimming against the current of history doubtlessly garnered his campaign some media attention, but when an eleventh-hour surge in popularity helped furnish a last-minute victory for Nenshi at the ballot

²⁰ Richard Cuthbertson, “Higgins, McIver on Same Page,” *Calgary Herald*, Aug. 13, 2010, B1

²¹ In an interview on December 14, 2012, one former elected official claimed that throughout his time on Council, McIver had never voted in support of a single budgetary measure, purportedly to safeguard himself against claims of wasteful spending. Accordingly, McIver’s austere posturing on budgetary matters earned him the appropriately theatrical nickname ‘Dr. No’ in Calgary’s local press.

²² See Naheed Nenshi, “Gutted Plan Mortgages the City’s Future,” *Calgary Herald*, Oct. 8, 2009, A14; Naheed Nenshi, “One Year to Go Before Possible Radical City Election,” *Calgary Herald*, Oct. 22, 2009, A14; Ric McIver, “Working on Policy is Called Democracy,” *Calgary Herald*, Oct. 26, 2009, A11. Later, Nenshi’s associate (and future chief of staff) Chima Nkemdirim intervened in this exchange to defend Nenshi’s approach. See Chima Nkemdirim, “Great Expectations,” *Calgary Herald*, Nov. 2, 2009, A13.

²³ Adrienne Beatty, “Money Matters in the Calgary Election,” *Calgary Herald*, Oct. 7, 2010, A18.

²⁴ Five weeks before the election, a local poll suggested that McIver drew support 43 percent of voters, compared to 28 percent for Higgins and 8 percent for Nenshi. Three weeks later, a comparable poll showed McIver and Higgins’ support levels at 31 and 28 percent support, respectively, and though Nenshi’s support had doubled to 16 percent, local media continued to predict that election would essentially be a coronation for McIver. See Jason Markusoff, “McIver, Higgins Battle for First,” *Calgary Herald*, Sept. 19, 2010, A6 and Jason Markusoff, “Poll Finds Mayoral Field Has Tightened,” *Calgary Herald*, Oct. 6, 2010, B6.

box, local media figures and political analysts were left grasping to explain both Nenshi's unprecedented ascendance and McIver's astounding collapse.²⁵ Likewise, given Calgary's popular reputation as a "steak-eating, SUV-driving, right-winging Hicksville" (to steal a turn of phrase from local journalist Chris Turner), national news media were doubly blindsided by Nenshi's success in light of both his ethnicity – Nenshi was to be the first Muslim mayor of a major Canadian city – and his vaguely progressive brand of eco-friendly politics.²⁶

Within a week, the surprise of Nenshi's election was thrown into sharp relief by the results of a civic election across the country in Toronto, where that city's reputation for Red Tory pragmatism was defied by Rob Ford's election as mayor on a ticket promising tax cuts, privatization schemes, labour discipline, and an end to Toronto's alleged 'war on the car' through retrenchment of transit services.²⁷ Canada's national press seized on the incongruity between the two mayors, and although Nenshi's election had confirmed that "Calgary is not, in fact, the backwater that much of the rest of the country perceives it to be," most sources remained mystified as to how two of the country's major urban centres had apparently switched political identities overnight.²⁸ Coming hot on the heels of Plan-It's unlikely approval, Nenshi's election appeared to portend a shift in Calgary's political structure, despite the fact that sustainability policies had been germinating in the city for more than a decade prior to Nenshi's rise. Even still, while a nationwide chorus of media voices was stirred to announce this apparent transformation, few could explain why it had occurred, while fewer still could articulate what it meant.

1.2 SITUATING SUSTAINABILITY

The acceptance of sustainability, at least in principle, in the environmental arena by virtually all actors has led to the desire to use such a universally acceptable goal as a slogan also in campaigns that have nothing to do with the environment, but where the lure of universal

²⁵ Jason Markusoff, "McIver Takes Stock After Losing Election," *Calgary Herald*, Oct. 20, 2010, B4.

²⁶ Chris Turner, "Calgary's New School," *Globe & Mail*, Oct. 23, 2010, F1.

²⁷ For an account that precedes Ford's election, but nevertheless discusses Toronto's controversial late '90s amalgamation with its suburbs as political project by the Province of Ontario to water down the voting power of urbane Torontonians, see Julie-Anne Boudreau, Roger Keil, and Douglas Young's *Changing Toronto: Governing Urban Neoliberalism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 39-84.

²⁸ Alexander White, "Where is Montreal's Answer to Naheed Nenshi?" *Montreal Gazette*, Oct. 28 2010, A23. Among other sources, the general confusion over this alleged mismatch is reflected in Christopher Hume, "So Who are the Rednecks Now?" *Toronto Star*, Oct. 20, 2010, A4; Margaret Wente, "Why Hometown Envy Cowtown," *Globe & Mail*, Oct. 21, 2010, A21; Don Martin, "The New Faces of Canadian Politics," *Vancouver Sun*, Oct. 21, 2010, A15; and Gary Klein, "Lessons From Calgary, Toronto," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, Oct. 28, 2010, A10.

acceptance is a powerful attraction. [...] It suggests all humanity has a similar interest in “sustainable housing” or “sustainable urban development”; that if we simply recognized our common interests everything would be fine, we could end poverty, exploitation, segregation, inadequate housing, congestion, ugliness, abandonment and homelessness. Yet, in these areas, the idea of a universal acceptance of meaningful goals is a chimera.

PETER MARCUSE²⁹

[...] sustainability is a debate about the preservation of a particular social order rather than a debate about the preservation of nature *per se*.

DAVID HARVEY³⁰

While controversy and surprise followed imagineCANGARY's consensual eco-friendly vision, Plan-It's compromised adoption, and Nenshi's green-themed accession, recent years have seen conceptions of sustainability proliferate through Canadian local governance networks and global(izing) circuits of urban policy knowledge more generally.³¹ In turn, the broad uptake of this term in formal policy circles in the post-millennial epoch has mirrored parallel changes in mainstream political and cultural circuits, where an explosion of phantasmagoric environmental anxieties related to climate change, peak oil, species extinction, and ever-spectacular ‘natural disasters’ have captivated popular attention.³² Indeed, as the world's advanced capitalist economies have continued to search for an ‘institutional fix’ for the post-Fordist (and post-Club of Rome) moment, the commonly accepted Brundtland-derived notion of sustainability – that is, as *sustainable development*, or, “development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” – has emerged as both viral pop-political phenomenon and edifying salvation narrative for late capitalism, evidently promising succor for global warming, social disintegration, and economic crisis at all once.³³

²⁹ Peter Marcuse, “Sustainability Is Not Enough,” *Environment and Urbanization* 10, no. 2 (1998): 104-105.

³⁰ David Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996), 148.

³¹ Early examples of urban sustainability policies in Canada include Vancouver's Clouds of Change report (1990), Winnipeg's Plan Winnipeg...toward 2010 (1991), Ottawa's City of Ottawa Official Plan (1991), and Calgary's own Sustainable Suburbs Study (1995). See Jeanne Wolfe, “Reinventing Planning: Canada,” *Progress in Planning* 57 (2002): 207-235; for a broader (and more critical) view, see Rob Krueger and David Gibbs, eds., *The Sustainable Development Paradox: Urban Political Economy in the United States and Europe* (New York: Guilford Press, 2007).

³² In *Dead Cities* (New York: The New Press, 2002), Mike Davis correlates the eschatological character of some postmillennial sustainability dialogues to emergent geopolitical anxieties about urban unrest and terrorism.

³³ Gro Harlem Brundtland, *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: “Our Common Future,”* United Nations, 1987, 8. On the pacifying valences of such sustainability scripts see Erik Swyngedouw, “Impossible ‘Sustainability’ and the Postpolitical Condition,” in *Sustainable Development Paradox*, 13-40. Cf. Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell, “Searching for a New Institutional Fix: The After-Fordist Crisis and the Global-Local Disorder,” in *Post-Fordism: A Reader*, ed. Ash Amin (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1994), 280-315.

For urban planners navigating the unsteady institutional terrain of post-Fordist urban governance, the concept of sustainable development has appeared as a kind of techno-managerial philosopher's stone, offering a balance, however tenuous, between the contradictory commitments to economic growth, environmental stewardship, and social redistribution which characterize planning as an institution.³⁴ Indeed, although the concept of sustainability has traditionally been associated with macro-scale environmental questions, the notion of *urban* sustainability became increasingly institutionalized over the course of the 1990s, as sustainable urban planning principles were established through the Local Agenda 21 program launched at the United Nations-sponsored Earth Summit in 1992, and subsequently incorporated at the United Nations' Habitat II City Summit in 1996 as a framework for responding to global environmental concerns.³⁵ Over the course of that decade, the concept was widely adopted in both planning schools and ongoing development projects across the advanced capitalist world, filling the intellectual gap left by the discipline's general retreat from social theory in the early 1970s.³⁶ Through the churning (re)circulation of (selectively framed) green-city success stories across the increasingly networked terrain of global 'fast policy' circuits, sustainability – alongside fellow conceptual travelers (and occasional dance partners) 'livability' and the 'creative city' – has become sedimented as an essential component of modern urban policymaking writ large, prompting some commentators to inaugurate the concept as the 'master signifier' for urban planning *in nuce*.³⁷

In no small part, the growing popularity of sustainability as a conceptual anchor for urban policymaking has been facilitated by influential planning and design movements such as the New Urbanism and smart growth.³⁸ Seizing on the demand for eco-friendly policy solutions, a rotating cast of aggressively charismatic, well-organized, and media-savvy planning and design professionals associated with these movements have produced a bounty of *prêt-à-porter* green development models,

³⁴ Scott Campbell, "Green Cities, Growing Cities, Just Cities? Urban Planning and the Contradictions of Sustainable Development," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 62, no. 3 (1996): 296-312.

³⁵ Stephen Wheeler, "Planning for Metropolitan Sustainability," *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 20 (2000): 134.

³⁶ See Michael Gunder, "Sustainability: Planning's Saving Grace or Road to Perdition?" *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 26 (2006): 208-221 and "The City of Theory" in Peter Hall's *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design in the Twentieth Century* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002).

³⁷ Mark Davidson, "Sustainability as Ideological Praxis: The Acting Out of Planning's Master-Signifier," *City* 14, no. 4 (2010): 390-405. Cf. Eugene McCann, "Urban Policy Mobilities and Global Circuits of Knowledge: Towards a Research Agenda," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 101, no. 1 (2011): 107-130 and Jamie Peck and Nik Theodore, "Mobilizing Policy: Models, Methods, Mutations," *Geoforum* 41, no. 2 (2010): 169-174.

³⁸ Paul Knox, *Metroburbia, USA* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 104-111 and Eugene McCann and Kevin Ward, "Relationality/Territoriality: Toward a Conceptualization of Cities in the World," *Geoforum* 41, no. 2 (2010): 175-184.

technically-qualified ‘best practices’, and sustainability-themed policy scripts which have been circulated between urban policy worlds with remarkable velocity. In contrast to the dull uniformity of 20th century (sub)urban development and the unholy modernist-urbanist trinity of “specialization, standardization, and mass production,” these strategies promise to cultivate and valorize the site-specific qualities of their target communities, while simultaneously producing new urban landscapes which facilitate increased social interaction and more energy-efficient lifestyles.³⁹

While maintaining a high degree of contextual flexibility, these models nevertheless mobilize a common set of pre-packaged problematics – sprawl, automobile dependence, loss or lack of ‘community vitality’ – for which they provide a corresponding ensemble of standardized development principles and prescriptive built forms. Although the particularities of these models share in their tone and tenor, they nevertheless draw from a similarly standardized laundry list of solutions to these problems, commonly including class for more dense and compact development; complimentary land-use and transportation arrangements which facilitate (if not encourage) more walking, cycling, and public transit use, while reducing dependency upon private automobiles; design strategies that emphasize aesthetics, multifunctionality, and ‘livability’; a broad incorporation of energy-saving technologies and alternative energy sources; more citizen participation in local government; abundant open-space networks, parks, and other green spaces; provisions for decent and abundant affordable housing; and the cultivation of locally-oriented economies, usually involving local food production, knowledge-based industries, and ‘green collar’ jobs.⁴⁰ Typically rendered in mollifying, politically anodyne terms, these scripts articulate in relation to a rotating cast of selectively framed case studies drawn from a handful of prosperous Western cities (Copenhagen, Vancouver, Melbourne, Stockholm, and Freiburg, Germany are among the usual suspects) which are used to disclose how sustainable development strategies can ostensibly facilitate community interaction, incubate cultural vibrancy, support more durable/high-tech/‘creative’ economies, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and mitigate the overall environmental impacts of urban development.⁴¹

³⁹ This quotation is taken from the esteemed New Urbanist Peter Calthorpe in his *Urbanism in the Age of Climate Change* (Washington DC: Island Press, 2011), 52. For other recent examples in this vein, see Douglas Farr, *Sustainable Urbanism: Urban Design with Nature* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2008) and Andrés Duany, Jeff Speck, and Mike Lydon, *The Smart Growth Manual* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010).

⁴⁰ As Wheeler notes, the novelty of these concepts is often generously overstated, as many of the precepts underscoring contemporary sustainability narratives can be found in the texts of luminaries such as Ebenezer Howard, Patrick Geddes, Lewis Mumford, and Jane Jacobs. “Planning for Metropolitan Sustainability,” 134-135

⁴¹ Such claims abound a triumphalist scholarly literature exemplified by Timothy Beatley, *Green Urbanism: Learning from European Cities* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2000); Peter Newman and Jeffrey Kenworthy,

The attractiveness of these unfailingly optimistic appraisals has been testified in recent years by the diffusion of sustainable development precepts into a wide range of localities commonly associated with socially conservative, market-oriented political cultures. Even in these seemingly unlikely contexts, green development and design projects have found receptive audiences among affluent consumers seeking morally instructive forms of consumption with less conspicuous social and environmental consequences.⁴² Indeed, where the ensemble of highly aestheticized architectural signifiers and urban design shibboleths associated with 'sustainable' communities foster a degree of eco-conscious social capital for residents, they provide a form of social distinction which facilitates new forms of competition and conspicuous status-seeking in real estate markets.⁴³

But while the aforementioned strategies have indeed contributed to higher living standards and renewed growth in a select number of cases, most 'sustainable' development projects are notably haphazard in delivering on their own social and environmental promises.⁴⁴ In practice, the putative benefits of sustainable development – environmentally sound communities, reliable transit services, increased property values, vibrant street life, and so on – have been persistently uneven in their spatial distribution, and the delicate balance of social, economic, and the socioecological welfare promised by contemporary sustainable development discourses has more often than not proved tenuous, if not altogether chimerical. Accordingly, the rising popularity of environmentally sensitive design and development precepts has been paralleled by a growing suspicion that sustainable development schemes may “end up doing little more than adding a green gloss to patterns of chronic inequality.”⁴⁵

In recent years, the persistence of social and environmental tensions in cities that have adopted green agendas has generated substantial controversy over how (or *if*) urban sustainability programs can

Sustainability and Cities: Overcoming Automobile Dependence (Washington, DC: Island Press, 1999); and Peter Newman, Timothy Beatley, and Heather Boyer, *Resilient Cities: Responding to Peak Oil and Climate Change* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2009).

⁴² See, for instance, Andrew Ross' analysis of green developments in Phoenix, Arizona in *Bird on Fire: Lessons from the World's Least Sustainable City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), and Elliot Tretter, "Contesting Sustainability: 'SMART Growth' and the Redevelopment of Austin's Eastside," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 37, no. 1 (2013): 297-310.

⁴³ See, for instance, James Duncan and Nancy Duncan, *Landscapes of Privilege: The Politics of the Aesthetic in an American Suburb* (New York: Routledge, 2004). While the material design features of green communities (solar panels, xeriscaped lawns, neotraditional or ultramodern architectural vernaculars, abundant green space, etc.) are surely wellsprings of social distinction in many places, however, Paul Knox points out that growing markets for 'sustainable' developments have not abated the abiding fixation with excess and 'bigness' that continues to predominate in American urbanism. *Metroburbia USA*, 154-174.

⁴⁴ Newman et al., *Resilient Cities*, 55-85.

⁴⁵ Ross, *Bird on Fire*, 240.

succeed on their own terms. In the more prosaic version of this critique, green-city gurus have been taken to task for selectively generalizing broad developmental ‘lessons’ from a narrow range of case studies. Here, the *necessary* connections between promised socioenvironmental outcomes (reduced emissions, social integration, cultural flourishing) and the standardized morphologies of sustainable urbanism (compact, mixed-use, transit-intensive developments) are called into question, casting doubt on the prescriptive content of many green development scripts.⁴⁶ More radically, several commentators have suggested that the Arcadian promises of popular sustainable development models treat the symptomatic expressions of urban problems (such as sprawl, ecological dysfunction, and social inequality) without adequately addressing their structural bases in the dynamics of capitalist accumulation, active legacies of colonial domination, institutional racism(s), and territorially-organized forms of marginality.⁴⁷ According to this perspective, the boisterous optimism of garden-variety sustainable development models not only veils the political-economic antagonisms at the root of contemporary urban problems, but deepens and extends existing patterns of inequality. Indeed, recent years have only seen an accelerating number of cases in which green development strategies and sustainability-oriented design principles have been enrolled in processes of displacement, dispossession, and gentrification which have consolidated local power imbalances and created new social divisions.⁴⁸ As Mike Raco has put it, sustainable development is itself “a chameleon-like discourse which has been (re)interpreted and deployed by a range of interests to justify a range of often contradictory agendas.”⁴⁹

Within the conflictual *realpolitik* of development politics, the ascendance of sustainability as a central objective and organizing concept for urban policy has been therefore paradoxical, belying numerous ambiguities about how sustainability ideals can be effectively realized.⁵⁰ While local governments have overwhelmingly opted for form-based approaches which recalibrate otherwise

⁴⁶ Although this view is relatively ubiquitous among free-market champions, a progressive version of this critique can be found in Michael Neuman, “The Compact City Fallacy,” *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 25, no. 1 (2005): 11-25.

⁴⁷ See Harvey, *Justice, Nature, and Difference*; Krueger and Gibbs, *Sustainable Development Paradox*, *passim*; Marcuse, “Sustainability Is Not Enough”; Marcuse, “Sustainability”; and Eliot Tretter, “Sustainability and Neoliberal Urban Development,” *Urban Studies* 50, no. 11 (2013): 2222-2237.

⁴⁸ For examples, see Melissa Checker, “Wiped Out by the ‘Greenwave’: Environmental Gentrification and the Paradoxical Politics of Urban Sustainability,” *City & Society* 23, no. 2 (2014): 201-229; Mike Raco, “Sustainable Development, Rolled-Out Neoliberalism and Sustainable Communities,” *Antipode* 37, no. 2 (2005): 324-327; and Tretter, “Sustainability.”

⁴⁹ Raco, “Sustainable Development,” 329.

⁵⁰ This ambiguity is succinctly registered by Peter Hall, who recounts that as sustainable development “emerged as almost a Holy Grail” for urban planners in the 1990s, “everyone was in favour of it, [but] nobody knew exactly what it meant.” *Cities of Tomorrow*, 414.

conventional zoning guidelines and design standards, critics have pointed out that these interventions subsume questions about, *inter alia*, who has access to environmentally-friendly developments; how surpluses generated from green development are to be appropriated and distributed; how environmental objectives are to be evaluated against competing (if not incongruous) commitments and imperatives; and how responsibilities for particular social, economic, and environmental goals are to be allocated between a dizzying, multi-scalar patchwork of institutions and agents.⁵¹ In this light, *contra* the now-predictable ensemble of development practices commonly associated with urban sustainability, it has been suggested that the concept of sustainability is an empty signifier which lacks any determinate conceptual or political essence, and only becomes meaningful when mobilized within material political projects in service of concrete political aims.⁵²

While varied in their approach and emphasis, these commentaries suggest that the meaning of Calgary's sustainability politics cannot be benchmarking the City of Calgary's formal sustainability policies to any kind of objective standard. The question of how a seemingly progressive concept has taken hold in a presumably hostile policy environment therefore presents a conceptual deadlock which has little utility for critically evaluating the possibilities and limitations of environmental policymaking within the landscape of contemporary urban governance. If the meaning and implications of sustainability can only be found in the material circulation, adaptation, and (re)use of the concept within contemporary policy worlds, then these processes will be the central matter of concern here.

1.3 QUERYING THE BOOMTOWN

But as there is no such thing as an innocent reading, we must say what reading we are guilty of.

LOUIS ALTHUSSER⁵³

After all, we are all ourselves caught in ideology, and ideological critique must therefore also take the form of self-analysis and self-consciousness, of self-critique.

FREDERIC JAMESON⁵⁴

⁵¹ With respect to the New Urbanist movement, David Harvey has averred that these silences in green development scripts inflame rather than remediate territorial struggles over scarce resources. "The New Urbanism and the Communitarian Trap," *Harvard Design Magazine* 1, no. 3 (1997): 68-69.

⁵² Davidson, "Sustainability as Ideological Practice; Gunder, "Sustainability." A debt to psychoanalysis (filtered through Louis Althusser, Slavoj Žižek and Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe) is evident in these claims.

⁵³ Louis Althusser, "From *Capital* to Marx's Philosophy," in Louis Althusser and Étienne Balibar, eds., *Reading Capital* (New York: Verso, 2009), trans. Ben Brewster, 14.

As Michael Burawoy has aptly noted, “a social order reveals itself in the way that it responds to pressure.”⁵⁵ During the public debates over Plan-It, Calgary’s social order erupted into a maelstrom of discontent as elected officials, developers, City policymakers, media pundits, and grassroots citizens’ organizations clashed over the role and status of urban policy: these conflicts, alongside the institutional struggles which preceded and in many ways shaped them, reveal much about the political structures shaping development politics in Calgary. To make sense of these disturbances and understand the meanings and implications that the City of Calgary’s turn to sustainability-oriented policy holds for Calgary’s social order, I ask three questions: what are the historical conditions of possibility for sustainability politics in Calgary? How do sustainability politics align and interact with institutionally-embedded and path-dependent development practices, ideological commitments, and political-economic power relations? And finally, what sort of methodological strategies and analytical frames can be used to understand sustainability politics in the contemporary city?

In the following chapter, I consider these questions against two relevant and influential theoretical frameworks: the notion of a ‘sustainability fix’, as developed by Aiden While, Andrew Jonas, and David Gibbs, and a growing body of scholarship on ‘policy mobilities’ research. After taking stock of the explanatory strengths of these approaches, I evaluate their respective ambiguities and lacunae. But rather than abandoning these theoretical frames for their respective weaknesses and grey areas, I turn to the thought of Antonio Gramsci to elaborate a number of generative methodological insights that can be used to conceptually stretch, stress-test, and reconstruct both theoretical frames.⁵⁶ Chapter 3 presents an historical analysis of urban policy in Calgary from the postwar era until the mid-1990s, focusing in particular on the City’s inauspicious first attempt towards sustainability-oriented policy in the Sustainable Suburbs Study. By contextualizing this project within the historical emergence of a coherent hegemonic power structure in Calgary’s developmental field, I use a refined and recalibrated notion of a sustainability fix to explain how the City’s attempts to incorporate sustainability ideals into urban policy have been indelibly shaped by a series of acute political-economic pressures. The historical patterns established in the chapter also provide the context for Chapter 4, which explores the reemergence of sustainability in the mid-2000s through imagineCALGARY and the subsequent Plan-It Calgary project.

⁵⁴ Frederic Jameson, *Valences of the Dialectic* (New York: Verso, 2009), 321.

⁵⁵ Michael Burawoy, “The Extended Case Method,” *Sociological Theory* 16, no. 1 (1998): 17.

⁵⁶ The similarities with Burawoy’s ‘extended case method’ here are intentional, although the practical limitations of this study occlude the ethnographic immersion and theoretical tension between local and ‘global’ social processes that he advocates. Nevertheless, I share Burawoy’s commitment to theoretical reconstruction (even if I am slightly less “kamikaze” in my use of theory).

Taking the political relations I sketch in Chapter 3 as a point of departure, I use this chapter to explore the combination of localized political tensions and extralocal, ‘mobile’ policy ideas which have informed urban sustainability planning in the postmillennial era. Chapter 5 makes a number of concluding remarks on this historical arc and some reflections on method.

But before proceeding with this analysis, I must place myself within it; as Althusser suggests, my readings of sustainability politics in Calgary are far from innocent, and definitely not a view from off the map. My analysis has been coloured by my own personal entanglements with the institutions and (suburban) landscapes that are featured prominently in these pages, and by the embodied practice of my research itself. Although I do not wish to suggest that these biographical details make this study somehow less credible or reliable – as if a completely disinterested, ‘objective’ study were somehow possible in the first place – I shall try to elaborate how they are of consequence to both the structure of my methodology and the findings of my study.

After being raised in typical middle-class Calgarian suburbs and coming of age during an intense development boom, it is surely far from coincidental that I became interested in development politics while an undergraduate at the University of Calgary’s urban studies program between 2004 and 2010. Under the tutelage of Byron Miller – the head of U of C’s urban studies program, and a recurrent interlocutor in these pages – I became enthralled by the politics of urban sustainability, which was not only the dominant preoccupation of my department, but an exigent matter in Calgary’s local political scene. It was portentous that my first urban geography class, taken in the fall of 2005, was canvassed by a group of City of Calgary planners as part of the imagineCALGARY project. My own evolution as an urban scholar was undoubtedly shaped by imagineCALGARY’s luminous reimagining of city life, and as the hearty consensus surrounding imagineCALGARY gave way to the political contentiousness of Plan-It, I too was becoming more politically engaged. In the fall of 2008, I co-founded a student club titled the Urban Calgary Students’ Association (UrbanCSA), which was focused on sustainability politics in general and Plan-It in particular.⁵⁷ Through UrbanCSA, I also became aware of and involved in CivicCamp, which counted both Miller and Nenshi among its founding members. Throughout 2008 and 2009, I attended a number of open houses and public round tables related to Plan-It, and coordinated a joint UrbanCSA-City of Calgary open house on Plan-It at the University of Calgary in the spring of 2009.⁵⁸ In the weeks before Plan-It’s arrival at City Council, I even took to the op-ed pages of a local newspaper to mount (an

⁵⁷ Some of this club’s history and record of activities can be found at www.urbancsa.org.

⁵⁸ For details, see Jason Markusoff, “Young People’s Vision for a Better City,” *Calgary Herald*, April 3, 2009, B1.

embarrassingly Floridaesque) defense of the plan's potential to reinvigorate Calgary's lackluster public sphere and retain young talent who might be otherwise be tempted to leave for more interesting urban environs.⁵⁹ After graduating in the spring of 2010, I also worked for the City of Calgary in various capacities (community planning student, assistant to a member of City Council, and social policy coordinator) until the summer of 2011.

My experiences in local activism, development politics, and formal policymaking have proved instrumental for conducting this study. Over the course of eight months between August 2012 and September 2013, I conducted semi-structured interviews with 21 informants spanning a number of roles related to development, including activists, politicians, developers, and a range of planners working at different administrative levels (Appendix A). I had become acquainted with many of these individuals through the networks I established as a planner and an activist in Calgary; seven of the twelve planners I interviewed had worked for the City of Calgary's Planning Department during the four month period in which I had worked there in 2010, and I regularly met and worked with three of the four community activists that I interviewed during the period in which I was active in CivicCamp (late 2008 through mid-2010).⁶⁰ Nevertheless, with the exception of two planners with whom I had coordinated the UrbanCSA-Plan-It open house, I had no previous experience working directly with any of the planners I interviewed for this study, and no prior personal contact with many of the informants I interviewed for this study. Given my foreknowledge of development issues in Calgary, I had identified approximately half of these informants as potential interview subjects and used publicly available email addresses to make initial contact. Through personal recommendations from this first round of interlocutors, I identified and obtained contact information for the remaining cast of informants that were interviewed for this study.

The access to interview subjects enabled by this personal history, however, is not isomorphic with access to any sort of unmediated, behind-the-scenes truth about Calgary's urban policy world(s). As Elizabeth Dunn has pointed out, expert interviews can often be somewhat scripted, staged encounters, where policy elites and urban power brokers proffer exaggerated accounts of their own agency and prowess while simultaneously obscuring their own role in failed or compromised projects.⁶¹ The majority of interviewees elected to meet in public places – cafés being the near-unanimous option – although I

⁵⁹ Tom Howard, "Plugging the Brain Drain with Plan It," *Calgary Herald*, Sept. 28, 2009, A11.

⁶⁰ Though the City's Planning Department was renamed 'Land Use Planning & Policy' in the late 1990s, I use the title 'Planning Department' throughout this thesis for the sake of both simplicity and historical continuity.

⁶¹ Elizabeth Dunn, "Of Pufferfish and Ethnography: Plumbing New Depth in Economic Geography," in *Politics and Practice in Economic Geography*, eds. Adam Tickell, Eric Sheppard, Jamie Peck, and Trevor Barnes (London: Sage, 2007), 82-93.

conducted six interviews in interviewee's offices, and another five inside of interviewee's homes.⁶² Although tempting to see venues like offices and living rooms as 'backstage' areas where social actors practice and perform social routines with less reflexive pressure than the stage of everyday public life, these environments tended to be highly managed performance spaces filled with numerous props and set pieces – overstuffed bookshelves, maps, mounted degrees and other formal accreditations – designed to lend a greater degree of authority and credibility to the actors themselves.⁶³

Bearing in mind that the actual content of these interviews is always situated, structured, and subjective, I used three strategies to mitigate the 'pufferfish' effect of interviewee self-aggrandizement. First, the names and titles of all informants have been rendered anonymous in order to disassociate their commentary from their real personae and professional reputations.⁶⁴ Although I have retained the generic category of "planning manager" for senior planning officials whose positioning in the City's bureaucratic order gave them closer access to the political contortions of Calgary's development scene, I have abstained from disclosing their actual job titles (with which they could be easily associated by anyone with basic knowledge of Calgary's planning and development culture). By retaining this title, however, I do not mean to suggest that these interviewees were necessarily more credible than other informants, or had access to a god's-eye view; indeed, my second interview strategy was to purposively fact-check, contextualize, and triangulate the commentary of *all* informants with other sources, including archival records, news reports, policy documents, and the perspectives of other informants themselves. Finally, while all interviews were open-ended exchanges, I used them as opportunities to discuss contending accounts from other sources – within the bounds of confidentiality and anonymity – to evaluate proto-explanations and challenge narratives that were, at times, evidently scripted and well-rehearsed. In this sense, interviews were not *passive* fact-finding exercises, but *dynamic* and *generative* encounters in which I played an active role in the coproduction of social knowledge.⁶⁵

As these interviews were embodied interventions into structured fields of social authority, they were inevitably shaped by the effects of power that arise from social scientific research. Burawoy, for

⁶² The location of each respective interview is included in Appendix A.

⁶³ I draw this dramaturgical metaphor from Erving Goffman's conceptions of 'impression management', and the thoughtful discussion of this concept's role in urban anthropological research that is presented in Ulf Hannerz, *Exploring the City: Notes Toward an Urban Anthropology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 202-241.

⁶⁴ Although many retired planners or higher level public officials were largely indifferent on the matter, most of the non-management planning staff I interviewed suggested anonymity as the very condition for our interview.

⁶⁵ Cf. Jamie Peck and Nik Theodore, "Follow the Policy: A Distended Case Approach," *Environment and Planning A* 44, no.1 (2012): 21-30.

instance, highlights *domination, silencing, objectification*, and the *normalization* of power as four of these possible effects, and debates within economic geography have shown that the procession of interview processes is strongly impacted by, *inter alia*, the gender and class positioning of both the interviewer and interviewee.⁶⁶ With only four exceptions, all of my interview subjects were white males, most of whom were actively employed in (or recently retired from) upper-middle class occupations. Although a number of important actors within Calgary's development community (especially within the City) are women, the field of urban development in Calgary remains overwhelmingly male. Doubtlessly, my positioning as a white male from a middle-class background bestows a habitus that was helpful in building a rapport with many of these subjects, for whom questions of power – specifically, my relative ability to dominate, silence, and objectify them within the immediate context of the interviews themselves – were decidedly less pressing. For the female subjects of this research, I have attempted to mitigate any effects of power working in my favour by locating interviews at sites of their discretion and convenience, and keeping the script of interviews open-ended and exploratory. Throughout this thesis, I have attempted where possible to provide context for quotes and transcriptions from these interviews. Regrettably, within the confines of this study I have been unable to fully explore how gender structures the field of development and policymaking in Calgary, although I maintain that this remains an important avenue of inquiry.

The aforementioned interviews conducted for this research were supplemented by archival work which I undertook at three locations. The majority of this work was conducted at the City of Calgary's archives, with supplementary material found at the Calgary Public Library's Local History collection and the University of British Columbia's libraries. This research was likewise exploratory and open-ended, though neither my archival nor interview-based research was conducted without the assistance of supporting concepts. In order to avoid the pitfalls of inductivist research, I began this research equipped with a number of explanatory theories; and so, before delving into the historical tensions abounding in this city of contradictions, I now turn to this theoretical armature.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ "Extended Case Method," 22-25. On debates regarding embodied power relations in geographical research, particularly related to gender, see Erica Schoenberger, "Politics and Practice: Becoming an Ethnographer," *Politics and Practice*, 27-37 and Linda McDowell, "Thinking the Economy, Theorizing Bodies," *Politics and Practice*, 60-70.

⁶⁷ As Loïc Wacquant has observed, all research is guided by a set of "principles of pertinence" which directs the researchers to some research objects, methodologies, and explanatory tools (and away from others). The primary shortcoming of inductive research – such as the "epistemological fairy tale" of 'grounded theory' – is a failure to reflexively engage with these principles, which produces both an inability to (re)construct theoretical frameworks and a parallel moralizing tendency in social analyses. See Loïc Wacquant, "Scrutinizing the Street: Poverty, Morality, and the Pitfalls of Urban Ethnography," *American Journal of Sociology* 107, no. 6 (2002): 1468-1532.

CHAPTER 2: SUSTAINABILITY, HEGEMONY, AND URBAN POLICY

2.1 SUSTAINABILITY IS THE ANSWER! (BUT WHAT WAS THE QUESTION?)

Sustainability is about making our community a better place for current and future generations. [...] This translates into striving for community well-being, a sustainable environment, a prosperous economy and smart growth and mobility choices. It is achieved by having a balanced financial capacity and creating a sustainable corporation that will drive toward this vision and provide the service Calgarians need today and in the future. In plain language, *it is about building a great city for everyone, forever.*

CITY OF CALGARY, *2020 SUSTAINABILITY DIRECTIONS*⁶⁸

[...] reality is teeming with the most bizarre coincidences, and it is the theoretician's task to find in this bizarreness new evidence for his theory, to 'translate' the elements of historical life into theoretical language, but not vice versa, making reality conform to an abstract scheme. Reality will never conform to an abstract theme, and therefore this conception is nothing but an expression of passivity.

ANTONIO GRAMSCI⁶⁹

Since Plan-It's approval in 2009, the City of Calgary has produced a number of detailed studies, policy directives, and internal reports echoing the imperative to instantiate sustainability principles into local development practices. Among its diverse constellation of specialized departments – termed 'business units' after a late-1990s corporate reorganization – the City has also established an Office of Sustainability, which has busily set to work installing the concept at the core of departmental 'business plans'.⁷⁰ Through these exercises, the City has become adept at expressing sustainability principles in disarmingly inclusive and conciliatory terms, encapsulated in the City's self-proclaimed commitment towards "building a great city for everyone, forever." The conflicts and compromises surrounding Plan-It's turbulent ascendance, however, suggest that the clap-happy consensus touted by imagineCALGARY is considerably more fractured and incomplete than advertised. Moreover, where imagineCALGARY and Plan-It are typically considered watershed moments for environmental policy in Calgary, the targeted

⁶⁸ City of Calgary, *Calgary 2020: The City of Calgary's 10-Year Plan Towards imagineCALGARY*, Office of Sustainability, 2012, 4, emphasis in original.

⁶⁹ Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks Volume II*, ed. and trans. Joseph Buttigieg (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 4538.

⁷⁰ In 1999 the City hired a private consulting firm to realign the City's organizational structure along more business-oriented lines, in which departments were renamed 'business units' and the City's commissioners were renamed 'executive officers'. A number of planners confirmed to me in interviews that business jargon has become more prevalent in City communications since then, and this trend is clearly reflected in the phrasing and framing of more recent City policies.

focus of earlier attempts at sustainability-oriented policy – most notably the 1995 Sustainable Suburbs Study – suggest that ‘sustainability’ has not always (if ever) been so inclusive in its practical application.

Two analytical frameworks currently circulating among critical urban scholars provide a useful starting point for understanding the meaning and implications of sustainability policies in Calgary. The first of these, promulgated by Aidan While, Andrew Jonas, and David Gibbs, suggests that sustainability policies are best understood as a strategic response, or ‘fix’, for the political-economic contradictions of contemporary urban development.⁷¹ In this view, sustainability policies inevitably reflect contextual forces, as policymakers must struggle to balance local environmental concerns with imposed demands to maintain an ‘entrepreneurial’ disposition and hospital investment climate.⁷² The relationship between these localized dilemmas and the search for solutions in extralocal, expert-affirmed policy knowledge is a central object of concern for emergent scholarship in ‘policy mobilities’, which constitutes the second framework I consider here. Although much of this work has not focused on sustainability *per se*, it nevertheless provides insights on several aspects of contemporary policy processes which are helpful for understanding the role and status of expert consultancy and relational knowledge of elsewhere in localized policy processes. After reviewing these theories and making some preliminary remarks on their adequacy for studying policy formation in Calgary, I attempt to supplement them with insights from the thought of Antonio Gramsci, particularly regarding his conception of hegemony. By joining these bodies of work together, my objective here is not to establish a formalized and schematic ‘Gramscian’ approach to urban politics and policymaking. Instead, by reading While et al. and policy mobilities scholarship against Gramsci, my goal here is to explore how hegemony (and a series of related concepts in Gramsci’s work) can be used to open up productive lines of inquiry to apply these theoretical frameworks in seemingly unlikely contexts and cases, such as the uptake of sustainability politics in Calgary.

2.2 LOCAL POLITICS AND THE ‘URBAN SUSTAINABILITY FIX’

Capitalist development must negotiate a knife-edge between preserving the values of past commitments made at a particular place and time, or devaluing them to open up fresh room for accumulation. Capitalism perpetually strives [...] to create a social and physical landscape in its

⁷¹ Aidan While, Andrew Jonas, and David Gibbs, “The Environment and the Entrepreneurial City: Searching for the Urban ‘Sustainability Fix’ in Manchester and Leeds,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 28, no. 3 (2004): 549-569.

⁷² Cf. David Harvey, “From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism,” *Geografiska Annaler* 71, no. 1 (1989): 3-17.

own image and requisite to its own needs at a particular point in time, only just as certainly to undermine, disrupt and even destroy that landscape at a later point in time. The inner contradictions of capitalism are expressed through the restless formation and reformation of geographical landscapes. This is the tune to which the historical geography of capitalism must dance without cease.

DAVID HARVEY⁷³

What is urban political economy when the earth itself “talks back” as an environment supersaturated with the waste of modern production?

HARVEY MOLOTCH⁷⁴

The ascendancy of sustainability discourses in urban policy circles has taken place in a political-economic context which at first sight appears inauspicious, to say the least. Although the term sustainability had been in use since the late nineteenth-century to describe the long-term viability of ‘natural’ ecologies, its first application to human social systems (in the Club of Rome’s notoriously Malthusian report *The Limits to Growth* in 1972) roughly corresponds to the onset of roiling political-economic crises that dramatically reorganized the structure and stakes of urban development in the world’s advanced capitalist economies in terms that are unfavourable to notions of ecological conservation and social redistribution.⁷⁵ Where the slow-motion collapse of Fordist-Keynesian growth regimes throughout the 1970s and 1980s was paralleled by widespread liberalization in international trade and finance regulations, the rise of ‘flexible’ production networks has compelled nation-states to adopt a broad ensemble of reforms in order to remain competitive in the global economy. Alongside the rise of free(r) trade models and monetarist fiscal regimes, this period also witnessed a broad ‘roll back’ of welfare commitments at a variety of regulatory scales, accompanied by a complementary ‘roll out’ of market-oriented forms of governance typified by widespread deregulation and privatization schemes on the one hand, and workfarist programming and revanchist penal strategies on the other.⁷⁶ Among these wrenching dislocations, many states have responded to impending fiscal crises by downloading social

⁷³ David Harvey, “The Geopolitics of Capitalism,” in *Social Relations and Spatial Structures*, ed. Derek Gregory and John Urry (London: Macmillan, 1985), 150.

⁷⁴ Harvey Molotch, “The Political Economy of Growth Machines,” *Journal of Urban Affairs* 15, no. 1 (1993): 30.

⁷⁵ Wheeler, “Planning for Metropolitan Sustainability,” 133-134. Among the voluminous literature on this transition, particularly lucid discussions can be found in David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1990), 121-197; Bob Jessop, “Liberalism, Neoliberalism, and Urban Governance: A State-Theoretical Perspective,” *Antipode* 34, no. 3 (2002): 452-472; and Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell, “Neoliberalizing Space,” *Antipode* 34, no. 3 (2002): 380-404.

⁷⁶ The definitive account on this point remains Peck and Tickell, “Neoliberalizing Space.”

welfare responsibilities to subordinate state scales while simultaneously clawing back prior levels of budgetary support.⁷⁷

The results of this geographically uneven process have been particularly acute at the urban scale. With diminished reservoirs of fiscal capacities and hypertrophied social responsibilities at their disposal, local governments have become increasingly dependent on local taxation as a necessary source of revenue to fund municipal operations.⁷⁸ Faced with new imperatives to capture and retain new sources of tax revenue, many cities have rewritten their political agendas to deprioritize ‘traditional’ obligations for redistributive spending and social welfare provision to pursue a ‘growth-first’ approach that installs economic development as the primary objective of local government.⁷⁹ Under these conditions, a number of commentators note the rise of interurban competition as a disciplining and coercive imperative for urban governance, as cities seek to maintain budgetary solvency by throwing themselves towards the “the lowest common denominator of social responsibility” and cultivating taxation rates and regulatory environments that will make them attractive to prospective investors.⁸⁰ With the ever-present threat of capital flight casting a long shadow over local decision-making procedures, many cities are reticent to pursue strict regulations on development. Conversely, this turn against regulatory management and social redistribution has been paralleled by a systemic shift towards entrepreneurial policy strategies which attempt to lure (and retain) investment through supply-side interventions such as capital subsidies, place-marketing exercises, tax breaks, and relaxed regulatory standards.

In turn, these conditions empower coalitions of locally-embedded economic actors – aptly termed *growth machines* by Harvey Molotch – to secure valuable regulatory concessions and policy-based support from local governments for development projects.⁸¹ These circumstances also give these actors an upper hand in setting the parameters of public discussion surrounding urban development.

⁷⁷ In “Modes of Governance,” Miller calls this process ‘mismatched rescaling’, which also involves the *uploading* of some local state responsibilities to senior state bodies and supranational authorities. See also Neil Brenner, *New State Spaces: Urban Governance and the Rescaling of Statehood* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

⁷⁸ As Jason Hackworth notes in *The Neoliberal City: Governance, Ideology, and Development in American Urbanism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007), many American cities also became dependent on bond markets to generate revenue, which have imposed their own unique set of constraints on municipal governance.

⁷⁹ Peck and Tickell, “Neoliberalizing Space,” 394.

⁸⁰ Harvey, “Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism,” 12. See also Helga Leitner, “Cities in Pursuit of Economic Growth: The Local State as Entrepreneur,” *Political Geography Quarterly* 9, no. 2 (1990): 146-170.

⁸¹ Harvey Molotch, “The City as a Growth Machine: Toward a Political Economy of Place,” *The American Journal of Sociology* 82, no. 2 (1976): 309-332. For a later elaboration, see John Logan and Harvey Molotch, *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

Through both highly public threats of capital flight and triumphalist, 'rising tide lifts all boats'-style advocacy, these coalitions can translate their structural privilege into a powerful political script which not only casts economic growth as the primary object of local government, but also "present[s] the pro-growth interests of business as being coterminous with the interests of a locality."⁸²

Although multiple commentators have focused on the erosion of social welfare commitments within these conjunctural circumstances, While et al. evaluate their effect on local policy processes in light of growing popular environmental consciousness and mounting demands for ecologically sensitive governance. In order to "capture some of the governance dilemmas, compromises, and opportunities created by the current era of state restructuring and ecological modernization," they sketch a matrix of pressures impinging upon urban environmental policymaking (Figure 2.1).⁸³ Among three acute sources of pressure militating *for* local sustainability policies, they first note their purported *economic incentives*, insofar as the dense, mixed-use, transit-supportive land-use landscape envisioned by many green development policies not only create much-needed infrastructure efficiencies for cash-strapped city managers, but can also lower costs for local firms.⁸⁴ On this front, environmental clean-up programs which revalorize disused or polluted urban spaces provide another such incentive, while the apparent competitive edge that green credentials lend to boosterist city-branding and place-marketing strategies provide yet another.⁸⁵ *Regulatory drivers* form another pressure for local environmental policy, as green development programs funded by upper state bodies may be irresistible for financially starved cities, while changing regulatory standards at both national and international scales may push local governments to adopt stronger environmental controls. The rise of popular environmentalism also portends intensifying dilemmas surrounding *legitimation and public pressure*, as both critiques of past development models and demands for ecologically-sensitive alternatives have grown incessantly louder in recent decades.⁸⁶

⁸² Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell, "Business Goes Local: Dissecting the Business Agenda' in Manchester," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 19, no. 1 (1995): 59.

⁸³ This section is largely drawn from While et al., "Environment and Entrepreneurial City," 559-564.

⁸⁴ These are central claims to the ecological modernization school of sustainable urban development. See Newman and Kenworthy, *Sustainability and Cities*.

⁸⁵ For examples, see Eugene McCann, "Policy Boosterism, Policy Mobilities, and the Extrospective City," *Urban Geography* 34, no. 1 (2013): 5-29 and Tretter, "Sustainability and Neoliberal Development."

⁸⁶ For a critical view of these popular politics see Roger Keil, "Sustaining Modernity, Modernizing Nature: The Environmental Crisis and the Survival of Capitalism," in *Sustainable Development Paradox*, 41-65.

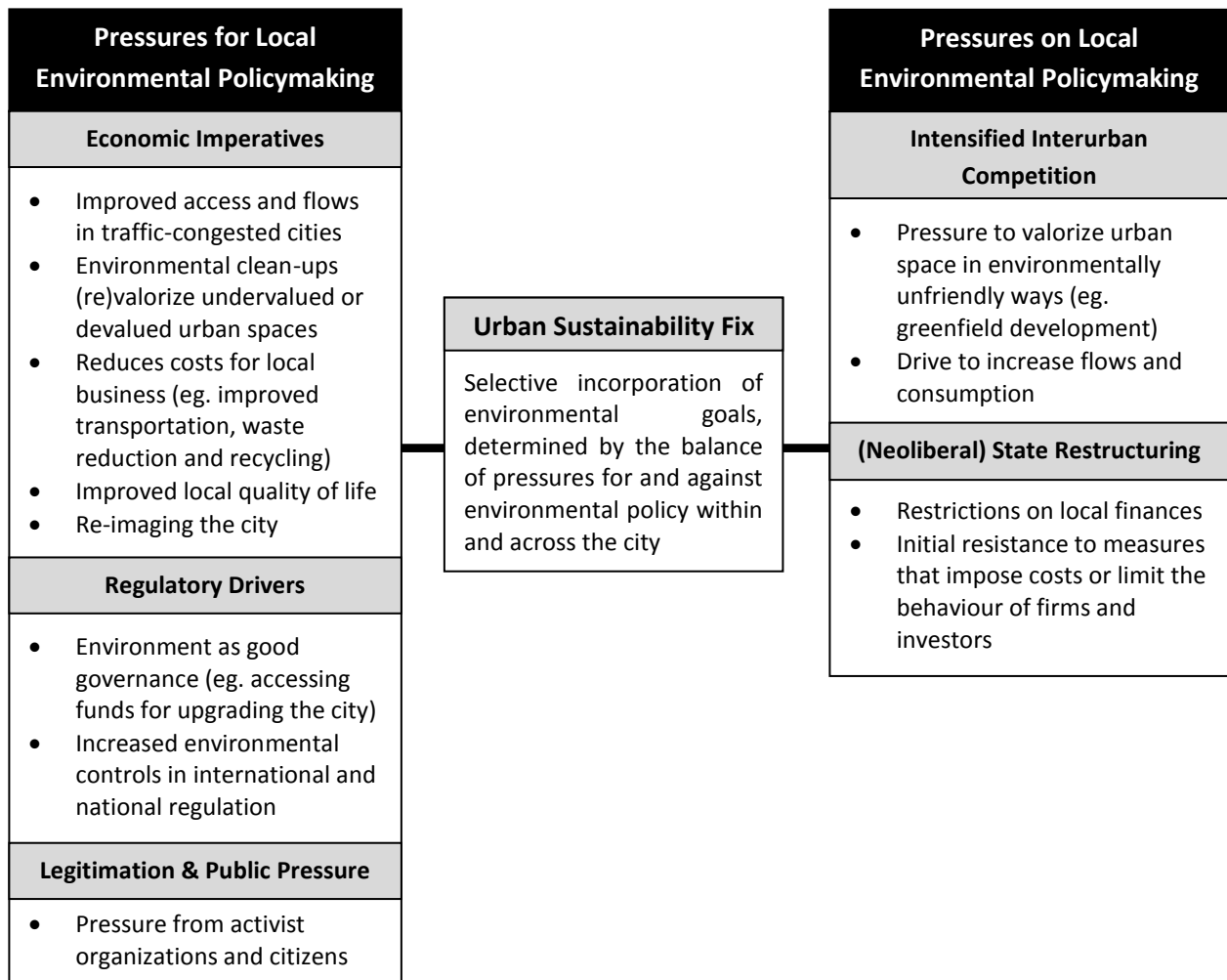


Figure 2.1 Political-economic pressures and the urban sustainability fix

Source: Adapted from While et al., "Environment and Entrepreneurial City," 552

Working against these forces, While et al. observe that processes of *intensified interurban competition* and *(neoliberal) state restructuring* also pose substantial constraints on local policymaking capacities. With regard to the former, zero-sum scrambles for investment not only encourage policymakers to instrumentalize place-based social and environmental characteristics as marketable 'assets' in local governance, but also demand (and reward) permissive regulatory regimes which court environmentally ruinous forms of development.⁸⁷ Related to this first hurdle, the capacities of local

⁸⁷ For examples, see Margit Mayer, "Contesting the Neoliberalization of Urban Governance," in *Contesting Neoliberalism*, 90-115 and Tretter, "Neoliberal Urban Development."

policymakers are likewise delimited by retrenched funding from upper tiers of the state, which ensures the subordination of sustainability to growth-supportive governance objectives by eliminating the countercyclical lifelines which might be used to not only weather storms of capital flight, but also finance alternative developmental trajectories.⁸⁸

To account for the role and status of sustainable development strategies forged in this crucible of contradictory tensions and oppositional countercurrents, While et al. suggest that local sustainability policies can be best understood as a *urban sustainability fix*. Drawing from David Harvey's conception of a *spatial fix* for the internal contradictions of capitalist development, this concept suggests that

the geographical reproduction of the capitalist mode of production depends on uniting territorially-based class interests and factions behind a coherent line of action (or state strategy) [...] This fix acts to hold, for a time (though not necessarily resolving) tensions between capital and labour, and economic development and collective consumption.⁸⁹

In this view, the selective incorporation of sustainability precepts into local policy does not reflect the short-sightedness, indifference, or incompetence of local administrators. Instead, their notion of the sustainability fix suggests that the construction of urban sustainability policies are profoundly shaped by the need to strike a provisional balance between a maelstrom of social, political, and economic forces pulling policymakers in opposite directions. Certain forms of environmental policy may, for instance, simultaneously boost a locality's competitive standing and enable developments offering windfall rewards to local elites, while projecting a vaguely pacific and progressive aura that disarms critics and assuages popular anxieties over environmental decline.⁹⁰ Elsewhere, city-sponsored green development may provide opportunities to satisfy downloaded responsibilities for environmental governance, capture funds from senior state bodies, and establish city leaders as ecologically credible figures within one fell swoop.⁹¹ The definitional plasticity of 'sustainability' makes the concept a valuable asset for local policymakers in this respect, as it permits the integration of environmental rhetoric into a wide

⁸⁸ The view that all local policy priorities should be made subsidiary to the facilitation of economic growth is most infamously advanced (and advocated) in Paul Peterson, *City Limits* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

⁸⁹ While et al., "Environment and Entrepreneurial City," 551. Cf. David Harvey, *The Limits to Capital* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982); on the application of similar ideas to governance institutions within a broadly regulationist framework, see Peck and Tickell, "New Institutional Fix."

⁹⁰ For an example of this flexibility at work, see McCann, "Policy Boosterism."

⁹¹ See Cristina Temenos and Eugene McCann, "The Local Politics of Policy Mobility: Learning, Persuasion, and the Production of a Municipal Sustainability Fix," *Environment and Planning A* 44, no. 6 (2012): 1389-1406 and Tretter, "Contesting Sustainability."

spectrum of policy forms which clear the ground for new rounds of accumulation while diffusing (if not dismantling) disruptive sources of political opposition.⁹²

This view specifies the relation between localized political pressures and the panoply of broad, macrostructural forces that form the “context of context” for local policymaking.⁹³ Insofar as this model sees sustainability policies as strategic compromises between a series of mutually opposed antagonisms and demands, the sustainability fix is in one sense a theory of *why* municipalities adopt sustainability reforms. But insofar as contextual pressures influence the *content* of local sustainability policies, it also theorizes *how* sustainability policies take on the form that they do. Here, While et al. are decidedly more cautious than their formalistic model might suggest: although they claim that policies are responsive to macrostructural political-economic conditions, they insist that policies are not wholly predetermined by these pressures *a priori*. Even though the propulsive forces of interurban competition and market-oriented state restructuring compel cities to adopt entrepreneurially-oriented sustainability policies, While et al. suggest that territorial struggles between locally-embedded actors – state bureaucrats, politicians, citizens coalitions, locally-dependent firms, and the like – ultimately shape the substantive content of policies in a manner which prevents total functional convergence.⁹⁴ In other words, while broad contextual forces may set the agenda of these struggles, they do not have the final say, leaving “the meanings and implications of sustainability [...] determined by conflicts rooted in particular geographies of revalorization and devaluation in the contemporary city.”⁹⁵

Though based on observations on sustainability policies formed at a specific time (the mid-1990s to the early 2000s) and place (Northern England), the generative political-economic rhythms that this conceptual framework seeks to explain are not unfamiliar to Calgary. Wrenching bouts of state restructuring enacted during the 1990s have decisively altered Calgary’s governance context (alongside other municipalities across Alberta) by diminishing local fiscal capacities while simultaneously downloading multiple governing responsibilities into the purview of municipal administrators.⁹⁶ In addition, the provincial government’s 1995 decision to dissolve Alberta’s regional planning commissions

⁹² While et al., “Environment and Entrepreneurial City,” 554.

⁹³ This *bon mot* belongs to Neil Brenner, Jamie Peck, and Nik Theodore, “Variegated Neoliberalization: Geographies, Modalities, Pathways,” *Global Networks* 10, no. 2 (2010): 182-222.

⁹⁴ While et al., “Environment and Entrepreneurial City,” 565. While et al.’s emphasis on the salience of territorial struggles makes apparent their debt to Kevin Cox’s conception of the ‘new urban politics’. Cf. Kevin Cox, “The Local and the Global in the New Urban Politics: A Critical View,” *Environment and Planning D* 11, no. 4 (1993): 433-448.

⁹⁵ While et al., “Environment and Entrepreneurial City,” 565.

⁹⁶ See Miller, “Modes of Governance,” 238-240, and Miller and Smart, “Ascending the Main Stage,” 50-53.

(the oldest in the country) under the pretense of improving government efficiency has effectively ratcheted up competitive pressures between municipalities across the province, including Calgary.⁹⁷ If the coercive threat of capital flight compels cities to make concessionary approvals for environmentally destructive developments – such as Calgary’s ubiquitous low-density suburbs – then While et al.’s formulation provides a method for conceptualizing how the terrain of local policymaking is structured by a broad structural forces.

But although the notion of an urban sustainability fix helpfully indicates how policy ‘innovations’ respond to both systemic political-economic pressures, its central explanatory proposition – that cities adopt sustainability policies to temporarily reconcile capitalist growth pressures with political demands for environmental reform – is incongruous with the political realities surrounding imagineCALGARY and Plan-It. While the former project ostensibly registered popular support for stronger sustainability measures in local policy, public demands for environmental governance were largely muted in the years leading up to imagineCALGARY and both provincial and federal funds for sustainability-related projects were relatively minor.⁹⁸ Moreover, while CivicCamp provided a wellspring of popular support for Plan-It, neither it nor imagineCALGARY were drafted as responses to citizen pressure: if anything, the opposite was true, as CivicCamp’s organized and conspicuously vocal support for urban sustainability was only formed in the *aftermath* of imagineCALGARY.

These are not, however, reasons for dismissing the notion of the sustainability fix altogether. In contrast to the sometimes myopic localism of ‘regime theory’ approaches to urban governance, this formulation draws together a wide range of multi-scalar processes into an integrated and robust framework.⁹⁹ As a heuristic, their schema of pressures *for* and *on* local environmental policy (Figure 2.1) usefully charts the contextual dilemmas facing local policy actors, and their conception of policy as a strategic compromise is helpful for understanding how environmental policies can proceed when in Mike Raco’s terms, “many of the premises and underlying rationalities [...] seem diametrically opposed

⁹⁷ Geoff Ghitler and Alan Smart, “Mad Cows, Regional Governance, and Urban Sprawl: Path Dependence and Unintended Consequences in the Calgary Region,” *Urban Affairs Review* 44, no. 5 (2009): 617-644. On the historical origins of Alberta’s regional planning and the tensions they were designed to salve, see Michael Gordon and David Hulchanski, “The Evolution of the Land Use Planning Process in Alberta, 1945-1984” (Research Paper No. 156, School of Community and Regional Planning, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, 1985).

⁹⁸ The lack of popular support for environmental issues is registered in Miller and Smart’s “Ascending the Main Stage,” 54, wherein local activists claimed that they needed to make a business case for social and environmental concerns in order to make them legible in local political arenas.

⁹⁹ For an overview, critique, and (partial) reconstruction of regime theory, see Hackworth, *Neoliberal City*, 62-67.

in both conceptual and empirical terms.¹⁰⁰ Although perhaps inadequate for explaining imagineCALGARY, there is substantial analytic potential for applying the sustainability fix to earlier rounds of sustainability-oriented policymaking, particular those that accompanied the shift towards market-based governance in Calgary (and Alberta more broadly) during the 1990s. But before taking up this task, I first consider an alternative approach to understanding contemporary policy formation.

2.3 POLICY ON THE FLY: MOBILE CONSTRUCTIONS OF SUSTAINABILITY

[...] there is never a 'clean slate' position and, with respect to policy ideas, few concepts which get leverage spend much time in isolation [...] Instead, they circulate around the messy worlds of political life, each with its complex intellectual culture and history, and its struggles between agencies and institutions.

PATSY HEALEY¹⁰¹

[...] what is commonly defined as 'urban politics' is typically quite heterogeneous and by no means referable to struggles within, or among, the agents structured by some set of social relations corresponding unambiguously to the urban.

KEVIN COX¹⁰²

Well, policies do not suddenly appear in a particular location. Rather, there is labour involved in creating the conditions under which a policy is more likely to be introduced.

IAN R. COOK AND KEVIN WARD¹⁰³

While imagineCALGARY may not have been devised in response to mounting public pressure, it nevertheless *was* formed at a time when sustainability planning had emerged as a global norm for urban policymakers. After over a decade of policy experimentation by eco-conscious innovators and high-level deliberations among transnational development authorities, a jumbled ensemble of 'best practices' for sustainable development were fast becoming stock-in-trade urban policy resources, facilitated by the growth of globe-spanning green alliances and planning networks as vectors of transmission. Deliberative planning approaches were conspicuously present among the more widely-circulated planning ideas

¹⁰⁰ Raco, "Sustainable Development," 329.

¹⁰¹ Patsy Healey, "Circuits of Knowledge and Techniques: The Transnational Flow of Planning Ideas and Practices," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 37, no.5 (2013): 1517.

¹⁰² Kevin Cox, "Territoriality, Politics, and 'The Urban'," *Political Geography* 20, no. 6 (2001): 756.

¹⁰³ Ian R. Cook and Kevin Ward, "Conferences, Informational Infrastructures and Mobile Policies: The Process of Getting Sweden 'BID ready'," *European Urban and Regional Studies* 19, no.1 (2012): 143.

traversing these circuits during this period, appearing ubiquitously within green governance approaches ranging from symbolic sustainability charters to programmatic policy ‘models’.¹⁰⁴ Evidently, the City of Calgary was not immune to these influences, as the City joined a transnational green-city alliance one year before launching imagineCALGARY. In addition, the final imagineCALGARY report disclosed the City had utilized a number of consultants on the project, one of whom had supplied an approach to public consultation and ‘systems thinking’ which became cornerstones of the project’s methodology.¹⁰⁵ But while both global city anxieties and “market-based models of social action coordination” were vital principles for local governance at the time, the entrepreneurial value of these strategies is not readily apparent.¹⁰⁶ Alongside the question of *why* the City adopted these policy ideas, another set of questions arises here: *how* and with *what consequences* could seemingly democratic, non-instrumental policy strategies have taken hold within an institutional landscape which ostensibly privileges market interests in its policymaking processes?¹⁰⁷

Auspiciously, this ‘import’ of nonlocal planning expertise for imagineCALGARY occurred during a period when the normative reach of such emulative, expert-sanctioned policy ‘models’ was on the rise globally. Through the viral diffusion of several ‘global policy models’ across disparate policy contexts in recent decades, a number of practices and procedures have been cemented as standard(ized) policy conventions across a wide breadth of topical fields stretching from welfare reform and public health to cultural programming and the regulation of inner-city commercial spaces.¹⁰⁸ Where the spread of these models has been facilitated by an emergent constellation of globetrotting policy wonks, coffee-table intellectuals, consultancy bureaus, think-tanks, and other self-styled policy gurus, relational ties between seemingly ‘local’ policy processes have become increasingly more evident, while technocratic,

¹⁰⁴ See Gordon MacLeod, “New Urbanism/Smart Growth in the Scottish Highlands: Mobile Policies and Post-politics in Local Development Planning,” *Urban Studies* 50, no. 11 (2013): 2196-2221; McCann and Ward, “Territoriality/Relationality”; Susan Moore, “What’s Wrong with Best Practice? Questioning the Typification of New Urbanism,” *Urban Studies* 50, no. 11 (2013): 2371-2387; and Temenos and McCann, “Local Politics.”

¹⁰⁵ City of Calgary, *imagineCALGARY*, 185-188.

¹⁰⁶ Miller, “Modes of Governance,” 225. See also Miller and Smart, “Ascending the Main Stage” and Smart and Tanasescu, “On Wanting.”

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Brunet-Jailly, “Civic Culture.”

¹⁰⁸ See respectively, Jamie Peck and Nik Theodore, “Recombinant Workfare, Across the Americas: Transnationalizing Fast Welfare Policy,” *Geoforum* 41, no. 2 (2010): 195-208; Eugene McCann, “Points of Reference: Knowledge of Elsewhere in the Politics of Drug Policy,” in *Mobile Urbanism*, ed. McCann and Ward, 97-121; Jamie Peck, “Struggling with the Creative Class,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 29, no. 4 (2005): 740-770; and Kevin Ward, “Business Improvement Districts: Policy Origins, Mobile Policies and Urban Liveability,” *Geography Compass* 2, no. 3 (2007): 657-672.

nonlocal policy expertise has assumed rising providence over urban policy agendas.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, insofar as the policy frameworks and programming strategies peddled by this disparate ‘consultocracy’ have often overridden “traditional and more circumspect policy processes,” critical urban scholars have speculated that the rising influence of these ‘mobile’ policy solutions portends a “new spatial organization of power affecting how populations are governed, economies are managed, and policies are produced.”¹¹⁰

In response to these developments, a fledgling, multi-disciplinary inquiry into ‘policy mobilities’ has attempted to situate the accelerated circulation and rising influence of certain policy approaches within broader dynamics of urban transformation.¹¹¹ While an established political science literature on ‘policy transfer’ explains the diffusion of policy models across jurisdictional bounds through meritocratic rational-choice frameworks, policy mobilities scholars have foregrounded how institutional rationalities are shaped by the “*constitutive* sociospatial context of policymaking activities” themselves.¹¹² In this respect, much policy mobilities scholarship shares While et al.’s view that local policymaking activities are shaped by a series contextual pressures which make some approaches more ‘available’ than others. But rather than seeing localities as passive zones of reception for mobile policy expertise, this approach emphasizes how travelling policy ideas are subject to continual (and contested) processes of translation and adaptive recalibration in their travels across “dynamized institutional landscapes,” wherein the “form and effects of policies vary with context and shift while in transit.”¹¹³ In this view, the socially constructed *mobility* (rather than a-to-b *movement*) of policy paradigms is taken as a “complex, power-laden process” which operates according to no pre-given, universal playbook, and produces a divergent spectrum of local effects.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹ See Peck and Theodore, “Mobilizing Policy” and Russell Prince, “Policy Transfer, Consultants and the Geographies of Governance,” *Progress in Human Geography* 36, no.2 (2012): 188-203.

¹¹⁰ Prince, “Policy Transfer,” 188-192. Cf. Nick Clarke, “Urban Policy Mobility, Anti-Politics, and Histories of the Transnational Municipal Movement,” *Progress in Human Geography* 36, no. 1 (2012): 25-43.

¹¹¹ For examples of this emergent field at work, see Eugene McCann and Kevin Ward, eds., *Mobile Urbanism: Cities and Policymaking in a Global Age* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

¹¹² Jamie Peck, “Geographies of Policy: From Transfer-Diffusion to Mobility-Mutation,” *Progress in Human Geography* 35, no. 6 (2011): 774, emphasis in original. Alongside this analytical dependence upon spatially-abstracted notions of rational-choice, this literature has also been critiqued for its reliance on the nation-state as a standardized (and static) unit of analysis; its positivist emphasis on ‘successful’ policy exchanges; its tendency to reify the essential design features of subject policies; and its propensity for methodological literalism, where policy models are assumed to remain unchanged by their travels. Comparative overviews can be found in Eugene McCann and Kevin Ward, “A Multi-Disciplinary Approach to Policy Transfer Research: Geographies, Assemblages, Mobilities and Mutations,” *Policy Studies* 34, no. 1 (2013): 2-18; Peck, “Geographies of Policy”; and Cristina Temenos and Eugene McCann, “Geographies of Policy Mobilities,” *Geography Compass* 7, no. 5 (2013): 344-357.

¹¹³ Peck and Theodore, “Follow the Policy,” 24.

¹¹⁴ McCann and Ward, “Policy Transfer Research,” 9.

Though admittedly more a “rolling conversation than a coherent paradigm,” recent scholarship in this field nevertheless suggests some common tendencies within policy processes driven by ‘vehicular ideas’ and mobile forms of policy expertise.¹¹⁵ In particular, I focus on six aspects of policymaking as they are represented in this literature: the *political-economic conditions* which establish the ‘mobility’ of certain policy strategies; the *sources of political agency* and *forms of representational practice* which respond to these conditions and mobilize policies across space; how such mobilizations (re)shape both the *content of travelling policy ideas* and the *configurations of institutional authority* relevant to certain policy issues; and the possible *political implications* stemming from these processes.

The contradictory *political-economic conditions* charted by While et al. influence the differential mobility of given policy models in several respects. On the one hand, the chronic instability of municipal budgets wrought by rampant state downsizing, regulatory undercutting, and concessionary bargaining compels a search for low-risk policy ‘investments’ with reliable rates of return, quantifiable financial benefits, and immediate, empirically verifiable effects on the competitive profile of host cities.¹¹⁶ Here, reduced fiscal capacities at the municipal scale privilege the status of technocratic policies which emulate developmental ‘successes’ elsewhere while simultaneously offering calculative resources for diagnosing problems, forming solutions, and measuring success.¹¹⁷ To secure ‘fast’ integration in local political cultures where entrepreneurial governance has become the norm, mobile policy approaches also typically integrate conceptual premises and lexical tropes which seem to resonate with market logics.¹¹⁸ From conditional cash-transfer welfare reforms to ‘creative’ urban regeneration schemes, several viral policies are therefore packaged as tools for *inter alia* strengthening market incentives, curbing sources of institutional ‘dependency’ or entitlement, maximizing personal liberties, and devolving social welfare responsibilities away from state bodies and towards client subsidiaries or

¹¹⁵ Peck, “Geographies of Policy,” 774. On ‘vehicular ideas’, see Jamie Peck, “Recreative City: Amsterdam, Vehicular Ideas and the Adaptive Spaces of Creativity Policy,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 26, no. 3 (2012): 462-485.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*; Temenos and McCann, “Local Politics.”

¹¹⁷ Mike Raco and Wen-I Lin, “Urban Sustainability, Conflict Management, and the Geographies of Postpoliticism: A Case Study of Taipei,” *Environment and Planning C* 30, no. 2 (2012): 191-208; MacLeod, “New Urbanism.”

¹¹⁸ Riffing on Peck and Tickell’s notion of ‘roll-back’ and ‘roll-out’ neoliberalism, Roger Keil has termed this phenomenon the “politics of roll-with-it neoliberalization.” Roger Keil, “The Urban Politics of Roll-With-It” Neoliberalization,” *City* 13, n. 2-3 (2009): 230-245. On ‘fast policy’, see Jamie Peck, “Global Policy Models, Globalizing Poverty Management: International Convergence or Fast-Policy Integration?” *Geography Compass* 5, no. 4 (2011): 165-181.

‘responsibilized’ citizen-subjects.¹¹⁹ That these themes echo the neoliberal discourses dominant in many urban polities is self-evident. But because interurban struggles for scarce nonlocal state funds and footloose sources of private investment compel cities to develop marks of competitive distinction from their ‘rivals’, municipalities demand policies that not only align with entrepreneurial governance scripts, but also retain the capacity to be modified and adapted to respond to the particularities of local political dilemmas. In this respect, policy designs aspiring to widespread popularity must retain a pragmatic degree of formal plasticity (if not conceptual flexibility), while still maintaining sufficient coherence to dominant (market-oriented) political grammars across sites.¹²⁰

In practical terms, these ambivalences mean that the reasons for a particular policy’s ‘import’ to a locality cannot be ‘read off’ from conditions of structural necessity. While the mobility of a certain policy may be facilitated by specific political-economic conditions, the actual mobilization of policy ideas across different institutional contexts is itself realized only through active *sources of political agency* and *forms of representational practice* which disclose the apparent utility of travelling policy ideas to local governments in highly particular ways. As Jamie Peck and Nik Theodore have observed, a given policy framework “can only exist as a model once it has enrolled an audience of interlocutors and would-be emulators,” and subsequent research has revealed how networked forms of communication between disparate policymaking worlds – such as workshops, site visits, conferences, seminars, guest lectures, and other sites of comparative learning that policymakers are often compelled to attend – play a critical role in this process.¹²¹ By providing venues for policy actors to “compare, evaluate, judge, learn, and situate their city in relation to others,” charismatic ‘transfer agents’ operating at these sites can appeal to reflexive anxieties among target audiences while showcasing a moveable feast of policy strategies that participants are encouraged to see as “applicable and transferable to their [own] socio-spatial contexts.”¹²² Case studies on judiciously framed policy ‘success stories’ typically form the basis for evaluative ‘benchmarking’ exercises at these sites, through which certain procedures are performed as meritocratic ‘best practices’ or matter-of-fact, globally applicable principles of ‘good governance’.¹²³

¹¹⁹ Peck, “Creative Class”; Peck and Theodore, “Recombinant Workfare”; Raco and Lin, “Sustainability.” The *function* of policies branded with these terms, however, cannot be adduced by their narrative tropes alone: see, for instance, James Ferguson, “The Uses of Neoliberalism,” *Antipode* 41, no. 1 (2009): 166-184.

¹²⁰ Cf. Temenos and McCann, “Local Politics,” 1392-1393.

¹²¹ Peck and Theodore, “Follow the Policy,” 23. For examples, see Cook and Ward, “Conferences”; MacLeod, “New Urbanism”; McCann, “Urban Policy Mobilities”; McCann, “Points of Reference”; McCann, “Policy Boosterism”; Peck, “Recreative City”; and Prince, “Policy Transfer.”

¹²² Cook and Ward, “Conferences,” 141.

¹²³ Moore, “Best Practice.”

Appearing unmoored from their local conditions of possibility, showcase policies are not only rendered wholly replicable, but also conferred with a sense of universalizing, expert-affirmed authority that carries a high utility for target audiences struggling to maintain public trust amidst the zero-sum jungle-law of interurban competition.¹²⁴ But aside from their stated pragmatic value *vis-à-vis* the usual slate of public policy issues, these framings also “comprise their own social ontologies [and] their own hierarchies of goals and preferred instruments, constituting a kind of ‘prism’ through which policymakers read, interpret, and act on the world.”¹²⁵ In other words, policy ideas encountered at these sites do more than provide practical advice for managing issues *already* recognized as ‘problems’: they provide epistemologies for both (re)interpreting the causal bases behind existing governance dilemmas and identifying new types of ‘problems’ altogether.¹²⁶

That such framings may be persuasive implies neither passivity nor helplessness on the part of target audiences. Nor does it mean learned approaches are received ‘intact’ and integrated wholesale into existing institutional architectures. While policy strategies may be technocratically essentialized as a precondition for travel, the substantive *content of travelling policy ideas* often mutates and metastasizes as policies are ‘translated’ across sites of institutional learning into the often balkanized and antagonistic corridors of local government.¹²⁷ In response to local political demands, inbound policy ideas are often stretched and stress-tested, while various programmatic imperatives and structural designs may be truncated, extended, repurposed, or fused with existing approaches. But while often on-the-fly and *ad hoc*, these mutations are far from arbitrary. Certain elements of incipient policy approaches deemed strategically valuable may be retained at the expense of aspects considered superfluous. Likewise, other components of incoming policy practices may need to be recalibrated, reframed, or otherwise adapted to fit with pre-existing policy conventions, political commitments, or governing arrangements.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ Peck, “Recreative City,” 479; Moore, “Best Practice.” Cf. Mark Purcell, “Resisting Neoliberalization: Communicative Planning or Counter-Hegemonic Movements?” *Planning Theory* 8, no. 2 (2009): 140-165.

¹²⁵ Peck, “Geographies of Policy,” 784.

¹²⁶ An example here is Richard Florida’s ‘creative cities’ hypothesis, which posits that the fortunes of cities hinge on their ability to attract and retain a footloose and economically generative ‘creative class’. Not only does this narrative establish a new causal mechanism for urban decline (viz. the ‘flight’ of the creative class for more favourable environments), but it also privileges instrumentalized cultural programming and strategic investments in social entrepreneurship as favoured governing strategies. See Peck, “Creative Class,” 761-766.

¹²⁷ Salient examples can be found in the mutating arc of conditional cash-transfer programs from Mexico to New York City traced in Peck and Theodore, “Recombinant Workfare,” or the shifting field of Vancouver’s relational harm reduction drug policies studied in McCann, “Points of Reference.”

¹²⁸ McCann and Ward, “Policy Transfer Research,” 10; McCann, “Urban Policy Mobilities,” 112-113; Peck and Theodore, “Mobilizing Policy,” 170.

In this sense, circulations of mobile policy knowledge reflect processes of selective adaptation, partial emulation, and iterative hybridization more than simplistic cycles of mechanical replication. The institutional structures through which contemporary policy knowledge is transmitted and implemented, however, are not themselves exempt from change. In some cases, imported policy strategies (such as ‘creative’ growth scripts *à la* Richard Florida, or Giuliani-style ‘zero tolerance’ policing tactics) may call for existing institutional bodies to be reorganized or repurposed.¹²⁹ In other cases, implementing new policy directions may necessitate the founding of new institutional authorities relevant to the issue at hand, such as private associations to regulate ‘business improvement districts’, care networks to support ‘harm reduction’ drug management schemes, or quasi-autonomous development authorities to oversee Bilbao-style urban renewal projects.¹³⁰ Beyond the jurisdictional boundaries of individual cities, local adaptations of faraway policy may also build new relational connections between distant localities. Formal alliances and networked partnerships forged through policy exchanges may enable new forms of access for mobile policy gurus, enforce the adoption of new governing priorities, or even obligate future exchanges of policy resources.¹³¹ With respect to these contortions, long-distance mobilizations of policy knowledge imply changing *configurations of institutional authority* on ‘local’ policy matters: indeed, in some cases, such changes may constitute the *de facto* purpose underlying policy transfer itself.¹³²

Together, these observations suggest that the *how* and *why* of policy mobility cannot be found through comparisons between the essential qualities of a given policy model and their strategic value within certain conditions of structural necessity. Through a preferred methodology of ‘following’ the mutations of mobile policy ideas across multiple ports-of-call, policy mobilities scholars have inferred the utility of travelling policy ideas by examining the concrete ways they are communicated, interpreted, and remade in real-world policy contexts.¹³³ Without denying that sustainability policies may indeed serve as a ‘fix’ for the contradictions of urban development, this approach nevertheless points to a number of processes lying outside the spatial and temporal frame of While et al.’s model. Spatially, the

¹²⁹ Peck, “Creative Class”; Loïc Wacquant, *Prisons of Poverty* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 19-26.

¹³⁰ Respectively, see Ward, “Business Improvement Districts”; McCann, “Points of Reference”; and Sara González, “Bilbao and Barcelona ‘in Motion’: How Urban Regeneration ‘Models’ Travel and Mutate in the Global Flows of Policy Tourism,” *Urban Studies* 48, no. 7 (2011): 1397-1418.

¹³¹ See, for instance, Clarke, “Urban Policy Mobility,” 33, and Doreen Massey, “A Counterhegemonic Sense of Place,” in *Mobile Urbanism*, 1-14.

¹³² A prime example here can be found in how mobile ‘creativity’ policies were used by different factions within Amsterdam’s local state to jockey for departmental entitlements or authoritative capacities. See Peck, “Recreative City,” 466-470.

¹³³ Peck and Theodore, “Follow the Policy,” 22-24; Temenos and McCann, “Policy Mobilities,” 351-352.

policy mobilities approach looks to the networked, relational connections between cities which escape While et al.'s focus on regional affairs; temporally, the concept of following ideas has (for some) meant tracking policy ideas beyond points of incorporation and deployment (as a potential 'fix', for instance) to speculate on their downstream *political implications*. While this is admittedly the least developed strand of policy mobilities theorizing, some general trends are evident.

Where technocratic, expert-approved framings confer a high degree of political authority (and thus, *mobility*) to certain policy models, the status of 'expert' knowledge in local policy processes has been called into question by numerous policy mobilities scholars. In the main, this critique takes two forms. Following long-standing concerns about elite control in urban studies, several interlocutors have pointed to the growing authority of public-private partnerships (such as business improvement districts) and other non- or quasi-state institutions (such as homeowner associations or private security forces) effected by recent policy shifts. Where such groups are typically sequestered from public scrutiny and placed beyond democratic forms of control, policies which confer authority to them are taken as 'post-democratic'.¹³⁴ Without rejecting this first line of argument, others have claimed that the technocratic structure of many policy approaches narrows (if not negates) possibilities for meaningful discussion or dissent surrounding the objectives and imperatives of local government.¹³⁵ By affording specialized technologies such as impact models, performance standards, and other forms of evaluation science a central position within local policy debates, policy elites are seen to preemptively subsume questions regarding the normative aims of local government or the validity of status quo power arrangements. Crucially, participatory planning exercises (such as imagineCALGARY) have not been immune from these criticisms. On the contrary, such procedures are taken by many as a "perfect example" and "prime expression" of 'post-political' governance, insofar as the practices of 'indicator-led governance' channel public debates over political matters into banal discussions of technical administration surrounding a set of objectives (such as 'growth', 'security', or 'sustainability') that are entrenched as non-conflictual,

¹³⁴ For an overview, see Gordon MacLeod, "Urban Politics Reconsidered: Growth Machine to Post-Democratic City?" *Urban Studies* 48, no. 12 (2011): 2629-2660. Though these critiques are indeed trenchant, their novelty is often oversold by their tendency to avoid engagement with existing theories of elite control in urban studies. Cf. Alan Harding, "Elite Theory and Growth Machines," in *Theories of Urban Politics*, ed. David Judge, Gerry Stoker, and Harold Wolman (London and Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1995), 35-53.

¹³⁵ Much of this theorizing draws upon Erik Swyngedouw's idiosyncratic readings of 'post-politics' in contemporary continental philosophy and critical theory. See, for instance, his "The Antinomies of the Postpolitical City: In Search of a Democratic Politics of Environmental Production," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 33, no. 3 (2009): 610-611. For studies of sustainability policies using this conception as a central point of reference, see MacLeod, "New Urbanism"; Moore, "Best Practice"; and Raco and Lin, "Urban Sustainability."

taken-for-granted premises.¹³⁶ Moreover, where these exercises interpellate participants as mutually accountable ‘stakeholders’ in a common project, critics have charged that they paper over the structural bases of material inequalities and sociopolitical divisions, thereby allowing members of a locality to disavow the disparities serially reproduced by status quo power arrangements, while simultaneously placing alternative visions of the future outside the bounds of ‘legitimate’ debate.

Many aspects of this literature are compelling, and useful for interpreting imagineCALGARY’s consultative project framework. Examining how inspirational project designs were encountered, framed, and (re)deployed in particular ways can doubtlessly do much to reveal how and why these models were integrated into a seemingly incongruous institutional climate. Moreover, the methodological imperative to ‘follow’ various translations and transmutations helps orient analysis towards both the strategic goals sought by relevant policy actors, and the political implications of project’s reliance on expert knowledge. At the outset, however, it must be stated that while expert knowledge and technocratic framings were doubtlessly central to imagineCALGARY, the suggestion that these qualities make the project ‘post-political’ is, on its face, unconvincing. Far from removing issues of structural power and uneven urban fortunes from the local political scene, imagineCALGARY inaugurated a veritable firestorm of political debate about Calgary’s future and who holds the power to shape it. While the structural limitations of these debates indeed warrant closer scrutiny, normative inducements for policy mobilities scholarship to be framed within a supposed “post-political turn in urban geography” seem premature in this light.¹³⁷ To clarify an alternative vision of politics adequate for policy mobilities in Calgary, I turn here to Antonio Gramsci’s conceptualization of hegemony.

2.4 IDEOLOGY, INTELLECTUALS, AND THE VICISSITUDES OF HEGEMONY

[...] hegemony has its own ‘temporality’ distinct from the temporalities of other concepts in the *Prison Notebooks*; whereas the latter are *analyzed*, the concept of hegemony is *deployed*. It thus cannot be analyzed independently, but only after delineating the constellation of concepts to which, in its ‘integral’ meaning [...] it was designed as a response.

PETER THOMAS¹³⁸

¹³⁶ Swyngedouw, “Antinomies,” 604. See also McCann, “Urban Policy Mobilities” and Racó and Lin, “Urban Sustainability.”

¹³⁷ Temenos and McCann, “Policy Mobilities,” 353.

¹³⁸ Peter Thomas, *The Gramscian Moment: Philosophy, Hegemony and Marxism* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 134.

It is the problem of the relations between structure and superstructure which needs to be posed exactly and resolved in order to reach a correct analysis of the forces working in the history of a period and determine their relationship.

ANTONIO GRAMSCI¹³⁹

It is always the tendential balance in the relations of force which matters.

STUART HALL¹⁴⁰

The concept 'hegemony' carries several meanings within contemporary urban scholarship. In its simplest use, it implies the predominance of a particular coalition of political actors over a city or region, such as the "hegemony of the business community in Austin politics" described by Eliot Tretter, or the sclerotic confederacy of elites presiding over pre-'urban crisis' Los Angeles (a "declining hegemony," in Mike Davis' terms).¹⁴¹ While the nature of authority implied by the term is not always clear, it typically denotes some degree of control over both material development processes and the ideational currents of local politics. In a second register, hegemony is used to define the ideological dimensions of political rule at a given time and place: "hegemonic discourses" of marketization and privatization in Mike Harris' 'common sense revolution' in mid-1990s Ontario, for example, or the "vision of a free economy and minimalist state" as a "mode of political rationality" that was propelled to "global hegemony" under the watch of Thatcher and Reagan (among others).¹⁴² This use suggests that 'hegemonic' ideological currents enforce certain epistemologies and patterns of behaviour that are compatible with the interests of dominant powers. Frequently coupled with periodizing concepts for capitalism ('neoliberal hegemony'), these uses of hegemony imply that dominant ideologies not only complement the interests of particular local leaders, but the needs of capital accumulation writ large. This suggests a third meaning for the term, in which hegemony signifies the determining power of capitalist logics over social life, inasmuch as the "coercive laws of competition" mark "capital as a hegemonic force."¹⁴³

It would be admittedly tenuous to claim that any of these working definitions can adequately reflect some cohesive version of hegemony as it appears in Gramsci's oeuvre. Indeed, though Gramsci's name is so closely associated with the term hegemony that his "name is almost synonymous with it,"

¹³⁹ Antonio Gramsci, *The Modern Prince and Other Writings*, ed. and trans. Louis Marks (New York: International Publishers, 1957), 165.

¹⁴⁰ Stuart Hall, "Gramsci's Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 10, no. 5 (1986) 14.

¹⁴¹ Tretter, "Neoliberal Urban Development," 2227; Mike Davis, *City of Quartz* (New York: Verso, 1990) 106-122.

¹⁴² Roger Keil, "'Common-Sense' Neoliberalism" Progressive Conservative Urbanism in Toronto, Canada," *Antipode* 34, no. 3 (2002): 578-601; Peck and Tickell, "Neoliberalizing Space," 381.

¹⁴³ Harvey, "Mananagerialism to Entrepreneurialism," 15.

neither his celebrated prison notebooks nor his pre-carceral texts offer a singular, capsular definition of the concept.¹⁴⁴ Moreover, while Gramsci's prison writings are frequently cited by modern academics as wellsprings of conceptual innovation, the fragmented structure and use of allusive codes enforced on his writing by the squalid conditions of his imprisonment make these notes less a polished, fully-formed exegesis than sketches of an exploratory work in progress filled with provisional hypotheses and protean ideas-in-the-making.¹⁴⁵ Gramsci's *quaderni* therefore do not (and cannot) offer a prefabricated 'theory' of hegemony which can be unilaterally applied to contemporary urban processes as an explanatory device. But the absence of a fixed definition of hegemony in these texts does not mean that the concept is without analytic merit.¹⁴⁶ Likewise, saying that typical evocations of hegemony in urban studies do not represent the breadth of Gramsci's thought in all of its complex totality does not mean that these conceptions are altogether *wrong* or misleading. In fact, each of the positions outlined at the beginning of this section – hegemony as a concrete political formation, determining ideological framework, and condition adequate for the demands of capitalist accumulation – correspond to Gramsci's conceptions of politics and power in important ways that bear emphasis. By comparing these versions of hegemony to Gramsci's thought, my goal here is not to distill a conceptually 'pure' or textually 'accurate' version of hegemony to serve as a theoretical master-key for unlocking the secrets of policy mobilities or the sustainability fix. Instead, by selectively and carefully supplementing these understandings of hegemony with key insights from Gramsci's texts, I aim to elaborate the concept as an organizing *problematique* for both approaches; a general framework for asking questions and posing tentative hypotheses.

In the first place, Gramsci clearly saw hegemony as an historically and geographically specific political formation. From its first mention (in a note tellingly titled *Political class leadership before and after assuming power*), he depicts hegemony as an arrangement which involves state power, but is nonetheless irreducible to the particular identities and goals of the figures occupying key positions in the

¹⁴⁴ Thomas, *Gramscian Moment*, 160

¹⁴⁵ Joseph Buttigieg, "The Prison Notebooks: Antonio Gramsci's Work in Progress," *Rethinking Marxism* 18, no. 1 (2006): 37-42. This indeterminacy is indeed part of Gramsci's allure, as a veritable cottage industry of academics have attempted to divine the 'true' meaning of his texts. For critical commentaries on this trend, see Joseph Buttigieg, "Gramsci's Method," *boundary 2* 17, no. 2 (1990): 60-81; Kate Crehan, *Gramsci, Culture and Anthropology* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 29-35; Marcus Green, "Rethinking the Subaltern and the Question of Censorship in Gramsci's Prison Notebook," *Postcolonial Studies* 14, no. 4 (2011): 387-404; and Thomas, *Gramscian Moment*, 86-131.

¹⁴⁶ For examples of the merit of Gramsci's thought within geography, see Michael Ekers, Gillian Hart, Stefan Kipfer, and Alex Loftus, eds., *Gramsci: Space, Nature, Politics* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013).

state.¹⁴⁷ As Gramsci later elaborated, although the “historical unity of the ruling classes is realized in the State,” the unity of *class* leadership at this level “results from the organic relations between State or political society and ‘civil society’.”¹⁴⁸ Here, Gramsci suggests that non-authoritarian state leadership – distinctive from *dominio*, or rule through the force of arms – must be supplemented and legitimated by a series of alliances within the terrain of civil society, a conceptual zone that includes firms, popular media, trade unions, educational institutes, and a host of other voluntary organizations and ‘private’ interest groups.¹⁴⁹ Realizing that these partnerships historically took several non-hegemonic forms, Gramsci notes that hegemony is distinguished from “economic-corporate” compromises between state and civil societal forces characterized by piecemeal concessions and short-term truces. In contrast to such arrangements, Gramsci imagined hegemony proper as a moment where social actors spanning state and civil society consolidate into *hegemonic bloc* capable of organizing both formal regulations and popular cultural beliefs behind a coherent ‘conception of the world’ or way of thinking (*forma mentis*) which supports their shared interest *as a class*.¹⁵⁰ By persuading subordinate classes to consent to these beliefs, the interests of these blocs become naturalized and universalized to the point where they are received as coincident with the interests of all classes. In this sense, hegemony is a form of “moral and political leadership” which includes not only the capacity to influence or execute formal state action – the choice to pursue this or that policy direction – but also the power to render certain normative assumptions about social and political life as unreflexive, popularly-held ‘common sense’.¹⁵¹

Although Gramsci mostly analyzed these projects unfolding at the scale of the nation-state (such as the Jacobin-led national program in France, Fordist production across America, or the flawed Italian *Risorgimento*), this framework can also be applied to local power structures as well.¹⁵² The coalitions

¹⁴⁷ *Prison Notebooks Volume I*, ed. Joseph Buttigieg, trans. Joseph Buttigieg and Antonio Callari (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 1544.

¹⁴⁸ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 52

¹⁴⁹ See Michael Burawoy, “For a Sociological Marxism: The Complementary Convergence of Antonio Gramsci and Karl Polanyi,” *Politics & Society* 31, no. 2 (2003): 193-261 and Kate Crehan, “Gramsci’s Concept of Common Sense: A Useful Concept for Anthropologists?” *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 16, no. 2 (2011): 273-287.

¹⁵⁰ Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, 157-201. On ‘conceptions of the world’ and hegemony in Gramsci’s writing, see Joseph Buttigieg, “Gramsci on Civil Society,” *boundary 2* 22, no. 3 (1995): 1-32 and Joel Wainwright, “Gramsci’s Conceptions of the World,” in *Gramsci*, ed. Ekers et al., 161-196; on the ‘blocs’ within which hegemonies are embedded, see Hall, “Gramsci’s Relevance,” 15-16.

¹⁵¹ Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, 57. See also Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks Vol. II* 4548 and *Prison Notebooks Vol. III*, 85169.

¹⁵² The flexibility of scale in Gramsci’s thought is explored in Bob Jessop, “Gramsci as a Spatial Theorist,” *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 8, no. 4 (2005): 421-437. See also Bob Jessop, “A Neo-

described by Molotch as ‘growth machines’, for instance, exemplify the integration between state and civil society implied by Gramsci’s version of hegemony. For Molotch, growth machines are diverse ensembles of actors united by a common dependence upon locally-generated revenues, typically including builders, developers, utilities, educational institutes, news media, professional sports teams, and (especially) the local state among their ranks.¹⁵³ Since population growth ostensibly creates a larger potential revenue pool for these groups, Molotch claims that their shared stake in local demographic expansion overrides competitive pressures between local fractions of capital among them. To ensure local growth, Molotch notes that these coalitions work within the local state to secure the necessary conditions for growth, often by dominating the low-visibility committees, boards, and councils deliberating on seemingly innocuous infrastructure and policy matter which bear directly on development.¹⁵⁴ More crucially, however, Molotch suggests that growth machines preemptively dismantle political opposition to their projects by enshrining the very *idea* of ‘growth’ itself as a value-free, mutually beneficial, and commonsensical objective within local politics. By projecting a popular “‘we’ feeling which bespeaks of community” across popular media channels, these groups create the basis for asserting (and reasserting) that intensified development produces benefits for a locality in aggregate, typically ranging from local ‘prestige’ to more tangible promises of jobs and rising property values.¹⁵⁵ Among governed populations, this narrative not only reinforces the belief that growth is desirable for all, but suggests that social problems ranging from unemployment and homelessness to capital flight and falling land values stem from local failures to attract growth. Thus, Molotch claims the “wide acceptance of growth as a positive response to societal difficulties does not reflect an accurate appraisal of costs and benefits of development, but instead the ideological influence of growth coalitions” in local political cultures.¹⁵⁶

Not only is the convergence of state and civil societal elites within a growth machine apposite for Gramsci’s conception of a hegemonic bloc, but the notion of growth-as-public-good promulgated by these actors is representative of what Gramsci termed a *historically necessary* or *historically organic*

Gramscian Approach to the Regulation of Urban Regimes: Accumulation Strategies, Hegemonic Projects, and Governance,” in *Reconstructing Urban Regime Theory*, ed. Mickey Lauria (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1997), 51-73.

¹⁵³ Molotch, “Growth Machine,” 314-318. See also Kevin Cox and Andrew Mair, “Locality and Community in the Politics of Local Economic Development,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 78, no. 2 (1988): 307-325 and Logan and Molotch, *Urban Fortunes*, 62-85.

¹⁵⁴ Molotch, “Growth Machine,” 313.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 311. In the words of Peter Marcuse, the way that a city’s interests are referred to in aggregate and in the singular sense constitutes a “perverse metaphor” which deepens and extends existing social divisions. Peter Marcuse, “‘The City’ as Perverse Metaphor,” *City* 9, no. 2 (2005): 247-254.

¹⁵⁶ Molotch, “Political Economy,” 36.

ideology.¹⁵⁷ Three points about these ideologies and their role within a hegemonic bloc are worthy of emphasis here. First, while these ideologies (such as that of growth machines) doubtlessly support logics of capital accumulation, they are neither illusory nor arbitrary as in the banal caricatures of ‘false consciousness’ typically levied at theories of ideology.¹⁵⁸ While boosterist promises of rising tides lifting all boats may be demonstrably untrue in practice, and may also obscure real power imbalances in local politics, they nevertheless bear some correspondence to reality insofar as *some* populations *really do* reap material benefits from accelerated growth (in the form of increased property values or job prospects). Within a conjunctural context marked by increasingly insecure employment arrangements and evaporating social welfare provisions, growth machine ideologies actively respond to the real hopes and desires of urbanites trying to maintain balance upon increasingly shaky economic ground.¹⁵⁹ It is in this sense that Gramsci saw hegemonic ideologies as persuasive and consensual (as opposed to simply manipulative), and it is for this reason he dismisses idealist conceptions of ideology which render it as a “*marchè de dupes*, a matter of conjuring tricks and sleight of hand.”¹⁶⁰

Second, while deeply engrained cultural attitudes and social beliefs – what Raymond Williams called *structures of feeling* – may be necessary for a given phase of capitalist development, they are not spontaneously self-emergent, autogenic, or foreordained.¹⁶¹ For Gramsci, ‘historically organic’ ideologies were given a historically and geographically particular form by an affiliated class of *organic intellectuals*. Though Gramsci’s definition of the intellectuals was broad (“the whole social mass that exercises an organizational function in the broad sense, whether it be in the field of production, or culture, or political administration”), he saw them fulfilling a very specific functional role: through “active participation in practical life” (rather than withdrawn contemplation) intellectuals are positioned as a “constructor, organizer, ‘permanent persuader’” capable of organizing a population’s “feeling-passions” into a collective social identity (Molotch’s ‘we feeling’).¹⁶² Within Taylorist production systems, he saw this group to include union leaders, bureaucrats, engineers, and industrial technicians; in Molotch’s growth machines they would include local entrepreneurs, politicians, development spokespersons, and

¹⁵⁷ Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks Vol. III*, 7§19.

¹⁵⁸ Raymond Williams, *Keywords* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 153-157.

¹⁵⁹ Inasmuch as material economic conditions play a crucial role in shaping ideological currents, Gramsci noted that “It is not ideologies that create social reality, but social reality, in its productive structure, that creates ideologies.” Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks Vol. II*, 4§15.

¹⁶⁰ *Prison Notebooks Vol. II*, 4§38. ‘False consciousness’ marks a major theme in the prison notebooks, and it is clear that hegemony was for Gramsci an attempt to move beyond this unhelpful exaggeration. See also *Ibid.* 4§12 and *Prison Notebooks Vol. III* 7§19, 7§21, and 8§169.

¹⁶¹ See Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 128-135.

¹⁶² Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks Vol. I* 1§43; Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, 418, 10.

civic officials.¹⁶³ In either scenario, their “function is precisely ‘organizational’ or connective,” insofar as these actors must structure popular common sense around a conception of the world that is adequate to both the needs of capital and the lived experience of subordinate classes.¹⁶⁴

The third point on ideology within a hegemonic formation concerns its effects on possibilities for political praxis. Acknowledging that social life requires some sort of adequate sense-making apparatus *qua* ideology, Gramsci claims that ideology forms an “objective and operative reality” for social actors, shaping how they perceive their possible horizons for social and political action.¹⁶⁵ He accords “a validity that is ‘psychological’” for hegemonic ideologies, inasmuch as “they ‘organize’ the human masses, they establish the ground on which humans move, become conscious of their position, struggle, etc.”¹⁶⁶ Here, Gramsci signals that as ideology gives a frame to interpret and navigate the material social world, it also has a reciprocally transformative effect on social reality, making hegemony both a *worldly* and *world-shaping* process. In this respect, Raymond Williams has suggested hegemony *pace* ideology should be understood as a process of *determination*; not in the sense that ideology “totally predicts or prefigures” social consciousness, but that ideologies “set limits and exert pressures” on how people perceive (and accordingly act within) given social contexts.¹⁶⁷ This dynamic momentum, which enables some forms of action while inhibiting others, is captured by the notions of community identity and communal benefits undergirding growth machine politics: on the one hand, the enshrinement of ‘growth’ as an unquestioned (even *unquestionable*) political value creates *a priori* consent for entrepreneurial forms of government which pressure municipalities to draft ‘growth-supportive’ public policies (and presumably ditch regulations which might impede growth). On the other hand, Molotch notes that this same hegemonic vision also *limits* political discourse by eliding “any alternative vision of the purpose of local government or the meaning of community.”¹⁶⁸

At this level of elaboration, the implications of ‘hegemony’ for policy mobilities are clear. State policy could be seen, as Gramsci suggests at multiple points, as a formalized expression of the delimiting

¹⁶³ See Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, 310-313; Logan and Molotch, *Urban Fortunes*, 29-39 and 62-85.

¹⁶⁴ Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks Vol. II*, 4§49; see also Stefan Kipfer, “Urbanization, Everyday Life and the Survival of Capitalism: Lefebvre, Gramsci and the Problematic of Hegemony,” *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 13, no.2 (2002): 117-149.

¹⁶⁵ *Prison Notebooks Vol II*, 4§15.

¹⁶⁶ Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks Vol. III*, 7§19.

¹⁶⁷ See “Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory” in Raymond Williams, *Culture and Materialism* (New York: Verso, 2005), 31-49.

¹⁶⁸ Logan and Molotch, *Urban Fortunes*, 51.

common sense related to a hegemonic project.¹⁶⁹ In this light, the broad proliferation of specific policy models would reflect either their alignment with similar hegemonic projects unfolding in different places, or their capacity to be flexibly remade as ‘historically necessary’ components of divergent hegemonies.¹⁷⁰ Guru consultants and transfer agents in this vision would constitute a mercenary form of organic intellectuals who can represent “plastically and ‘anthropomorphically’ the [...] ‘collective will’” of an urban population, like the *condottiere* discussed in Gramsci’s *Brief notes on Machiavelli’s politics*.¹⁷¹ The representational practices employed by these intellectuals would largely align with notions of devolved responsibility, individual rights, and market-based competition widely inscribed as organizing principles for governance in many cities. The limits and tendential pressures endemic to a hegemonic project, in short, would compel the import of policies supportive to, if not extensive of, status quo power relations.

Doubtlessly, this version of hegemony actually *would* partially explain the relative mobility of certain policies, if not provide some sense of their political implications. But it would also afford a degree of permanence and stability to hegemonic formations that Gramsci not only denied, but *actually sought to overturn*. As both a committed political militant and a deeply dialectical thinker, Gramsci conceptualized hegemony as a provisional and historically contingent arrangement wracked by internal contradictions, instabilities, and crisis tendencies.¹⁷² Though hegemonic blocs may share “certain common conditions of existence, they are also cross-cut by conflicting interests, segmented and fragmented in their actual course of historical formation.”¹⁷³ While these interests may remain cohesive under specific historical conditions, gales of creative destruction inevitably sweep away the economic foundations of a hegemonic bloc and decisively reconfigure its internal *relations of force*.¹⁷⁴ Where all

¹⁶⁹ Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, 246-261; Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks Vol. I*, 1§87; Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks Vol. II*, 4§55; Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks Vol. III*, 6§84 and 6§89.

¹⁷⁰ Richard Florida’s ‘creative cities’ approach – whose purposive conceptual plasticity is paralleled by its manifest compatibility with neoliberal governing imperatives – is an apposite example of how this conception of hegemony might apply. Cf. Peck, “Creative Class” and Peck, “Recreative City.”

¹⁷¹ Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, 125. To label policy gurus as ‘mercenary’ intellectuals does *not* mean that they are divorced from any class interest; as Gramsci summarily points out in *Prison Notebooks Vol. I*, 1§44, “there does not exist an independent class of intellectuals.” What I mean here is that while mobile policy gurus typically align with bourgeois interests, they may serve as ‘hired guns’ for different class *factions*.

¹⁷² Jim Glassman, “Cracking Hegemony: Gramsci and the Dialectics of Rebellion,” in *Gramsci: Space, Nature, Politics*, 241-257; Maurice Finocchiaro, *Gramsci and the History of Dialectical Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 147-180.

¹⁷³ Hall, “Gramsci’s Relevance,” 14. A critical example might be the slow unraveling of LA’s Chandlerian *ancien régime*, which was first split by a postwar schism between downtown and suburban interests before being finally rent asunder by the entry of global finance capital in the 1970s. Davis, *City of Quartz*, 120-144

¹⁷⁴ Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, 175-185.

that is solid melts into air under the incandescent heat of capitalist dynamism, today's class alliances may be altered or even obviated by tomorrow's productive relations. Upon this shifting landscape of political opportunity structures, factions of subordinate classes struggle to develop new forms of representation adequate to their class interests, while varying strata of intellectuals jockey for position within hegemonic blocs to shift relations of force in their favour. New conceptions of the world – such as those articulated by particular policy paradigms – are a key aspect of these contests, as attempts to alter power structures are paralleled by manoeuvres to introduce complimentary social epistemologies.¹⁷⁵ Although the ground on which these struggles emerge is shaped by hegemonic forces, their outcomes are far from predetermined.

Viewing hegemony as *tendential*, but nonetheless *internally conflictual*, *contradictory*, and *crisis-prone* implies a different understanding of policy mobilities than outlined above.¹⁷⁶ Without discounting that hegemonic conceptions of the world set real limits and exert real pressures on (re)constructions of mobile policy ideas, it suggests that the stability and cohesiveness of local power structures cannot be presumed *a priori*. Moreover, given that state policies crystallize conceptions of the world and forms of common sense particular to specific hegemonic projects, moves to inaugurate new policy paradigms can be read as struggles for dominance within a hegemonic bloc. While non-local policy expertise may be a crucial component of these mobilizations, these sources of intellectual agency are always channeled by local interest groups in support of particular political objectives which *do not necessarily* conform to dominant hegemonic projects. Questions of *ideological alignment* (“how do mobile policies align with hegemonic ideological currents?”) are therefore tied to questions of *strategic utility* in the context of political struggles for “moral and intellectual” leadership (“how do factions *within* a hegemonic formation incorporate and adapt mobile policies to shift relations of force in their favour?”). Applied to imagineCALGARY, this approach asks how this project's particular deliberative model was selected from among competing frameworks, and how different intellectual cadres – planners, developers, community groups, commercial interests, local news media, and so on – attempted to shape the project (and those following in its wake) to strengthen their relative position in Calgary's hegemonic bloc. Rather than forecasting ‘post-political’ closure, this approach not only sees projects like imagineCALGARY as sites of active conflict, but also sees resolutions to these conflicts through policy formation as always-already contradictory and crisis-prone arrangements.

¹⁷⁵ Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks Vol. II*, 4§55; Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks Vol. III*, 6§98.

¹⁷⁶ Cf. Michael Krätke, “Antonio Gramsci's Contribution to a Critical Economics,” *Historical Materialism* 19, no. 3 (2011): 63-105.

2.5 'FIXING' HEGEMONY, OR, GOING GREEN WITH GRAMSCI

Gramsci was not concerned to define abstract laws of motion or derive the necessary form and functions of the capitalist state. Instead he tried to specify the complex relations among the plural social force involved in exercising state power in a definite conjuncture.

BOB JESSOP¹⁷⁷

But first of all one should take account of [...] the contradictory conditions of modern society, which create complications, absurd positions, and moral and economic crises often tending towards catastrophe.

ANTONIO GRAMSCI¹⁷⁸

The assumption [...] that one can present and explain every political and ideological fluctuation as a direct expression of the structure must be combated on the theoretical level as a primitive infantilism [...] Politics is in fact always a reflection of the way the structure is tending to develop, but there is no guarantee that these tendencies will necessarily reach their fulfillment.

ANTONIO GRAMSCI¹⁷⁹

Although While et al.'s schematic outline depicts sustainability policies as a response to a set of pressures that pull policymakers in different directions, closer inspection shows many of these forces have more in common than their model might suggest. Take, for example, the oppositional pairing of economic imperatives and interurban competition in Figure 2.1. By forcing policymakers to kowtow to market demands for growth at all costs, intermunicipal competition is seen to delimit local capacities for meaningful environmental policy. In contrast, since sustainability policies can open up new spaces for capital accumulation, produce efficiencies for local business, and foster a marketable, eco-friendly image for the city, market forces also incentivize (certain forms of) sustainability-oriented policy development. But insofar as these incentives are *functionally compatible* with (if not *actively responsive* to) interurban competition, economic imperatives for sustainable development can be seen to emerge from within the same competitive paradigm which ostensibly fetters local policy processes.¹⁸⁰ From this perspective, market forces do not assume a unilateral trajectory working for or against local environmental policy. Instead, market conditions can be seen to both encourage and enfeeble sustainability-oriented policy processes, albeit in a highly differentiated and contradictory fashion.

¹⁷⁷ Bob Jessop, *State Theory: Putting the Capitalist State in its Place* (Cambridge: Polity, 1990), 51.

¹⁷⁸ Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, 279.

¹⁷⁹ Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks Vol. III*, 7§24.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. McCann, "Policy Boosterism."

A similarly Janus-faced juxtaposition is also found in While et al.'s view of state processes. On the one hand, While et al. claim that (neoliberal) state restructuring circumscribes local policymaking, as retrenched funding from senior state authorities seems to leave urban leaders "little option but to sell their souls to global capital at the expense of broader social and ecological goals."¹⁸¹ On the other hand, however, While et al. note that localities are impelled to produce sustainability policies by downloaded regulatory directives and green development funds stemming from these same authorities. Whereas neoliberal statecraft has been long characterized by the downloading of governing responsibilities to cities and concomitant replacement of stable budgetary support for local government with contingent, project-based funding arrangements, it is not difficult (or far-fetched) to see the seemingly oppositional pressures of 'state restructuring' and 'regulatory drivers' as components of the same process.¹⁸²

If viewed as an internally conflictual, contradictory, and crisis-prone process, Gramsci's notion of hegemony can provide a basis for linking these seemingly antipodean pressures into a unified analytical frame. As a first step for reconceptualizing While et al.'s model along Gramscian lines, the spectrum of pressures they identify working for and against environmental policymaking can be reorganized into a tentative sketch outlining their interconnectedness at three 'levels' of analysis (Figure 2.2). Economic imperatives for sustainable development and countervailing patterns of interurban competition can be classed as conjunctural *market forces*; the pressure of regulatory drivers and (neoliberal) state restructuring can be viewed as *state-based processes*; while questions of *legitimacy and public pressures* – for which While et al. define no opposing force – can be broadly classed as the *social relations* of local development. Though highly preliminary, this outline offers a basic framework for linking pressures impinging upon local policy processes to a series of concepts and processes that Gramsci associates with hegemony. In what follows, I attempt to briefly elaborate these concepts, and their methodological implications for studying the formation of a sustainability fix.

¹⁸¹ While et al., "Environment and Entrepreneurial City," 550.

¹⁸² Brenner, *New State Spaces*; Jessop, "Liberalism, Neoliberalism"; Miller, "Modes of Governance."

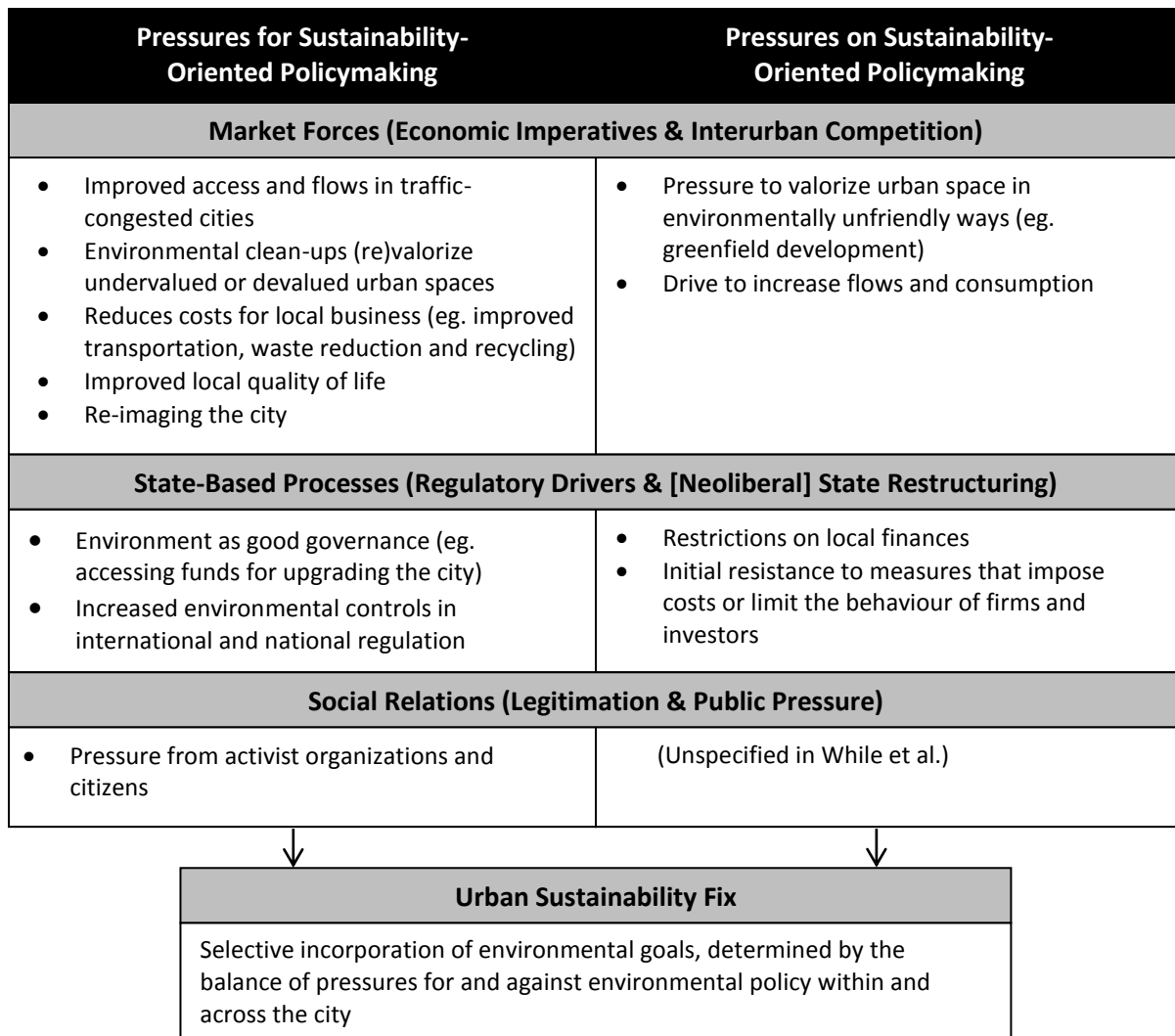


Figure 2.2 The sustainability fix reconfigured

If the market forces considered by While et al. describe the imperatives and incentive structures of capital accumulation at a given time and place, then they roughly correspond to Gramsci's conception of the *determined market* (*il mercato determinato*).¹⁸³ Gramsci borrows this term (or "concept-fact," in his words) from David Ricardo, and uses it as a periodizing concept to describe how market forces

¹⁸³ The translation of this concept varies by sources. It is given as the 'determined market' in Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith's translation of *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, Joseph Buttigieg's translation of *Prison Notebooks Vols. I, II, and III*, and Jessop's "Gramsci as a Spatial Theorist," but as 'determinate market' in Krätke, "Gramsci's Contribution," Thomas, *Gramscian Moment*, and the translation of Antonio Gramsci, *Further Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. Derek Boothman (London: Wishart). While neither definition by itself captures the dialectical valences of the term in Gramsci's thought – where markets are 'determinate' of social relations while being determined by them – I hereafter use the term 'determined market' for purposes of lexical simplicity.

stabilize at given points in time and assume a “certain degree of ‘automatism’ that gives individual initiatives a certain degree of ‘predictability’ and certainty.”¹⁸⁴ Rather than seeing market pressures as transhistorical constant, unfolding the same way at all places and times, this concept emphasizes the conjunctural specificity of capitalist imperatives within different hegemonic contexts. As Gramsci notes elsewhere, determined markets are therefore “equivalent to [a] ‘determined relation of social forces in a determined structure of the productive apparatus’, this relation being guaranteed (ie: rendered permanent) by a determined political, moral, juridical superstructure.”¹⁸⁵

By claiming that certain market processes assume a degree of ‘automatism’, Gramsci refers to how certain forms of economistic behaviour – such as competition between cities for investment – are not only normalized as seemingly ‘natural’ factors of social life, but also inscribed into the very fabric of an economy as a taken-for-granted basis for accumulation. Insofar as this conception implies a certain form of social consciousness, Gramsci saw determined markets not only as material relations of capital accumulation, but phenomena which demanded corresponding forms of subjectivity, or particular constructions of *homo oeconomicus*. As a foundation for both liberal state law and popular common sense transmitted by economists, industrial leaders, and other organic intellectuals, Gramsci suggests that abstract conceptions of humans as rational, utility-maximizing subjects performatively shape labourers as subjects adequate for a given determinate market.¹⁸⁶ In this sense, a determined market encompasses what the Parisian regulationists called a ‘regime of accumulation’ (an historically specific pattern of production of consumption which is reproducible over a long period) and as well as a ‘mode of social regulation’ (the ensemble of rules, conventions, and institutions that stabilize an accumulation regime).¹⁸⁷ The implication of this view is that while (determined) market pressures shape social and political conduct, markets are themselves contingent on – indeed, possible only because of – corresponding arrangements within civil society. Given this contingency, (determined) market forces cannot be assumed to operate with equal force in all places and times, nor expected to converge on a common teleological end-point. As Gramsci points out, specific market configurations and trajectories

¹⁸⁴ Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks Vol. III*, 8§128. See also 8§216 in the same volume.

¹⁸⁵ Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, 410. Elsewhere, he describes it as “determinate forces [*that*] have risen historically, the operation of which presents itself with a certain ‘automatism’ that allows a measure of ‘predictability’ and certainty for individual initiatives.” Quoted in Thomas, *Gramscian Moment*, 355.

¹⁸⁶ In contrast to bourgeois economics, Gramsci saw *homo oeconomicus* as a historical abstraction rather than an axiomatic, transhistorical truth. See Krätke, “Gramsci’s Contribution” 82-87 and Gramsci, *Further Selections* 10II§15, 10II§27, 11§59.

¹⁸⁷ Similar connections are made in, Jessop, “Neo-Gramscian Approach.”

are instead “determined by the fundamental structure of the society under question,” meaning that “any law of political economy cannot be but tendential.”¹⁸⁸

Although this perspective meant for Gramsci that the outcome of market processes cannot be assumed *a priori*, it is clear that he viewed capital accumulation as a deeply “contradictory process of development.”¹⁸⁹ From his defenses of Marx’s law of the tendential fall of the profit-rate to his comments Fordist labour relations, it was also clear that Gramsci saw these contradictions as latent crisis-tendencies.¹⁹⁰ For Gramsci, a bulwark to this crisis lay in the organization of *civil society*, which corresponds most closely to the ‘social relations’ I flag in While et al. Here, forms of bourgeois common sense organized by intellectual forces provide social agents with both an explanatory framework for interpreting economic crises as well as a general sensibility for forming appropriate political responses. In the example of growth machines, for instance, economic crises can be explained as competitive underperformance in local government, rather than an inevitable outcome within a growth paradigm that structurally relies upon an uneven landscape of territorial ‘winners’ and ‘losers’. In this view, the range of available solutions inevitably point towards redoubled entrepreneurial efforts in local government; by obscuring the insoluble, systemic nature of economic crises and social inequalities, this common sense ostensibly maintains the reproduction of consent for capitalist accumulation.

And yet, Gramsci also notes that like the economic bases they seek to secure, these systems of popular common sense are also sites of crisis and contradiction. His notes on *Americanism and Fordism*, for instance, find that while the high wages and broad prosperity of ‘virtuous’ Fordist growth cycles informed a common-sense view of the economy as a meritocratic and mutually beneficial arrangement, this system is only possible through alienating forms of social control. Although the increased productivity achieved through Taylorist work discipline was the condition of widespread prosperity under Fordism, Gramsci noted that attempts to transmogrify workers’ bodies into “trained gorillas” ironically provided them opportunities to contemplate the antinomies of their situation.¹⁹¹ In his words:

[...] the worker remains a man [*sic*] and even that during his work he thinks more, or at least has greater opportunities for thinking, once he has overcome the crisis of adaptation without being

¹⁸⁸ Gramsci, *Further Selections*, 1011§33.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 1011§36.

¹⁹⁰ See, respectively, Gramsci, *Further Selections*, 1011§33 and Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, 301-305. For Gramsci, while high wages gave industrial workers under Fordism the means to reproduce their labour power (by purchasing essential goods, and so on), he also noted that it gave them the means to seek therapeutic relief from industrial toil in alcoholic excess, thereby (ironically) destroying their own labour power.

¹⁹¹ A lucid exegesis on the contradictions of this labour process can be found in Glassman, “Cracking Hegemony.”

eliminated: and not only does the worker think, but the fact that he gets no immediate satisfaction from his work and realizes that they are trying to reduce him to a trained gorilla can lead him into a train of thought that is far from conformist.¹⁹²

Within the contradictions of bourgeois ideology, Gramsci finds dormant seeds of what he termed 'good sense' (*boun senso*); an underdeveloped sensibility that existing common sense not only fails to deliver its promised rewards, but also obscures real injustices and power inequalities.¹⁹³ As recurrent crises stretch the validity of existing common sense – such as when the ecological consequences of unfettered urban growth machine become increasingly apparent – the hegemony of market practices is not assured by any automatic force, but only by contingent forms of intellectual intervention in popular culture.

At this juncture, the social tensions and market force I identify in While et al.'s analysis appear not only internally contradictory, but standing in contradiction to one another. But here Gramsci adds another wrinkle by suggesting that 'civil society' and 'determined markets' are similarly entangled with what he terms *political society*, a category that encompasses the formal institutions of the state (such as policy and legal institutions, police forces, political parties, and the like). As indicated by his reference to the necessary "political, moral, [and] juridical superstructure," underpinning a determined market, Gramsci proposes that alongside the consent of civil society, the support of state institutions is the very condition of possibility for determined market.¹⁹⁴ Aside from their crucial role in providing regulatory support and legal protections for private property arrangements, Gramsci noted that a substantial degree of legitimacy for capitalist development was provided by the "educative and formative" work of political society.¹⁹⁵ In moments of crisis, "when incurable contradictions have come to light within the structure," he suggested that states must be reorganized in order to both jump-start new rounds of accumulation and shore up legitimacy within civil society.¹⁹⁶ In rather Gramscian fashion, Bob Jessop has termed these recalibrations *state projects*, which he defines as moments of internal restructuring – as in the 'state-based processes' in While et al. – aimed at projecting an imagine of operational unity and coordination between the state and its bases in civil society, thereby providing the basis for new

¹⁹² *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, 310. The unfortunate androcentricism and heteronormativity of these notes is thoughtfully critiqued in Michael Ekers, "Gramsci and the Erotics of Labour: More Notes on 'The Sexual Question'," in *Gramsci*, ed. Ekers et al., 217-237.

¹⁹³ See Crehan, "Gramsci's Concept." A classic study of good sense (which exposes class power) underlying common sense (which maintains it) can be found in Paul Willis, *Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977).

¹⁹⁴ As Krätke notes, Gramsci saw determinate markets as a phenomenon "closely linked – in fact, only possible due – to a particular form of the state and a corresponding social structure." Krätke, "Gramsci's Contribution," 87.

¹⁹⁵ Quoted in Hall, "Gramsci's Relevance," 18.

¹⁹⁶ Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks Vol. II*, 4§38.

accumulation strategies to be launched.¹⁹⁷ It is in this light that Gramsci notes that the distinction between political and civil society (or between 'state' and 'private' affairs) is "purely methodological and not organic," for "in concrete historical life, political society and civil society are a single entity" (termed elsewhere by Gramsci as the 'integral state' [*lo stato integrale*]).¹⁹⁸

Although admittedly high-level and impressionistic, this overview conveys the dialectical, non-exclusionary, and functional relationship that Gramsci establishes between the determined market, the state (*qua* political society), and civil society. For Gramsci these phenomena do not claim an objective existence independent of one another, but are instead historically *co-emergent*.¹⁹⁹ What links these phenomena together, and indeed serves as their very condition of possibility, is the organization of class power under a hegemonic arrangement. From this perspective, the provisional categories of market forces, state-based processes, and social tensions that I identify in While et al. can be respectively linked to the Gramscian concepts of the determined market, political society, and civil society (Figure 2.3). The internal contradictions, conflictual tensions, and crisis-tendencies which traverse these phenomena flow in from their shared point of origin in a coherent hegemonic project, which in this case refers to a coherent accumulation strategy based around a particular pattern of urbanization. As in While et al., the crisis-tendencies and contradictions of a given urbanization scheme are provisionally 'fixed' by local sustainability policies, the content of which are determined by relations of force within the originary hegemonic bloc.

¹⁹⁷ Jessop, *State Theory*, 341-347. See also Brenner, *New State Spaces*, 84-91.

¹⁹⁸ *Prison Notebooks Vol. II*, 4§38. As Gramsci notes elsewhere, "one might say that the State = political society + civil society, in other words hegemony armoured by coercion." Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks Vol. III*, 6§88. In yet another notes, Gramsci defines the state as "the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance, but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules." *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, 244.

¹⁹⁹ Cf. Thomas, *Gramscian Moment*, 159-195.

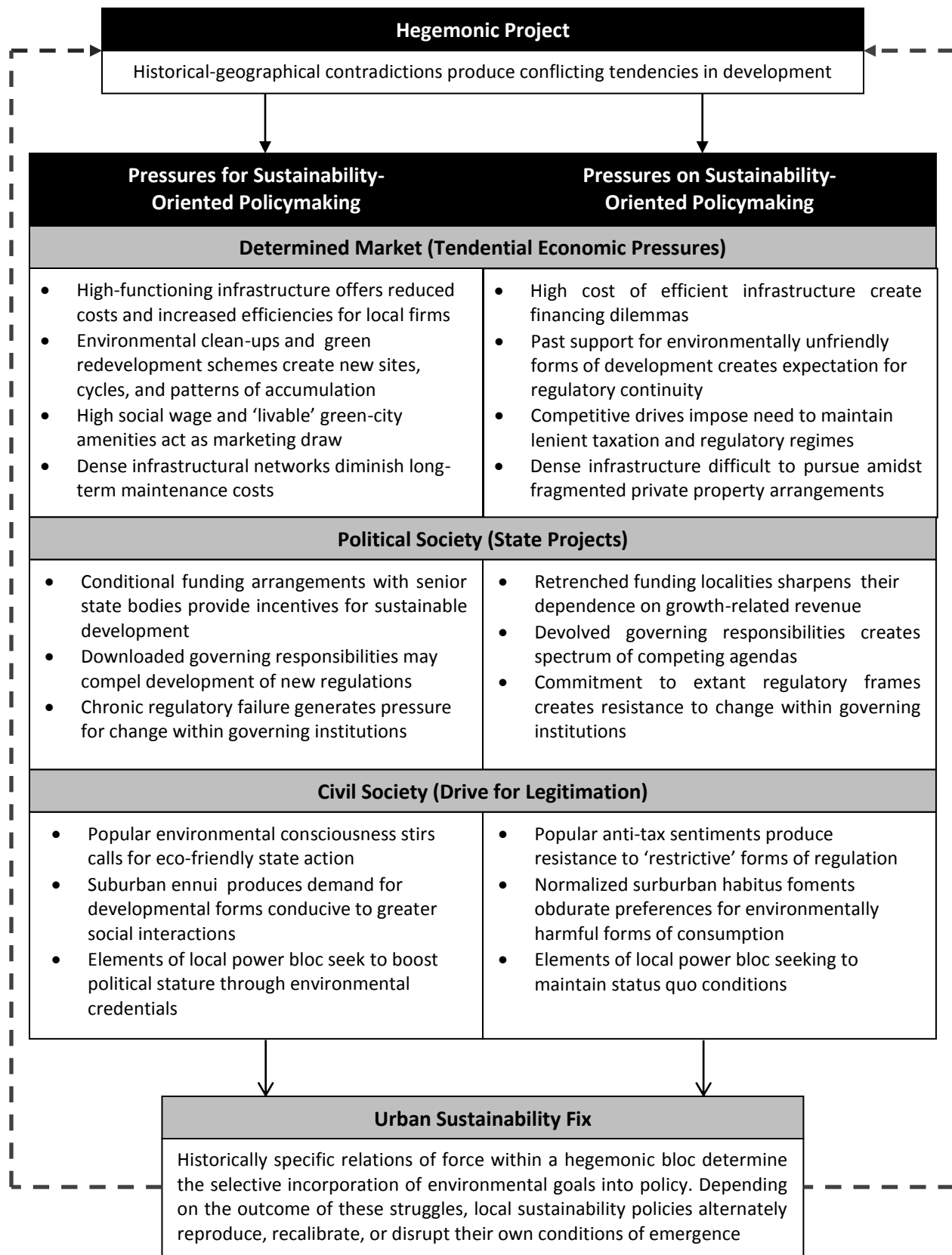


Figure 2.3 Hegemonic projects and the sustainability fix

In the first place, this reconfigured arrangement sharpens and extends While et al.'s notion of a sustainability fix by specifying the nature of the contradictions that policymakers must seek to resolve. At the level of the determined market – which constitutes the tendential economic imperatives driving urbanization at a given place and time – contradictions arise diachronically, as extant development strategies conflict with the demands of newer, more competitive forms. For instance, developers may assemble large suburban landholdings with the expectation that local government will extend existing suburban growth patterns, putting them into conflict with the policy needs of other factions of capital seeking profit in new spatialities (such as inner-city redevelopments, reclaimed 'brownfield' sites, and so on).²⁰⁰ By the same token, the spatialities and institutional relations which enabled past accumulation-*cum*-urbanization strategies (such as the fragmented private-property regimes and diffuse infrastructure networks tied to suburban growth) may later fetter the development of more compact, eco-friendly alternatives. The tension that While et al. identify between the need to valorize urban space in environmentally unfriendly ways and the imperative to develop new forms of accumulation thus arises from within a general dynamic of creative destruction which pits existing and emergent accumulation strategies against one another.²⁰¹

A similar dynamic operates upon the terrain of civil society. On the one hand, growth machine-style common sense may spur civil societal actors to militate against sustainable development programs, insofar as sustainability reforms can be constructed as threats to continued growth or potential limitations on freedom of choice in housing markets.²⁰² On the other hand, however, the spiraling environmental problems and growing levels of social isolation emerging from certain growth machine trajectories may expose the cracks in this 'common sense', fomenting social advocacy in support of more stringent sustainability controls. But these sentiments do not emerge through some automatic force; as Gramsci suggests, society is only given coherence through the "organizational and connective" manoeuvres of the intellectuals, who are themselves locked in a continual struggle for ascendancy within a given hegemonic bloc. Although these interlocutions play a strong role in shaping public opinion, they are neglected in While et al.'s account; here I correct this oversight by placing these *intramuros* struggles within civil society, which is conceived as a terrain of struggle over the legitimization of different hegemonic projects (*qua* development models).

²⁰⁰ See, for instance, Ross, *Bird on Fire*.

²⁰¹ Cf. David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1973 [2009]), 202-205 and Harvey, *Limits to Capital*, 232-238.

²⁰² Molotch, "Growth Machine";

As a mediating level between markets and civil society, the apparatus of political society is itself traversed by contradictions stemming from its attempt to give coherence to both domains through state projects. Processes of regulatory downloading or fiscal retrenchment in this view are not *sui generis* developments emerging from out of nowhere; instead, they are responses to demands (and emergent crises) across the terrain of both markets and civil society. But here, I add another contradiction within state projects elided by While et al., encompassing the possibility of conflict *internal* to the state between actors seeking to create developmental alternatives and actors who have become habituated and committed to outdated modes of governing and regulation that stand in the way of environmental reforms.²⁰³

This sketch is, necessarily, a highly provisional ideal-type. Hegemonies are, in Gramsci's view, historically and geographically particular arrangements, wherein the 'automatism' of specific forces (such as competitive growth paradigms) cannot be assumed *a priori*. Although I have tried to outline some contradictions that might be typical to conventional growth models in North American cities, the precise ensemble of contradictions requiring a policy fix are themselves particular to the specificities of localized configurations of market, state, and civil society in a coherent hegemony. Likewise, these policy 'fixes' themselves can be regarded as contingent and temporary solutions, wracked by their own internal crisis-tendencies and contradictions. Given these contingencies, the sustainability fix cannot be a static, schematic model which can be invoked intact as an explanatory device for localized policy outcomes. Indeed, if the array of forces that I have tentatively outline in Figure 2.3 cannot be presumed in advance, then the *methodological* challenge of this model is to verify the specific ensemble of forces impinging on local policy processes through a historical and philological analyses which charts their historical co-emergence, tendential effects, and internal contradictions.²⁰⁴ It is to this task that I now turn.

²⁰³ See, for instance, Jill Grant, "Theory and Practice in Planning the Suburbs: Challenges to Implementing New Urbanism, Smart Growth, and Sustainability Principles," *Planning Theory & Practice* 10, no. 1 (2009): 11-33.

²⁰⁴ Philology is, in Gramsci's terms, "the methodological expression of the importance of particular facts understood as definite and specific 'individualities'." As Buttigieg points out, Gramsci's insistence on a philological inquiry is a hedge in his thought against overt generalizations drawn from "abstract laws which are divorced from the lived experience of history." Buttigieg, "Gramsci's Method," 77.

CHAPTER 3: BOOM TIMES AND BIRTH PANGS

3.1 LINEAGES OF FAILURE

From my recollection, it [the Sustainable Suburbs Study] wasn't something that was as strong as imagineCARGARY is today. There wasn't much public buy-in or much engagement done through that study to generate a level of buy-in [*sic*], either within the City of Calgary or broader within the community. I don't recall it having a major influence on any of the work we were doing.

CITY OF CALGARY PLANNER²⁰⁵

There was one planner, who we had just made the head of the new community planning division: he was the guy who had said to me that "if I'm going to be the head of this [division], then sustainable suburbs is the direction I'm taking it" [...] and yeah, I let him have his head, as it were.

FORMER CITY OF CALGARY PLANNING MANAGER²⁰⁶

If one wishes to study a conception of the world which has never been systematically expounded by its founder [...] some preliminary detailed philological work has to be done.

ANTONIO GRAMSCI²⁰⁷

When asked about the Sustainable Suburbs Study, many City of Calgary planners receive the question with a grimace, a smirk, or a resigned sigh. Depending on whom you ask these reactions might betray a sense of bemusement, disappointment, or embarrassment in the plan; what they all share is an acknowledgement that the early 1990s planning project had been, for all its precociousness and innovation, a failure. As the City of Calgary's first attempt at sustainability-oriented policy, the Sustainable Suburbs Study was dealt the unenviable task of incorporating sustainability principles into Calgary's received urban fabric, which by was by then a checkerboard landscape of fringe developments, strip malls, and modular subdivisions. Rather than calling for a full cessation of suburban growth, the plan aimed to produce "more fiscally, socially, and environmentally sustainable communities" *within* the suburbs, where it was pragmatically acknowledged that "most population growth is expected to occur."²⁰⁸ Building from the nostrums of the emerging New Urbanist movement, the plan attempted to provide performance standards and design guidelines for new communities that focused on mixed land-

²⁰⁵ Interview, October 17, 2012.

²⁰⁶ Interview, October 16, 2012.

²⁰⁷ Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, 382.

²⁰⁸ City of Calgary, *Sustainable Suburbs Study: Creating More Fiscally, Socially and Environmentally Friendly Communities*, Planning and Building Department, 1995, i.

uses, raised densities, more abundant open space, and street layouts that accommodated walking, cycling, and better transit access.

In truth, the spaces proposed by these reforms diverged widely from the single-use, low-density developments which had characterized Calgary's postwar growth. And yet for all its putative novelty, the Sustainable Suburbs Study was destined to have little impact. When it went before City Council in 1995, the plan was adopted as a nonstatutory document, thereby consigning its prescriptive content to the legal status of formal *recommendations* (and nothing more). With no binding regulatory capacity at its disposal, the plan was powerless to shape the bumper crop of edge developments which sprouted across Calgary's frontiers throughout the city's late 1990s boom, and for eyes made jaundiced by the glare of this unchecked sprawl, the Sustainable Suburbs Study's paeans to sustainability can look more like platitudes. Indeed, if conventional North American subdivisions are typically cast as the antithesis of sustainable development by most contemporary green-city gurus, the plan's fixation on suburban reform seems naïve in retrospect, while its open acceptance of suburban development as an inevitable outcome seems to flirt with defeatism.²⁰⁹ One planner described a recent review of the plan as follows:

It doesn't matter what we do in terms of trying to create sustainable suburbs. We can work on sustainability inside the suburb, but we are not sustainable as a city because we have too many other things going on at the same time.²¹⁰

Doubtlessly, the plan's somewhat jejune focus on suburban communities and abortive (lack of) impact accounts for much of the sheepishness it plan elicits from local policy actors. When asked about the Sustainable Suburb Study's origins, however, this sensibility often gives way to candid admiration for the planner who conceptualized, organized, and otherwise led the project from its inception to its completion. The plan was initially conceived as a supporting land-use framework for the GoPlan, a parallel sustainability-oriented project being developed within the City's Transportation Department. With direction from neither City Council nor the City's planning director, a senior planner approaching the end of a long career in Calgary's planning culture drafted the Sustainable Suburbs Study as a canary for sustainability planning in the coalmine of Calgary's hostile development politics. Since the Planning Department had not been *obligated* to create policy support for the GoPlan, many planners attempted to explain (or perhaps excuse) the Sustainable Suburbs Study as a product of its author's singular commitment to environmental issues. One planner noted that the plan would not exist without its

²⁰⁹ Cf. Beatley, *Green Urbanism* and Newman et al., *Resilient Cities*.

²¹⁰ Interview, City of Calgary planner, December 19, 2012.

author's "very aspirational, very visionary" approach to environmental problems, and when asked about the origins of the plan, another recalled it as a highly personal, "ideological" project:

We had a manager that was extremely ideological, who took the sustainability mantra to a great degree; when you think of how the city had developed suburbanly [*sic*], what he was proposing was quite a leap.²¹¹

As Calgary's planners have moved towards more systemic, totalizing visions of urban sustainability in recent years, it is commonly accepted that the Sustainable Suburbs Study was not only a total failure, but an anomalous moment in the city's planning history, driven by one planner's maverick ambition and radically singular vision. By casting the plan in these terms, planners weave an institutional folk history of the project which allows them to assert the superiority of contemporary policies (and policymaking exercises) more effectively. If the Sustainable Suburbs Study appears improvisational and myopic, contemporary sustainability plans appear rigorous and comprehensive; if the Sustainable Suburbs Study was an aberration within an otherwise rational planning culture, then contemporary plans appear as reasoned advancements within a sequential arc of policy refinement; if the Sustainable Suburbs Study failed because it was a highly personal pet project, then the consultative processes deployed in more recent planning exercises appear all the more effulgent with promise.

But against the tidal force of political pressures constituting capitalist urbanization cycles, no policymaker can be said to be an island unto herself. Even if the Sustainable Suburbs Study *really was* just a product of its author's personal quirks and eccentricities, it would hardly be *sui generis*, for as Gramsci notes, individual social identities are themselves "strangely composite" products of broader social forces, ineluctably shaped by material historical conditions and class relations.²¹² The sensibilities and eccentricities of the plan's author, in other words, did not emerge from nowhere. They were formed within a specific institutional setting and political-economic context, and these contextual pressures shaped how different forms of political action could be mentally perceived and materially pursued. "In acquiring one's conception of the world," Gramsci noted, "one always belongs to a particular grouping which is that of all the social elements which the same mode of thinking and acting."²¹³ It is in this sense that even seemingly 'individual' personalities in fact reflect an "ensemble of historically determined

²¹¹ This first quote is from an interview on October 11, 2012; the second from an interview on October 17, 2012.

²¹² *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, 324.

²¹³ *Ibid.* As Paul Willis has put it in another context, "Creativity is in no individual act, no one particular head, and is not the result of conscious intention. Its logic [can] only occur [...] at the *group* level." *Learning To Labor*, 120, emphasis in original.

social relations [...] as a historical fact which can be ascertained, within certain limits, by the methods of philology and criticism.”²¹⁴

This chapter is an attempt to interpret the ensemble of historically determined social relations within which the Sustainable Suburbs Study *made sense* as policy. Since the policy indelibly responded to the contextual pressures posed by a particular development paradigm in the city, this chapter attempts to specify this paradigm in greater detail. Fuelled by a volatile energy economy, driven by the animal spirits of growth machine politics, and steered by an emaciated local state, the careening arc of Calgary’s urbanization has presented manifold contradictions for which the Sustainable Suburbs Study attempted to provide a ‘fix’. Taking this policy seriously as a response to real pressures and paradoxes in Calgary’s political culture therefore means exploring the origins of this particular and peculiar milieu.

3.2 A PRE-HISTORY OF POWER AND PLANNING IN A PRAIRIE BOOMTOWN

Many people hold the view that the major influences on Calgary came from the Canadian Pacific Railway and the oil industry. I would not agree with that proposition: the CPR and the oil industry have had a major influence on this city developing here, at this location. But the feel of Calgary, the kind of City Calgary is, had been determined by other factors.

HAROLD COWARD²¹⁵

Calgary is a small city, it’s a new city, it emerged in an era of wealth. We don’t have the history that many older cities have, and part of that is wealth. It’s a conservative prairie city by nature, which to me has limited the appetite for planning, or it means that you’ve really got to make your case ... it’s much harder to make your case, and by and large there has been a perception that planning is part of a necessary evil to support an efficient industry, and industry is good and government is bad. I mean, it’s part of the history.

FORMER CITY OF CALGARY PLANNING MANAGER²¹⁶

From its incorporation in 1884, Calgary has long been a boomtown. Railway development and federal homesteading programs brought explosive growth accompanied by widespread real estate speculation in the early twentieth century, and by the time oil was discovered in the nearby Turner

²¹⁴ Quoted in Thomas, *Gramscian Moment*, 394.

²¹⁵ Harold Coward, “Introduction,” in *Calgary’s Growth: Bane or Boon?*, ed. Harold Coward (Calgary: The University of Calgary Press, 1981).

²¹⁶ Interview, December 13, 2012.

Valley in 1914, the mercurial town had already suffered a number of real estate crashes.²¹⁷ Calgary's proximity to this strike drew several important petroleum-related infrastructures and services to the town, and after Alberta's energy economy was kickstarted by the discovery of massive oilfield near the town of Leduc in 1947, mining firms flocked to Calgary rather than capital city Edmonton, which was five times closer to the location of the Leduc oil strike.²¹⁸ In turn, as the growth of urban centres across Canada produced high demand for petroleum (and derivative products), the rapid growth of Calgary's energy sector quite literally provided fuel for the city's postwar development, and the city's population swelled by 80 percent between 1946 and 1954 alone.²¹⁹

Without an established growth management framework or adequate means for financing new growth, the City struggled to provide services for the bumper crop of new housing developments seeded by these broader machinations. While the Province's 1948 revision of the Planning Act and subsequent formation of regional planning councils in 1950 provided some tools for growth management, the City's financial woes were exacerbated by the Province's 1951 City Act, which circumscribed the borrowing powers of municipalities and formally delimited their powers of taxation to the domain of property taxes.²²⁰ With a paucity of options at their disposal for coping with the financial pressures of rapid growth, City officials began looking to homebuilders to shoulder the cost of utilities and infrastructure in new communities during the 1950s.

As growth in Calgary's energy sector spurred increased demand for housing, however, the organization of Calgary's homebuilding sector underwent a parallel shift. Homebuilding in Calgary was still something of a craft industry until the 1950s: builders typically worked on small-scale projects,

²¹⁷ As Max Foran observes, these crashes were largely caused by rampant land speculation as the town's population nearly quadrupled between 1906 and 1911. For an overview, see his, "Land Speculation and Urban Development: Calgary 1884-1912," in *Frontier Calgary: Town, City, and Region 1875-1914*, ed. Anthony Rasporich and Henry Klassen (Calgary: McClelland and Stewart West, 1975), 203-220.

²¹⁸ Key factors in this development were that Calgary was the site of Alberta's first refinery (built in 1923) as well as the province's oil and gas regulatory board (founded in 1938). GH Zieber, "Calgary as an Oil Administrative and Oil Operations Centre," in *Calgary: Metropolitan Structure and Influence*, ed. Benton Barr (Victoria, BC: University of Victoria Press, 1975), 77-121.

²¹⁹ Max Foran, *Expansive Discourses: Urban Sprawl in Calgary, 1945-1978* (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 2009), 24.

²²⁰ The utilities portion of the City's debenture debt doubled between 1950 and 1954, while City expenditures on local improvements and utilities saw a twelve-fold increase between 1944 and 1953. *Ibid.*, 27. On revision to the Planning Act, see Gordon and Hulchanski, "Evolution of Land Use," 5-7; for an analysis of earlier planning legislations that shaped these acts, see David Hulchanski, "The Origins of Urban Land Use Planning in Alberta, 1900-194" (Research Paper No. 119, Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON, 1981).

building one unit at a time on lots developed by the City.²²¹ In response to high growth rates and the City's growing inability to fund infrastructure for new growth areas, however, Calgary's disparate constellation of construction interests began consolidating into development firms capable of capturing federal funds aimed at producing mass housing – primarily consisting of single-detached homes – in the postwar period.²²² From 1954 onwards, the City began transferring infrastructure costs to these firms, and between 1955 and 1958 these arrangements were formalized through project-by-project rounds of bargaining that determined the division of costs between the City and developers. In anticipation of continued growth, these nascent developers used their access to larger supplies of capital to purchase (and in some cases, develop) land on the urban fringe before applying pressure on the City to annex their landholdings into its legal boundaries.²²³

From the 1950s onwards, annexation was facilitated by the ruling of a fateful Royal Commission which the Province struck mid-decade to consider how the structure of local government could be tailored to meet the demands of rapid urban growth. Named after its chair, George Frederick McNally, the 1954 McNally Commission would be the venue where City officials first claimed that rising costs of growth were best managed through a 'uni-city' model, in which the City would enlarge its tax base, facilitate long-range planning, and circumvent 'parasitic' satellite developments by proactively annexing peripheral land supplies and amalgamating nearby communities into its jurisdictional purview.²²⁴ After receiving Provincial support for this strategy in 1956, the City went on an annexation spree, effectively tripling its boundaries over the next six years.²²⁵ Using their superior liquidity as a form political

²²¹ Sandalack and Nicolai, *The Calgary Project*, 79.

²²² The two most significant of these were Kelwood Corporation, formed in 1953, and Carma Developments, which formed in 1958 in order to counter the near-monopoly that Kelwood had established by the mid-1950s. Both the lending practices of the Central (later 'Canada') Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the lending regulations set by the 1938 National Housing Act were designed to stimulate mass production of housing, and set at terms preferable to larger developers who could guarantee large production rates. See Robert Stamp, *Suburban Modern: Postwar Dreams in Calgary* (Calgary: TouchWood Editions, 2004), 86-94 and Richard Harris, *Creeping Conformity: How Canada Became Suburban* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 106-128.

²²³ The precedent for this process was set in 1956, when the City annexed a number of sites that had been built just beyond its legal boundaries. See Foran, *Expansive Discourses*, 31-42.

²²⁴ Several planners noted that this approach continues to inform the City's approach to annexation to this day.

²²⁵ In 1956, Calgary's footprint was 79.8 square kilometers: by 1962, it covered 244 square kilometers. The Royal Commission's report supported both the City's solution to fiscal imbalance (annexation) and its perspective on the source of this imbalance in the first place. It reads: "The crippling effects seen in most metropolitan areas are characterized by a maze of local governments, Boards of Education, and Commissions administering various municipal services, with none responsible to the other and a lack of integrated effort on behalf of the total metropolitan area despite its economic oneness. Population has spread all over the countryside around large cities with utter disregard for existing political boundaries; tax structures are completely out of balance [...] and superimposed on this conglomerate structure is a labyrinth of local authorities competing with one another and

leverage, Calgary's ascendant developers propelled urban expansion by acquiring cheap land on the city's outskirts, petitioning for annexation with reference to the City's uni-city strategy, and fronting costs for utilities and services.

These arrangements were crucial for the formation of a 'determined market' for urbanization in Calgary which seemed to ineluctably favour suburban development. In the absence of a general planning framework, the City's abrogation of responsibility for infrastructure financing and permissive attitude towards annexation surrendered a significant amount of initiative for the design and location of new growth to Calgary's fledgling development sector. To take advantage of a propitious situation, local developers founded the Urban Development Institute (UDI) in 1958, which negotiated on behalf of local real-estate interests to secure consistent infrastructure fees from the City – in the form of 'standard development agreements' – and lobby for amenable policy conditions, including ongoing annexation.²²⁶ In this context, annexation-led suburbanization was quickly established as the norm for postwar development, and the City's first general municipal plan, adopted in 1963, enshrined homeownership and low-density development as the twin bases for future growth in Calgary.²²⁷

These nostrums were realized in the proliferation of diffuse subdivisions that steadily sprawled outwards through newly annexed spaces as development progressed through the 1960s.²²⁸ Paralleling virulent suburban growth during this period, Calgary's development community underwent a rapid expansion entailing a shift towards larger and more powerful firms.²²⁹ In 1969 Calgary's two homegrown development firms - Carma Developments and the Kelwood Corporation - were joined by a third as the Nu-West Development Corporation went public. After growing by an average of 27 percent *per year* throughout the early 1970s, Nu-West became the majority shareholder in Carma, which had itself gone public in 1972 after tripling its profit margins from the previous fiscal year. In the meanwhile, strong growth rates (Figure 3.1) drew the attention of larger development consortiums from afar: the

building up a cost of government for the total area that is out of all proportion to the services rendered." Quoted in City of Calgary, *City of Calgary Comprehensive Annexation- Technical Report*. Submission to the Alberta Local Authorities Board, 1989, 13-14.

²²⁶ By 1960, the institute had opened chapters in Ontario, Manitoba and Nova Scotia, and by 1973 it was incorporated as a national body. The Calgary chapter was the first developer-only advocacy group to be formed in Canada. Jack Masson and Edward LeSage, *Alberta's Local Governments: Politics and Democracy* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1994), 251.

²²⁷ Foran, *Expansive Discourses*, 71.

²²⁸ 82 percent of Calgary's growth between 1961 and 1971 was in single family housing starts: in comparison, the national average during the same period was 77 percent, while the respective averages for the province of Ontario and metropolitan region of Toronto were 64 percent and 38 percent.

²²⁹ This discussion draws heavily from Foran, *Expansive Discourses*, 88-90.

internationally active Genstar Development Corporation, for instance, began buying up Calgarian homebuilders in the late 1960s, while Vancouver-based Daon Developments Corporation began operations in Calgary in 1969. Genstar's 1972 purchase of Kelwood – in the midst of a \$31 million dollar buying spree of buildings and materials companies, no less – signaled the emergence of Calgary's real property sector as a national force, and as local firms joined the ranks of the country's wealthiest developers, Calgary's development community became increasingly organized, well-capitalized, and horizontally integrated.²³⁰

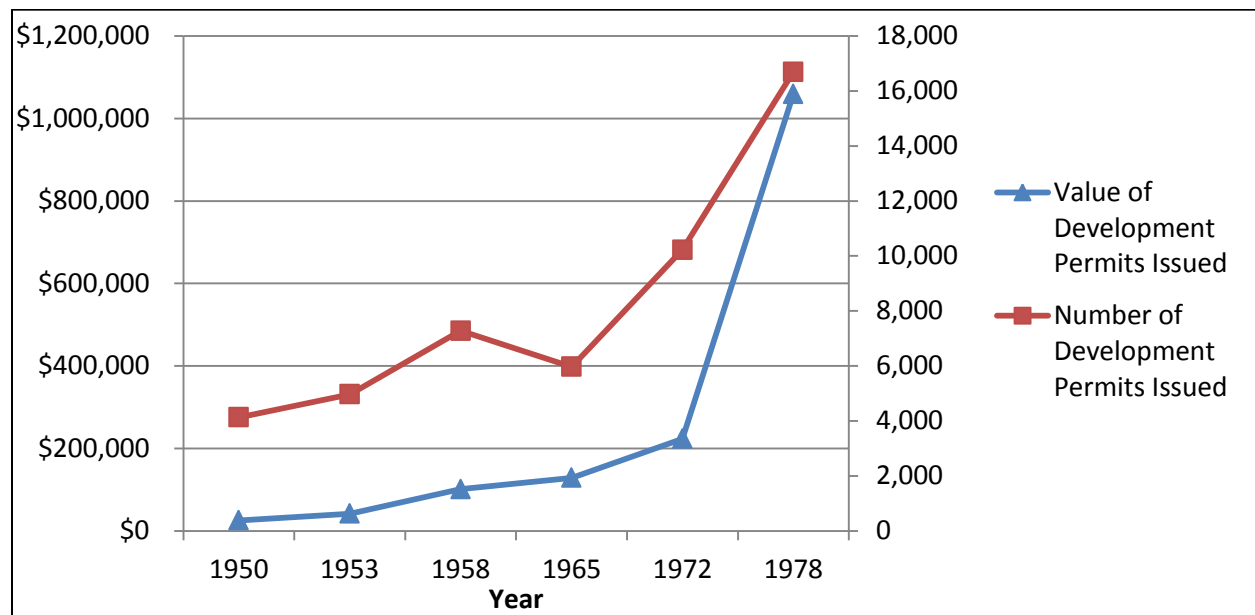


Figure 3.1 Growth in Calgary's development sector (selected years)

Source: Adapted from Foran, "Project Apollo," 17

While Calgary's development sector metastasized, property values continued to skyrocket amidst soaring oil prices in the early 1970s, particularly after the OPEC embargo years of 1973-74.²³¹ As public discontent mounted, developers blamed rising housing prices on the City's reticence to annex land in pace with demand for development. City officials began to bristle under developer influence, and

²³⁰ By the close of the 1970s, Carma and Nu-West joined Daon and Genstar amongst the 10 wealthiest development firms in the nation. See Susan Goldenberg's *Men of Property: The Canadian Developers who are Buying America* (Toronto: Personal Library, 1981) and James Lorimer's *The Developers* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1978).

²³¹ In his preamble to the City's 1974 financial report, Commissioner Alan Womack made the following remarks: "In 1974 we experienced the effects of the most dramatic change in the economic environment in the world that has occurred since the Depression. The price of oil from the Arabian sources [*sic*] was one of the main triggers which set off a succession of price increases affecting everything." City of Calgary, *1974 Financial Report*, 1975.

under the suspicion that high housing prices were caused by developer collusion and price-fixing more than land scarcity, the City's Chief Commissioner hired private contractors to secretly investigate the possibility of monopoly in Calgary's development sector in 1973.²³² Codenamed 'Project Apollo' and undertaken without the knowledge of other senior bureaucrats, the mayor, or City Council, the study eventually revealed 'preliminary' evidence of oligopolistic control, finding that three firms in particular – Genstar, Nu-West, and Carma – had assembled large landholdings situated on the city's periphery and dispersed between separate quarters that would not be in direct competition with one another.²³³

By the time the report was discovered and made public by City Council in October 1974, the City was considering a plebiscite on annexation which would have nearly doubled the city's footprint, and as Project Apollo revealed, created windfall profits for a handful of development firms. After Calgarians defeated the plebiscite at the polls by a three-to-one ratio, Genstar threatened the City with a lawsuit and forced it to officially apologize for the report and publically disavow its findings. In the following years, rising oil prices continued to (quite literally) fuel breakneck growth rates, and when housing prices nearly doubled (again) between 1974 and 1976, the City's backpedalling on Project Apollo undermined its ability to associate these increases with price fixing by developers. Conversely, developers regularly and publicly blamed mounting housing prices on a land supply deficit caused by stalled annexation plans, and humbled City administrators quietly acquiesced to a series of relatively small developer-initiated annexation proposals in 1974, 1975, and again in 1976.²³⁴ Two policy processes that unfolded in the aftermath of Project Apollo evidence the consolidation of a long-developing political project during that period that would set its own limits and pressures on policymakers, and eventually require a form of policy fix.

²³² Max Foran, "Project Apollo: The *Genstar Report* and the City of Calgary, 1973-1975," *Urban History Review* 38, no.1 (2009): 15-25. Parts of this essay appear in an altered form in Foran's *Expansive Discourses*, 105-133. See also Mike Cooper, "Calgary: Housing Market Control Revealed" in *The City Book: The Politics and Planning of Canada's Cities*, ed. James Lorimer and Evelyn Ross (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1976), 31-36.

²³³ Foran notes that the true extent of these firms – particularly Genstar – was largely invisible to the public eye, as subsidiary companies did not bear the names or advertise their relation to parent companies, thereby creating the impression of a greater degree of competition in Calgary's homebuilding sector than actually existed

²³⁴ Foran, *Expansive Discourses*, 115.

3.3 A TALE OF TWO POLICIES

Growth! It has been the chant of several decades of politicians and bureaucrats. Growth! It's a wonder Calgary city council's opening prayer doesn't beg the blessing of Growth instead of God when its members gather every other week.

RON WOOD²³⁵

To the economico-corporate phase, to the phase of struggle for hegemony in civil society and to the phase of State power there correspond specific intellectual activities which cannot be arbitrarily improvised or anticipated.

ANTONIO GRAMSCI²³⁶

While the City's backtracking over Project Apollo bolstered the developers' political clout, the contradictions of Calgary's growth model mounted towards the end of the 1970s. Buoyed by a rising tide of petrodollars, Calgary grew faster than any other medium-sized city in North America at that time, swelling by nearly 20 percent between 1976 and 1980 alone.²³⁷ But amidst the flood of suburban expansion that accompanied this growth, Calgary's role as an administrative centre for a growing Western Canadian mining sector had also produced high demand for office space. Most of this pressure was directed towards the low-profile residential units interleaved between the commercial services dotting Calgary's downtown core, where supplies of office space nearly tripled between 1976 and 1982.²³⁸ In 1979 alone, more square footage of office space was built in Calgary than in New York and Chicago combined, and the inner city's traditional stock single-family residences were put to the bulldozer at a voracious pace to clear room for office units, falling at a rate exceeding 600 per year by 1980.²³⁹ Despite robust growth in new residential apartment units in the downtown, Calgary's downtown population actually *declined* in lockstep with an equivalent boom on the suburban frontier during this period.²⁴⁰ In the meantime, while high inflation rates strained the City's ability to finance

²³⁵ Quoted in Chuck Reasons, "Real Estate: The Land Grab," in *Stampede City: Power and Politics in the West*, ed. Chuck Reasons (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1984), 69-70.

²³⁶ Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, 403-404.

²³⁷ Boddy, "Underground and Overhead," 142.

²³⁸ City of Calgary, *Inventory of Downtown Office Space*, Corporate Resources and Operations Research Department, 1982, 26.

²³⁹ Reasons, "Real Estate," 65-70.

²⁴⁰ In between the City's spring censuses in 1975 and 1976, 333 new apartment units were added to the downtown. By the time that the 1982 civic census was tallied, 2,367 new units had been added since the previous spring. On the other hand, the population of Calgary's inner city and inner-ring suburbs declined by 22 percent between 1970 and 1976, while the outer suburbs grew by 122 percent during this period. City of Calgary, *Comprehensive Annexation*; Foran, *Expansive Discourses*, 175.

status quo suburban growth, discontent over housing costs kept the City from raising property taxes, which remained the lowest of any major city in Western Canada.²⁴¹

Although the City had produced a new General Plan in 1973, these wrenching transformations compelled City officials to review the newly minted plan in 1976. As part of this review, two projects were launched to address problems of unchecked suburban growth and annexation on the one hand, and the socioeconomic disjunctures of downtown redevelopment on the other. The first of these was launched in January of that year, as the Planning Department led a series of open houses and in-house reviews to consider the impacts of the city's present growth model and examine the possibility for alternatives. Planners created a series of thirty year growth projections by October, alongside eight prospective strategies for allocating expected increases in jobs and population.²⁴² In the main, these strategies dealt with the relationship between housing prices, City finances, annexation, and zoning requirements, which had become hot-button issues in the wake of the Project Apollo fiasco. To simultaneously abate (though not eliminate) the need for politically contentious land annexations and reduce the need to build and maintain costly road services in new developments, three of these strategies proposed density increases and transit improvements within the city's existing borders. In contrast, and following the conventional (developers') logic that land supplies determined real estate prices, the study's remaining five strategies proposed continued annexation in varying degrees of intensity as mechanism to depress housing costs, create new spaces for low-cost commercial nodes, or both. Projecting a need for cost-effective solutions, the study ultimately recommended alternate growth plan which would have the City simultaneously scale back its commitments to annexation while channeling new developments towards districts with both high(er)-density requirements and pre-established infrastructural support.²⁴³

As a complement to this study, planners began work on a new Inner City Plan in September 1976 to assess how breakneck downtown redevelopment was transforming community life.²⁴⁴ While acknowledging that office space and high density residential developments were the most remunerative development options for inner city landowners, they articulated numerous concerns with "a cycle of

²⁴¹ Between 1977 and 1980, Calgary's Consumer Price Index rose by 29 percent, while property taxes only rose by 21 percent. In comparison to five major Western Canadian cities (Edmonton, Saskatoon, Regina, Vancouver, and Winnipeg) Calgarians also had the highest levels of disposable income, but lowest property taxes (in both relative and absolute terms). City of Calgary, *1982 Budget: Operations & Capital Budget Summary*, 1982, 20-20 and 20-23.

²⁴² City of Calgary, *Calgary's Future – Decide Now: A Summary of Alternative Strategies for Calgary*, 1977.

²⁴³ The politics (and consequences) of this study are described in Foran, *Expansive Discourses*, 117-121.

²⁴⁴ This plan was intended to replace the City's Downtown Plan, which had been approved in 1966.

speculation, deterioration, and redevelopment” had left numerous communities “struggling to maintain a livable environment and some semblance of neighbourhood identity.”²⁴⁵ Among multiple problems related to this cycle, “commercial intrusions into residential areas” and speculative investment patterns were held responsible for driving downtown residents (particularly the elderly, infirm, and low-income) to the suburban fringe, where City services were often wanting.²⁴⁶ These movements undermined the efficiency of City-owned services fixed in the downtown while creating new demands for City services and infrastructure in the outer suburbs, and the Inner City Plan accordingly noted that redevelopment was not only reconfiguring the downtown as a space inhospitable to community life, but creating numerous financial and political problems for the City.²⁴⁷ To remedy these dilemmas, the plan proposed a number of design and development controls for the area, outlining the need to preserve some of its (relatively) affordable housing stock, promote pedestrian-friendly design, accommodate a mix of housing types and styles, and limit the overall pace of redevelopment.

Neither project, however, was to be implemented as intended. When the City unveiled their proposed alternate growth strategy in October 1976, developers descended upon City Hall to protest its tentative shift towards higher densities. The UDI argued that Calgary’s real estate market preferred low-density housing, that the City’s plans violated free market choice, and that reductions in developable land supplies would (further) inflate housing prices. Predictably, these claims were accompanied by renewed pressure for annexation, and by March 1977 all recommendations for densification and scaled-back annexation were removed from the report. Dubbed the Balanced Growth Strategy, this policy effectively cemented trends already in motion by adopting a twofold strategy that – in contrast to its previous recommendations – endorsed *accelerated* (commercial) development in the downtown and *continued* annexation on the urban fringe.²⁴⁸ Tellingly, when the City drafted a Balanced Annexation

²⁴⁵ City of Calgary, *Inner City Plan*, Planning & Building Department, 1979, 3.

²⁴⁶ Transit and social services were singled out in the document as especially lacking on the suburban fringe.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 21-32. The plan singled out demographic trends (the replacement of families with apartment-dwelling couples and singles) and shifts in the built environment (the replacement of single-detached houses with a patchwork of monolithic, homogenous towers intercut with high-capacity roadways) as key problems. In both regards, the plan’s critique actually rested upon a rather conservative view in which non-traditional family households were held to “have little involvement or ‘stake’ in the community’s environment and activities.”

²⁴⁸ Foran, *Expansive Discourses*, 117-121. Initially, the study contained an internal ranking system for evaluating possible growth strategies based on their relative alignment with the City’s mercurial 1977 General Plan. The two strategies which had ranked most highly proposed a mix of densification in established communities and a more efficient distribution of homes and jobs within the city’s existing form, with special emphasis on the downtown. Ultimately, the Balanced Growth Strategy merged the strategy emphasizing spatial efficiency with one committed to reducing construction costs and “Influencing the market-place by ensuring an oversupply of land.” Cf. City of Calgary, *Calgary’s Future*, 7-12.

Policy only months later, it recommended that the City annex another 59 square kilometers of territory, noting that this move would help ameliorate high housing prices. After Carma and Nu-West complained that their landholdings were not amongst the annexations, however, another eight square kilometers were added to the policy's recommended takings, and under pressure from another group of landholders, the City expanded its proposal to a full 77 square kilometers only three months later.²⁴⁹

The Inner City Plan was likewise pilloried by developers, who alleged that its proposed controls were an unreasonable restriction on their basic property rights. Although the plan was accepted by City Council in 1979 (to the surprise of many planners), it was assigned a nonstatutory status. When the Planning Department was tasked with creating an implementation strategy for the bracketed Inner City Plan, their follow up plan (termed the Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan) followed its predecessor by proposing restrictions on commercial development and lower densities in the city centre. Developers again reacted strongly and swiftly to these proposals, and publicly denounced them as an unreasonable extension of the City's regulatory powers, an unrealistic defiance of market forces, and an unfair assault against (their) private property rights.²⁵⁰ In the meanwhile, development continued apace as Council waffled on this new plan, granting low-cost approvals for extravagantly high-density projects in the downtown which often exceeded the limits of existing plans.²⁵¹ When approval was given for a building which doubled the recommended building heights contained in the draft plan, Planning Director George Steber Jr. publicly questioned the City's commitment to preserving downtown community life, suggesting to a reporter that Council's reticence on the Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan might be rooted in a fear of upsetting local developers and real estate firms.²⁵²

New Mayor Ralph Klein swiftly and publicly rebuked Steber for his candor, and after a review of the Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan by a special Mayor's Task Force, the plan was tabled in the fall

²⁴⁹ Despite protestations from both the Calgary Regional Planning Commission and the neighbouring Municipal District of Rocky View (from whom this territory was taken), this annexation was approved by the Province on February 20, 1978. On May 11 of that year, however, the approved annexation was subsequently reduced to 40 square kilometers by Alberta's Minister for Municipal Affairs. See Foran, *Expansive Discourses*, 116-123.

²⁵⁰ In the terms of one developer, the plan "Defied the realities of the marketplace" – which ostensibly proscribed "high density, high rise" development in the downtown, "Whichever way you cut it" – while another noted that the plan was an "insidious subversion of land owner's property rights," warning that if the plan were followed, "developers would lose some freedom and city planners would gain too much authority." Both quotes were made in Calgary's most widely read daily newspaper (the *Calgary Herald*) and are cited in Reasons, "Real Estate", 69.

²⁵¹ Two former high-level planning managers (whom I respectively interviewed on October 16 and 17, 2012) averred that the City was approving some of the highest density developments in North America at that time.

²⁵² Reasons, "Real Estate," 71.

of 1981 before it was finally defeated altogether in the spring of 1982.²⁵³ Just months after the plan was defeated, Klein discussed the affair with a local newspaper, and commented that the Planning Department had recently “taken a far greater political role than it should”; he furthermore warned that “heads may have to roll” in order to preempt further political action from planners.²⁵⁴ And yet, as the Planning Department was publicly excoriated for obstructing growth, there were signs that Calgary’s prolonged postwar development frenzy was coming to a close. Indeed, as one of the most significant waves of growth and development in Canadian urban history began to crest, planners and policymakers alike scrambled to avoid being swept away in its undertow.

3.4 GROWTH COLLAPSED, HEGEMONY EMERGENT

Business people’s continuous interaction with public officials (including supporting them through substantial campaign contributions) gives them *systemic* power. Once organized, they stay organized.

JOHN LOGAN AND HARVEY MOLOTCH²⁵⁵

Intellectuals of the urban type have grown up along with industry and are linked to its fortunes. Their function can be compared to that of subaltern officers in the army.

ANTONIO GRAMSCI²⁵⁶

The events surrounding these two planning projects marked the consolidation of a new political-economic order for Calgary. As local development firms grew in both size and political influence over the 1970s, power relations in the city shifted from what Gramsci might have called an ‘economic-corporate’ arrangement between the City and developers to growth machine-style hegemony.²⁵⁷ This power shift occurred alongside an organic transformation in the structure of Calgary’s development firms, as a combination of high growth-rates, favourable local institutional arrangements, and supportive federal lending programs had transformed yesteryear’s small-scale ‘builder-developers’ into large, horizontally-

²⁵³ In October 1982, the City adopted the Core Area Policy brief, which derived many of its objectives and orientations from the Inner City Plan. Nevertheless, this policy was also condemned to nonstatutory status, which ensured that it would remain as ineffectual as its predecessor. See Sandalack and Nicolai, *Calgary Project*, 112.

²⁵⁴ These remarks were made in an interview with the *Calgary Herald* on May 1, 1981, and are cited in Reasons, “Real Estate,” 71. In the same interview, Klein went on to warn that “[t]he future of some divisions of the planning department are in doubt.”

²⁵⁵ Logan and Molotch, *Urban Fortunes*, 62.

²⁵⁶ Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, 14.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 173-185.

integrated firms with a substantial quantum of financial resources and political cachet at their disposal. The growing dependency of Calgary's enfeebled local state on these actors to finance civic infrastructure cleared the ground for a hegemonic project best described as *developer-led suburbanization*, wherein the imperatives of property developers were inscribed as a "world-shaping, practical body of thought" in Calgary's local institutional culture.²⁵⁸ If an apparent consensus upon 'growth' as an unquestioned, commonsensical public good was the ideological bedrock of this project, developers had emerged as the central organic intellectuals of this consensus, reinforcing its terms through tireless activism and advocacy. City planners, on the other hand, were positioned as subordinate intellectuals in this emergent hegemonic bloc. Although many planners jostled against the imperatives of developer-led suburbanization, *as a class* they nevertheless contributed to its reproduction by adopting and adapting to several of its key ideological postulates while organizing – like "subaltern officers in the army" – a requisite degree of legitimacy for private land markets through supporting policy frameworks.

A critical foundation of the developers' hegemonic ascendancy during this period rested in their ability to establish housing prices a metonym for the general public interest, effectively trumping any questions of social welfare (as in the Inner City Plan) or the proper expenditure of public funds (as in the Balanced Growth Strategy) in major public policy debates. The City's uni-city approach to annexation, for instance, had initially been adopted as a mechanism for maintaining adequate revenue flows in Calgary's property tax base, but was eventually recast as means to assuage escalating housing prices by expanding developable land supplies. When City's commissioners acceded to pressure for annexation in the 1977 Balanced Annexation Policy, for instance, they did so under the premise that "provid[ing] large areas of land with a potential for residential development [...] should assist in keeping down the price of housing."²⁵⁹ The City repeated the claim that limited land supplies drove high housing costs in a 1978 appeal to the Province for annexation, where they also supported the UDI's claim that market forces must determine housing type and location; likewise, in a committee to investigate high housing costs later that year, the City decided to begin maintaining a 30-year supply of developable land within its boundaries, claiming that "the lack of developable raw land in a high demand situation has been the major factor in the dramatic increase in housing costs during the past five years."²⁶⁰

It was significant that the City accepted this line of argument (which it had previously rejected) in a period of high inflation where other factors likely played a role in high housing prices. It is more

²⁵⁸ The phrase is taken from Wainwright, "Conceptions of the World," 166.

²⁵⁹ Quoted in Foran, *Expansive Discourses*, 121.

²⁶⁰ City of Calgary, *Comprehensive Annexation*, 21.

significant, however, that the City used this line of argument to pursue a development trajectory (the Balanced Growth Strategy) that *its own research* had previously declared unviable for public finances.²⁶¹ This capitulation effectively entrenched low housing prices as the dominant policy objective for the City. As former one senior-level planning official observed,

The whole thing that drove Council was that we would approve anything that would reduce the price of housing ... that was the thing, because the industry was saying 'well, the main reason the price of housing is so high is land supply [*sic*], et cetera, et cetera. That was all that mattered.'²⁶²

Although welfarist concerns had admittedly been modest in local policy up to this point, this reversal of course signaled the emergence of the homebuying suburban *consumer* as the privileged subject for public policy.²⁶³ Yet, these subjects' apparent desire for cheap-at-all-costs housing and suburban living arrangements was not only rendered as the ersatz public interest, but also positioned as synecdochic with developers' seemingly inalienable right to develop their landholdings as they pleased in response to public demands. In this sense, private property rights and consumer sovereignty fused in a powerful political script which saw developers divine the popular interest through market trends, historical precedents, and customer feedback.²⁶⁴ Indeed, the hegemonic primacy of consumer choice appeared etched into the ubiquitous suburban landscapes encroaching upon the prairie fringe in this period; the virulent expansion of this built form was enough to lead two local geographers to the pithy conclusion that "in a society in which competitive enterprise is a fundamental value, it would be futile for urban planners to attempt a high order of manipulation."²⁶⁵

In course, Klein seemed to affirm as much in a speech made to Calgary's business elite only months before the Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan was defeated in Council:

In our effort to make the commercial core a more human place, we must be careful to avoid the trap of putting sunlight ahead of commerce: sunlight does not turn the wheels in our factory.²⁶⁶

²⁶¹ City of Calgary, *Calgary's Future – Decide Now*.

²⁶² Interview, October 17, 2012.

²⁶³ On enterprising subjects, public policy and neoliberalism, see Miller, "Modes of Governance," 225-227.

²⁶⁴ In an interview on December 21, 2012 one developer recalled this as a halcyon era where developers' interests were seen as isomorphic with Calgary's social wellbeing, and policy primarily aimed "to assist growth to happen."

²⁶⁵ DG Harasym and PJ Smith, "Planning for Retail Services in New Residential Areas Since 1944," in *Calgary: Metropolitan Structure and Influence*, ed. Benton Barr (Victoria, BC: University of Victoria Press, 1975), 186. On hegemony and space, see Jessop, "Gramsci as Spatial Theorist."

²⁶⁶ Quoted in Reasons, "Real Estate," 1983.

In the year leading up to Klein's ominous declaration, however, the wheels of production were already grinding to a halt not just in Calgary, but across Alberta: the high oil prices that had sustained Calgary's breakneck postwar boom began to collapse in 1981, dragging both Alberta's oil industry and Calgary's economic fortunes down along with it.²⁶⁷ By the time of this collapse, Calgary's homebuilders were, in the words of one former planning manager, "building houses for people who were coming to Calgary to build houses," and residential development cratered as interest rates soared and migration flows dried up.²⁶⁸ Because civic infrastructure for these new developments had been financed in a period of high inflation, the City's debt rate more than tripled between 1977 and 1982.²⁶⁹ Using the pretext of budgetary shortfalls, Klein used this recessionary slide as an occasion to make good on this previous threats to cut jobs in politically active departments, cutting 76 jobs from the Planning Department in July 1983.²⁷⁰ Just months earlier, George Steber Jr. had also resigned from his position as Director of Planning after eleven years in the hotseat, citing unmanageable tensions with the City's senior administrators.

Most planners I spoke to about these events, however, claim that Steber was actually *fired* over the Inner City Plan. Indeed, the disciplinary power of Calgary's growth machine was not only discursive; several planners recalled feeling of widespread insecurity during this period. One senior planning official

²⁶⁷ Local folk theory holds that the collapse of Alberta's petroleum economy in 1982 was the result of an industry-wide capital strike in response to the federal government's contentious National Energy Program (NEP); yet, this story ignores that a fall in global oil prices (by approximately two-thirds) in 1982 was more closely linked to the end of the Iranian Revolution and restoration of Iran's oil production. This popular tale of Alberta's petro-Atlases shrugging off the fetters of state encroachment also fails to account for the subsequent collapse of Alberta's oil sector in 1986, which occurred *after* the NEP was abolished, but *during* a period where OPEC countries repeatedly exceeded their production quotas. Nevertheless, this folk myth emerged in several interviews conducted for this study, and used to explain local economic woes in City of Calgary, *1990 Financial & Economic Review*, 1990, s.4-5.

²⁶⁸ Interview, October 17, 2012. In 1981, the City issued \$2.5 billion worth of development permits: this number fell to \$1.1 billion in 1982 and \$422 million in 1983 before bottoming out at \$393 million in 1984. The most precipitous declines were in the residential sector, where the total value of building permits declined by 90 percent between 1981 and 1984, compared to 70 percent decline across all sectors combined. *Ibid.* s.4-50.

²⁶⁹ In 1990 dollars, the City's debt rose from \$409 million in 1977 to \$1.3 billion in 1982, despite a budgetary 'gift' from the Province in 1979 which reduced the City's debt by 19 percent. Much of this staggering increase was tied to a light-rail network the City began constructing in 1977, alongside several other infrastructures related to the City's Olympic bid. As construction costs inflated by 15-18 percent *per year* during this period, the budgets for this projects had ballooned accordingly. City of Calgary, *1982 Budget*, s.20-9.

²⁷⁰ Reasons, "Real Estate," 75. Although I could not find staff figures for that year or the year prior, these cuts would have amounted to nearly thirty percent of the Planning Department's total staff in 1979. Many interviewees related the impression that a latent crisis of insolvency loomed during this period, though it should be noted that while the City's rate of profit (measured as an excess of revenues over expenditures) fell by 22 percent between budget years 1981-82, its revenue intake actually *increased* by 33.5 percent in the same period, with its combined balance of surplus rising by 19 percent (more than \$40 million). City of Calgary, *Financial Report – 1982, 1983*.

recollected the atmosphere in the Planning Departments after Steber's departure and the Inner City Plan's defeat as follows:

So, we had to redo this Core Area Policy Brief, but in the meantime the recession had hit and all these big people with their big ideas and everything all came crashing down ... and there was a series of layoffs in the Planning Department at that time and we were completely vulnerable because George Steber had been fired, and actually a number of staff got together and put together a program to save peoples' jobs. We all took extra day's holidays so that some people could not be let go.²⁷¹

These feelings of vulnerability were far from singular; several planners remembered both departmental cuts and Steber's subsequent exit as purposeful moments of discipline enacted to keep planners in line with extant developmental prerogatives.²⁷² The sense of precarity expressed to me in these interviews was undergirded by a sense of collusion between senior City bureaucrats, politicians, and developers: one planning manager's view that there were "strong ties between the development community and members of Council" was confirmed by a number of other planners who had worked during that era, while many agreed with another planner who claimed that development industry representatives would bypass noncompliant planning staff and directly bargain with upper tiers of City administration (and Council) to facilitate approvals.²⁷³ One high ranking planning official observed that the annexations necessitated by the compromised Balanced Growth Strategy were a way to "make sure that all of the big developers have land in the strategy," while another claimed that the enfeeblement of downtown planning strategies was a move to both appease developers and discipline the Planning Department.²⁷⁴

In many cases, planners invoked vivid, embodied anecdotes to convey their subordination, if not powerlessness, within Calgary's development culture. I was told of nervous City managers reading aloud tersely worded letters from irate developers threatening to report recalcitrant planners to acquiescent members of City Council for discipline; back-office encounters with builders and developers wherein the sanctity of property rights and market choice were asserted with raised voices and fists pounding upon conference tables; accusations of socialist tendencies hurled at non-cooperative planners by elected

²⁷¹ Interview, October 16, 2012. When I tried to ask Steber was fired, I was cut off before I could finish my sentence: "Why was George Steber fired? Over the Downtown Plan [*sic*]. You know, really, that was, that was it."

²⁷² In an interview on December 13, 2012, a former manager in the Planning Department claimed that "it was taken for granted that the industry and marketplace was the means of change, the means of building the city, and planning had a role to support the marketplace, but God help you if you got ... you know, if you weren't in synch."

²⁷³ Interview, former City of Calgary planning manager, December 22, 2012.

²⁷⁴ Interview, October 17, 2012; Interview, December 13, 2012. This former account is more or less confirmed in Foran, *Expansive Discourses*, 121-123.

officials during public meetings; and numerous cocktail parties, lunchtime meetings, and closed-door debriefings where the sentiment of growth a foundational public good was restated and reinforced.²⁷⁵

Against the available historical record, these accounts are credible. The fact that these stories were imparted regularly and independently in virtually *all* of the interviews I conducted with planners who worked for the City during this period moreover indicate that this was, at the very least, how this period was experienced. In addition, the subordination of City officials to developers in major public policy debates also suggests that there really was a deficit of legitimacy among planning staff. Even still, there is more than a small degree of self-defensiveness in these narratives which allows planners to lay the blame for Calgary's sprawling developmental arc at the feet of overpowering, determining forces beyond their control. Developers and client members of City Council were not the only actors upon whom these pressures were blamed, either: many of the planners I interviewed also attested that there *really was* a popular consensus on home-ownership, suburban living, and the ideal of the free market as normative social values at the time. In the view of these planners, policy strategies which encouraged sprawl were responses to popular demand, against which planners depicted themselves as powerless. After claiming that skullduggery involving developers and Council had "assassinated" the Inner City Plan, for instance, one former planning manager mused:

Part of what shapes planning and the way things get built is the economic context, what consumers, the public wants, and to a lesser extent what the industry does. But it's probably driven more by how strong the economy is and what consumers want. And that really, when you're doing planning you're doing it within that context, and there's only so far you can go.²⁷⁶

Within such sentiments lay an underlying agreement with the developer's position that public policy is beholden to 'market trends', and not the other way around. Although accepting these principles as unreflexive common sense allowed planners to achieve the "organic" unity between political society and civil society imagined by Gramsci, this common sense *demonstrably* and *recurrently* undermined the ability of planners to fulfill their professional credo of orderly, equitable, environmentally viable urban growth. Tellingly, the same planner who acknowledged that "there's only so far you can go" against consumer demand later noted that the discipline of urban planning itself was premised upon notions of

²⁷⁵ A former elected official recalled to me in an interview on September 25, 2012 that he sarcastically told Planning Department representatives that the Inner City Plan should have been "bound in red" for its presentation to Council; another planner recalled being called a "communist" by a member of City Council in public; another planner who was born in South Africa and trained in Britain recalled that former Mayor Rod Sykes had told him in the 1970s that he "should have gone east to Russia instead of west to Canada" when he presented a potentially restrictive planning document to Council in the late 1970s.

²⁷⁶ Interview, December 13, 2012.

‘sustainability’ long before the term had come into its modern-day vogue: yet, his refusal to accept or even acknowledge the antinomian tensions between economic growth, social equity, and ecological preservation at the heart of urban planning was virtually universal among his peers.²⁷⁷ But these contradictions had not yet reached a crisis point; other tensions within Calgary’s particular ‘determined market’ were on the boil.

3.5 CONSERVATIVE EIGHTIES, REVOLUTIONARY NINETIES

[...] clearly places do not have single, unique ‘identities’; they are full of internal conflicts.

DOREEN MASSEY²⁷⁸

In the wake of the precipitous economic collapse of 1981-82, developers in Calgary were plunged into billions of dollars in debt as demand for new homes evaporated, property values plummeted, and speculatively constructed homes sat idle. The collapse of Calgary’s development sector was paralleled by a growing crisis of real property overaccumulation that was reverberating across the Canadian urban system, and of the four dominant development firms operating in Calgary (Daon, Nu-West, Carma, and Genstar), Daon and Nu-West folded altogether, while Carma only survived the crisis in only skeletal form.²⁷⁹ Although the particular cast of firms in Calgary’s hegemonic bloc was reorganized during this period, however, the ‘organically necessary’ growth machine ideology that was consolidated in the 1970s outlived its founding architects. Housing prices and property rights remained the centre stage in political dramas surrounding urban development, and annexation and permissive zoning continued to be recurrent narrative tropes and plot devices in a storyline that continued guiding planning and development in Calgary, even in the face of mounting costs.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁷ Cf. Campbell, “Green Cities.”

²⁷⁸ Doreen Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 155.

²⁷⁹ By 1982, Daon, Carma, and Nu-West were estimated to have taken losses up to 90 percent. Daon and Carma were both bought out and essentially faded from sight in Calgary; Carma stayed afloat only through multiple reorganizations and by selling 48 percent of their development arm to a consortium of Toronto bankers in 1987. Owing to their diversified portfolio and complex, multinational ownership scheme, however, Genstar survived the crash relatively unscathed. Jack McArthur, “Turbulent Boom and Bust Cycles Characterize the Canadian Economy,” *Toronto Star*, June 11, 1987, E2; “Carma-Bancorp to Buy 48% Stake in Carma Ltd.,” *Toronto Star*, July 31, 1987, C2; Interview with former developer, October 19, 2012.

²⁸⁰ One 1982 report on the costs of growth, for instance, claimed that while the City had to “run to stay in place” to fund existing budgetary commitments, “favourable developments will not happen unless there is adequate

Amidst rising tides of municipal debt (Table 3.1) and back-to-back years of population *decline* in 1983 and 1984, the City stayed the course with a spree of 11 annexations between 1982 and 1989.²⁸¹ This strategy was reaffirmed as the foundation of efficient growth in the 1986 Long-Term Growth Management Strategy, which claimed that the maintenance of a (privately-owned) 30-year land supply would “allow for the comprehensive planning of new areas” while encouraging “requisite choice and competition in the marketplace.”²⁸² In the meantime, a 1978 rewrite of the Planning Act rescinded the City’s obligations to create a general municipal plan every five years, and efforts to tighten development regulations languished throughout the decade as planners searched for options to jumpstart growth.²⁸³

Table 3.1 Calgary’s municipal debt, 1980-88

Year	Total Municipal Debt (\$000s)	Expenditures on Debt Repayment (\$000s)	Total Expenditures (\$000s)	Total Expenditures Dedicated to Debt Repayment (%)
1980	669,551	57,569	575,266	10%
1981	920,297	97,293	739,342	13%
1982	1,300,501	143,559	763,154	19%
1983	1,444,416	180,109	873,999	21%
1984	1,629,435	213,272	920,175	23%
1985	1,660,553	237,939	970,512	25%
1986	1,649,816	241,289	1,069,834	23%
1987	1,654,666	226,860	1,068,967	21%
1988	1,651,394	236,828	1,128,748	21%

Source: City of Calgary, *1990 Review*

Further complication arose as the provincial government adjusted its own spending priorities in response to another drop in oil prices in 1986. Provincial expenditures fell by 15 percent in real terms

planning for the accommodation of growth [...] which keeps pace with the growth in the private sector.” It went on to claim furthermore that stronger planning controls would only bring about negative externalities such as “congestion, higher noise levels, pollution, and other problems” which would cause the City to “lose out on future opportunities for favorable growth and enrichment of life.” City of Calgary, *Financing Urban Growth*, 1982, 2-3.

²⁸¹ Calgary’s population fell from 623,133 in 1982 to 620,692 in 1983, before dropping to 619,814 in 1984. These were the first years of population decline in Calgary’s recorded history. These annexations are mapped in Neptis Foundation, *Growing Cities: Comparing Urban Growth Patterns and Regional Growth Policies in Calgary, Toronto, and Vancouver*, 2010 (Toronto: Neptis Foundation), 70.

²⁸² City of Calgary, *Long-Term Growth Management Strategy*, 1986

²⁸³ PS Elder, “The New Alberta Planning Act,” *Alberta Law Review* 17, no. 3 (1979): 434-466; PS Elder, “Some Interesting Aspects of the Alberta Planning Act, 1977,” *Alberta Law Review* 18, no. 2 (1980): 198-215. The City would not draft another general plan until 1998: the 20 year gap between this plan and its predecessor is the longest interval between major planning frameworks since the City adopted its first general plan in 1963. The City’s commitment to short-term projects in the 1980s was related to me by multiple informants.

under the leadership of Premier Don Getty between 1986 and 1991, with the majority of cuts focused on welfare services, healthcare, education, and other social services.²⁸⁴ Amidst windfall subsidies for Alberta's energy and agricultural sectors, welfare fell by over 22 percent between 1986 and 1991, while inflation climbed by an average of 5 percent per year during this period.²⁸⁵ Faced with declining funding from the Province and escalating demand for municipally-owned social services, the City began re-examining its own finances. In 1987, the City reassessed residential property tax rates for the first time since 1975, resulting in a 4 percent property taxes rise that year, followed by another 3.5 percent hike in 1988.²⁸⁶ Elsewhere, user fees were raised (and in some cases, instituted) for municipal services, hiring for City jobs was attenuated, and spending was slashed across the board as the City struggled with the dual pressure to pay down its debt load while maintaining effective public services.²⁸⁷

As social anxieties climbed under welfare retrenchment, Provincial Municipal Affairs Minister Dennis Anderson challenged Albertan municipalities to prepare "preferred vision" statements for the future. The City responded by soliciting 300 civic leaders, businessmen, and lay citizens (including a high school-aged Naheed Nenshi) to craft its own vision.²⁸⁸ The reasons for this project remain cloaked in mystery; perhaps the program was a state project designed to reestablish faith in the state amidst rising economic insecurity (although this is admittedly doubtful, given that *municipal* vision statements would do little to boost support for the *provincial* government). In light of the era's austere zeitgeist, however, the study that emerged from this exercise was even more surprising. Entitled *Calgary 2020* – a pun on both 'clarity of vision' and the project's 30-year scope – this study constituted the City's first attempt to organize a vision for urban sustainability without attempting to provide a 'fix' for any immediate social, economic, or political conflicts.²⁸⁹ In the future imagined by *Calgary 2020*, Calgary's local economy had diversified to support the growth of renewable energy and knowledge-based industries, social equity

²⁸⁴ Kevin Taft, *Shredding the Public Interest* (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press and Parkland Institute, 1997), 22.

²⁸⁵ In 1986 and 1987, the Province's spending on industrial subsidies was over 600 percent higher than the national average, for a total of more than \$3 billion. Although the Province's spending on industrial development had surpassed corporate taxes every year since 1976, industrial subsidies (particularly in the energy sector) intensified dramatically after the 'double-dip' recession of 1986: of the \$34 billion the Province spent on private-sector subsidies between 1971 and 1996, some \$20 billion were provided between 1986 and 1996 alone. *Ibid.*, 41-49.

²⁸⁶ City of Calgary, *1987 Financial Report*, 1988; City of Calgary, *1988 Financial Report*, 1989.

²⁸⁷ In deliberations over the 1989 municipal budget, for example, City Council dropped a proposed 4.5 percent property tax increase to 3.5 percent by cutting \$5.9 million from the City's operating budget, with the largest cuts going to transit service, data processing services, and public libraries, respectively. Claudia Cattaneo, "Property Tax Raise to Hold at 3.5 Per Cent," *Calgary Herald*, Dec. 20, 1988, D5.

²⁸⁸ Local historian Max Foran – frequently cited in this chapter – was also among those consulted.

²⁸⁹ Cf. While et al., "Environment and Entrepreneurial City."

had blossomed under expanded redistribution schemes, democratic capacities had flourished under participatory governance regimes, and Calgary's ecological integrity had been preserved through stronger conservation efforts and more environmental clean-ups.²⁹⁰ Despite some inconsistencies and incongruities, the ten 'guideposts' steering this vision appealed to a set of common social values and a collective civic identity (Figure 3.2), and the report itself continuously valorized diversity, difference, entrepreneurship, and equity as cornerstones for a new modality of community life.

1. People come first. A successful city invests in its children, education and training, strong communities, and quality work environments.
2. We are our past. The best choices for the future will build on our heritage, our values and our strengths.
3. Our prosperity in the past has been based on hard work, innovation and entrepreneurship. Our future depends on modern, aggressive approaches.
4. Our natural environment is perhaps our greatest asset. All plans, programs and activities must be sustainable. We are stewards for our children.
5. Calgary must make healthy decisions. A positive future will depend on people committed to wellness and supportive living conditions.
6. Calgarians are community-minded volunteers. Interdependence and self-help remain the key to the future.
7. Calgary is a city of many ethnic origins. We accept the challenge of reaching for our multi-cultural potential.
8. From time to time any Calgarian may be disadvantaged. Community success can be determined by the manner in which we provide one another with opportunities and incentives to improve the quality of life.
9. Calgary is proud to be a safe and secure city for all. Any abuse is simply unacceptable.
10. Our governments are extensions of ourselves and our communities. Citizenship and involvement are assumed in Calgary.

Figure 3.2 *Calgary 2020* guideposts

Source: City of Calgary, *Calgary 2020*, 3

Rather than asserting these values as free-floating, abstract principles, *Calgary 2020* related them to new spatialities. Its references to stronger community bonds and restored ecological integrity were tied to calls for stronger public transport networks, more urban green spaces, restored riparian environments, and better social facilities. In contrast to Calgary's received urban form, housing "for all ages and income groups" was imagined to return to the inner city; surrounding this "living downtown,"

²⁹⁰ City of Calgary, *Calgary 2020: Calgarians Choosing their Future Today*, 1989.

it called for a multi-nodal metropolitan structure that would rework the city's monotonous suburbs into a patchwork of vibrant and unique "urban villages."²⁹¹ The plan forecast future generations would see that "Pass-through traffic has been limited, and more and more [sic] people now walk or cycle" in these new spaces, and in true Jane Jacobs fashion, the increased use of city sidewalks would be expected to "make our streets safer [...] than ever."²⁹² Accordingly, the need for automobile use engendered by Calgary's postwar sprawl was expected to be resolved by this transition to a mixed-use built form and transportation network "weighted heavily in favour of public transportation."²⁹³

Although the concept of sustainability is used only twice within the forty page report, *Calgary 2020* nevertheless anticipated several now-standard trappings of contemporary urban sustainability discourses, including (intergenerational) social equity, environmental conservation, and 'balanced' economic growth, with due reference to a dense, mixed-use urban form and privileged access for pedestrians, cyclists, and public transit users. But like the sustainability discourses it presaged, the normative vision of *Calgary 2020* is often ambiguous, fraught, and incomplete. Despite its titular pun on visual clarity, the actual agents and institutions responsible for implementing the reports vision were obscured from sight, and actual policy recommendations were scarce.²⁹⁴ Furthermore, while the report celebrated interpersonal relations and hinted at collective responsibility for social change, it frequently asserted the need for bootstrapping self-help while simultaneously praising individual responsibility.²⁹⁵ These contradictions created significant confusion over the role and status of public policy: for instance, while the report insisted upon a future of "full employment offering meaningful, dignified work with livable wages," it neglected any mention of formal labour regulations or legal wage standards, while providing the meager suggestion that this goal should be "the highest priority of employers."²⁹⁶ On the one hand, parts of *Calgary 2020*'s social vocabulary and spatial imaginary challenged the city's received form of development and hegemony of its quotidian suburban lifeworlds; but on the other hand, its

²⁹¹ *Calgary 2020*, 14-17. Cf. Sandalack and Nicolai, *The Calgary Project*, 141.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, 16. Cf. Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961), especially the chapter "The Uses of Sidewalks: Safety."

²⁹³ City of Calgary, *Calgary 2020*, 17.

²⁹⁴ The only mention of public policy in the report is a call for a security-oriented form of planning that would see every building "equipped with prevention and protection devices with electronic links to nearby emergency services." While this version of "safety and security" safeguards the wellbeing of anonymized groups of building occupants, it nevertheless leaves the wellbeing of surrounding communities and social classes – from, say, gentrification, spatially-organized exclusion, or environmental hazards – out of view. *Calgary 2020*, 24.

²⁹⁵ For example, the report envisioned Calgary as "a truly pluralistic community that thrives on diversity," animated by a "deeply held awareness of the needs of others," but it nevertheless asserts that "Personal responsibility and community self-help are hallmarks of our collective value system." *Ibid.*, 7, 30.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

idealist appeals to individual liberties ignored how Calgary's extant structure (which was presumably in need of improvement) was founded upon the *exact same principles*. These latent contradictions would not, however, be (immediately) translated into any form of statutory policy: *Calgary 2020* was accepted and approved by City Council in fall of 1989, but despite a promise within the report for a forthcoming implementation plan, this follow-up never materialized, and the vision quickly sank from view.²⁹⁷

Parallel to this largely symbolic exercise, however, another revolutionary vision was working to transform social life in Calgary and beyond. In March 1989, Calgary mayor Ralph Klein left municipal politics to run for provincial office, and quickly ascended the ranks of Alberta's governing Progressive Conservative party. When party leader Don Getty stepped down as premier in 1992, Klein emerged as a front-runner for the Province's top job. Seizing on popular unease surrounding sluggish growth rates, Klein claimed that Alberta's slow economic recovery and mounting deficits were caused by regulatory red tape and profligate spending, particularly in the fields of social welfare and healthcare. Accordingly, Klein crafted a platform of rapid deficit-reduction, across-the-board spending cuts, reducing the size of government, and promoting economic growth through low taxes, permissive labour legislation, and minimal regulation.²⁹⁸ After winning the PC leadership race in December 1992, Klein was elected Premier in June of the following year, and two years before Mike Harris' infamous 'Common Sense Revolution' swept him to office in Ontario, the 'Klein Revolution' began systematically dismantling Alberta's already modest welfare state under the auspices of restoring growth by "getting government out of the business of business."²⁹⁹ When Klein government released its first budget in 1993, it invoked a looming debt crisis to legitimate a proposed 20 percent reduction in spending from the previous budget year. By 1995, the Province had cut nearly \$2 billion in annual spending, or 30 percent in real per capita terms, while annual budgets were aptly retitled 'business plans'.³⁰⁰ While many of these cuts targeted healthcare, education, and public-sector wages, support for municipalities also fell under Klein's budgetary meat-ax (Table 3.2), alongside Alberta's regional planning commissions, which were abolished

²⁹⁷ In 1997, the report was again presented to Council as a potential basis for the City's bid for Expo 2005, though nothing came of the report nor the Expo bid. Ron Collins and Dave Pommer, "Calgary 2020 Puts People First, City Survey Says," *Calgary Herald*, Feb. 4, 1997, B2.

²⁹⁸ Although it is true that the Province posted budgetary *deficits* in a number of years throughout the late 1980s and 1990s, the Province's reserves of revenue from the oil and gas sector had actually kept its *debt* levels – the target of Klein's populist ire – stable. See Greg Flanagan, "Not Just About Money: Provincial Budgets and Political Ideology," in *The Return of the Trojan Horse: Alberta and the New World Dis(O)rder*, ed. Trevor Harrison (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2005), 115-135. See also Smart, "Restructuring," 60.

²⁹⁹ On Ontario's 'Common Sense Revolution', see Boudreau et al., *Changing Toronto*, 58-60.

³⁰⁰ Flanagan, "Not Just About Money," 124. Shortly after the 1993 election, Klein received a visit – and budgetary advice – from Roger Douglas, who in his past role as New Zealand's Minister of Finance masterminded many of that country's neoliberal reforms during the 1980s.

in 1995.

Table 3.2 City budgets in an austere age, 1991-1995

Year	Population	Total Expenditures (\$000s)	Total Revenue (\$000s)	Total Contribution from Senior Levels of Government (\$000s)	Contributions from Senior Levels of Government as a Percentage of Total Revenue
1991	708,593	1,229,940	1,300,230	112,636	8.6%
1992	717,133	1,276,686	1,342,773	112,339	8.3%
1993	727,719	1,289,717	1,363,812	83,795	6.1%
1994	738,184	1,280,723	1,382,812	71,617	5.1%
1995	749,073	1,305,366	1,390,752	57,388	4.1%

Source: City of Calgary, 1995 *Financial Report*, 1996, 40-41.

As Provincial support for municipal operations tumbled precipitously after 1993, the Province's retrenchment of social services created more demand for services at the municipal scale. Faced with stagnant revenues and increasing costs (driven partly by a modest rebound in population growth), the City began cutting its own expenditures in 1993 as well.³⁰¹ In his preamble to the City's 1993 Financial Report – a space typically used to polish the City's image and trumpet its successes – Mayor Al Duerr cited “shifting political and social climates” as imperatives for an evolutionary adaptation in the role and function of urban government; quoting no less a figure than Charles Darwin himself, he noted that “It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but rather the one that is most adaptable to change.”³⁰² Under the auspices of this neo-Darwinist pragmatism, Duerr froze property taxes and municipal wages between 1994 and 1997 while hiking user fees for City services to cover real revenue shortfalls in the City's property tax base. Departments across the City (again) tightened their belts and suspended planned staff hires, while adopting new mandates that focused on efficiency and attrition.³⁰³ Within this austere moment, the people-first vision of *Calgary 2020* – fraught though it may have been – seemed superfluous, if not anathematic. But for a city of such contradictions, it is perhaps fitting that this would be moment in which sustainability would make its formal debut on the main stage of Calgary's ongoing policymaking drama.

³⁰¹ The 8.2 percent drop in real expenditures between 1993 and the year prior was only the second time spending had dropped in Calgary's postwar history, and it occurred during period of mild economic growth in Alberta's energy sector. The only other occasion where spending had dropped from one year to the next occurred when real spending dropped by less than 0.1 percent in 1987, in the midst of one of the worst recessions in provincial history.

³⁰² City of Calgary, 1993 *Financial Report*, 1994, 2.

³⁰³ This was elaborated in interviews with planners on October 11, October 17, and December 17, 2012.

3.6 ROADS TO REFORM

Entering the '90s, Calgary enjoys an excellent road system that is the envy of many other cities. Even in rush hour is it possible to drive to downtown from anywhere in the city in half an hour or so [...] Until now a predominantly auto-based transportation system has served most Calgarians well. But things have changed.

CITY OF CALGARY, *SUSTAINABILITY: SHOULD IT BE THE ETHIC FOR TRANSPORTATION PLANNING IN THE '90s?*³⁰⁴

By the dawn of the 1990s, decades of unabated suburban development had stretched Calgary's frame to 672 kilometres, giving it the second largest urban footprint in the country. Although most residential growth scattered to the prairie fringe, employment remained concentrated in the inner city, leaving nearly 25 percent of jobs located in a downtown corridor that accounted for only half of one percent of the city's total size.³⁰⁵ The 3,460 kilometers road network funneling traffic from Calgary's sprawling suburban patchwork to these jobs required frequent additions and expansions to avoid backlog, and in spring 1990 City transportation planners unveiled an amendment to its master planning framework reflecting the need for several new bridges and freeways, included river crossings in two of Calgary's most sensitive riparian environments. Within three weeks, an independent citizen's committee had gathered over eight thousand signatures in a petition to have the plan scrapped, and concerned citizens swarmed a public deliberation on the project in protest. The timing was inopportune: only eight months prior, an election brought a new mayor and a relatively large turnover on City Council. The controversy surrounding the City's proposed river crossings posed the first public relations challenge for this rookie Council, who promptly beat a hasty retreat and accused the Transportation Department of failing to adequately consult with citizens groups.³⁰⁶ The plan was scrapped, and by February 1991 Council directed the Transportation Department to overhaul the City's transportation planning framework for the first time in nearly two decades. If there was no need for an 'urban sustainability fix' before *Calgary 2020*, then the situation looked decidedly different only two years later.

³⁰⁴ City of Calgary, *Sustainability: Should it be the Ethic for Transportation Planning in the '90s?*, GoPlan Discussion Paper Series No. 1-06-93, 1993, 12.

³⁰⁵ City of Calgary, *Employment Distribution and Forecasts and Future Travel Demand Study*, BA Consulting Group, GoPlan Discussion Paper Series No. 3-12-93, 1993. In 1991, the City was estimated to have 373,000 jobs, of which 352,000 were non-mobile or 'fixed': of these 352,000 jobs, 87,000 were concentrated in a 3.6 square kilometer stretch of the downtown.

³⁰⁶ Don Martin, "Plans Spark Outrage," *Calgary Herald*, June 20, 1990, A3; Allyson Jeffs, "Residents Claim Edworthy Park Victory," *Calgary Herald*, June 20, 1990, B1.

Eager to avoid another public relations fiasco, City Council scanned for alternative public-engagement strategies, and held a two-day forum on public policy and participatory planning and public policy in August 1991. Given the lingering legitimacy deficit among planning staff, this event drew upon the developmental expertise of several intellectuals situated outside of the City, including private planning consultants, dispute resolutions professionals, and civic officials from Toronto and Vancouver. Guest speakers remarked that consent to development in the 1990s could no longer be won through non-collaborative, top-down means, and the public involvement and citizen oversight were becoming increasingly important vectors for winning popular support. One presentation on the City of Toronto's Cityplan '91 exercise, for instance, gave a detailed overview on how citizen engagement could be used to preempt conflict and controversy in transportation; another presentation on light rail development in Vancouver evinced the need for mutually supportive land-use and transportation plans.³⁰⁷

With the ability of City intellectuals to win consent on their own terms thrown into question by the river crossings debacle, Council seized on this advice and called for an unprecedented degree of citizen collaboration when they approved terms of reference for an integrated mobility plan next April dubbed 'GoPlan'. Not only were planners ordered to engage in the workshops, public information sessions, polls, and surveys which had been shown to be successful in Toronto's Cityplan '91, but a citizen oversight committee was developed to guide the strategic direction of the project itself. In addition, the scope of the GoPlan was expanded from engineering-based focus on road designs to consider the interrelationships between mobility needs, city form, environmental impacts, quality of urban life, and the City's long-term fiscal viability.³⁰⁸ At a cost of \$3 million, GoPlan would be more expensive than any other planning study in the City's history to that point, but the public consultation being purchased by these funds was to be, among other things, a hedge against any future community dissent: in the words of GoPlan manager David Watson, failure to consult with the general public would simply "set [the City] up to have the thing done over and over again."³⁰⁹

By mid-1993, the study had engaged over 5,500 participants, while City researchers published several comparative studies exploring the consequences of status quo development over an extended timeline. Early public feedback showed relatively high support for the notion of a more environmentally friendly transportation system, and participants appeared to support the suggestion that the City should

³⁰⁷ City of Calgary, *Public Involvement Forum*, GoPlan Background Series No. 2-11-92, 1992.

³⁰⁸ City of Calgary, *Calgary GoPlan: Terms of Reference*, GoPlan Background Series No. 1-11-92, 1993.

³⁰⁹ Phillip Jang, "Study to Probe Transit Trends," *Calgary Herald*, Nov. 12, 1992, B3. Having been devised before Klein-era panic over budget cuts had set in, the Province underwrote \$2.25 million of GoPlan's cost.

do more to make walking, cycling, and public transit more viable transportation options.³¹⁰ The City's own research was far less ambiguous on the point: since neither budgetary support from the Province nor stable growth in Alberta's energy economy could be safely presumed, GoPlan research considered the postwar suburb something of an historical anachronism. This research pointed to a number of 'hidden' social, economic, and environmental costs associated with conventional automobile-dependent growth, noting that it deepened social divisions related to gender, class, and able-bodiedness.³¹¹ In fiscal terms, the City estimated in 1994 that another ten years of status quo growth would cost \$1 billion dollars in capital costs for new distance-sensitive infrastructure, notwithstanding another \$1 billion to upkeep existing infrastructure which would only become more costly to maintain over time.³¹² Considered alongside the damage to local ecosystems caused by suburban expansion and the parallel growth of local road networks, GoPlan researchers concluded that Calgary's "predominantly auto-based transportation system" – with its implications of land-hungry annexation, fiscal profligacy, and social dislocation – would not be "fiscally or environmentally sustainable in the long term."³¹³

If conventional subdivision designs were freighted with spiraling (social, ecological, and fiscal) costs and low-efficiency infrastructure requirements, then mixed-use, high-density development would seem a plausible basis for a more viable urban form. City planners were not blind to this (somewhat obvious) conclusion, and GoPlan research noted that densification and mixed-used (re)development initiatives were already underway in several comparable North American cities. Among others, contemporaneous projects in Vancouver, Kansas City, Ottawa, Portland, Winnipeg, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle, and Toronto, appeared as possible models for this transition. But since *Calgary 2020* had already included Calgary among the roll call of "cities and organizations that support the concept of

³¹⁰ A 1992 telephone survey found that 80 percent of respondents supported making "the development of a more environmentally friendly transportation system [...] a high priority," also finding that nearly half of all participants suggested that they were willing to walk/cycle or take transit more than drive. Given both the auto-dependent form of the city and the number of undecided respondents – over one quarter, in each case – these answers were deemed statistically significant. City of Calgary, *Calgary GoPlan Public Opinion Survey*, IBI Group, GoPlan Working Paper Series No. 4-12-92, 1992; see also City of Calgary, *Values Important to Calgarians: Results of Public Workshop, November 1992*, GoPlan Working Paper Series No. 3-01-93, 1993.

³¹¹ City of Calgary, *Sustainability*. Using the example of low-income single mothers, this report argues that the separation of land uses typical to suburban development creates immense challenges for marginalized populations without reliable access to a car – or the ability to drive a car, as in the case of the case of children, the elderly, or the disabled – to meet basic daily needs.

³¹² Distance-sensitive infrastructure includes transit vehicles, fire stations, water and sewage pipes, electrical wires, and of course, roads, the supply of which would need to be increased (and more frequently maintained) under the relatively inefficient demands of low-density growth. See City of Calgary, *Calgary's Future Suburban Growth: Moving Towards Sustainable Development*, GoPlan Discussion Paper Series No. 5-04-94, 1994, 7.

³¹³ City of Calgary, *Sustainability*, 13.

sustainable development,” project researchers noted that the City could be a leader as much as an emulator in this field.³¹⁴

There was a problem, however; while public opinion polls evidenced growing concern for environmental issues and (modest) support for the development of alternative transportation systems, they also suggested that Calgarians were reluctant – if not practically unable – to surrender their cars.³¹⁵ Moreover, the hegemony of suburban development had remained obdurate as ever, and continued suburban expansion caused a real outmigration of from existing communities to new subdivisions in the early 1990s.³¹⁶ These difficulties were compounded by tensions within the City itself, where a number of intransigent planners and engineers remained committed to *in situ* development models and skeptical that extant development trends (and, *a fortiori*, consumer tastes) would change in the foreseeable future.³¹⁷ Accordingly, the GoPlan research was itself Janus-faced, simultaneously detailing the negative impacts of suburban development while claiming this form of growth to be inevitable. One 1994 report, for example, asserted that despite the merits of sustainable development, urban policy alone would be insufficient to quell rampant market demand for suburban growth.³¹⁸ This same report went on to claim that sustainability-oriented policies may do more harm than good, as “restricting the supply of serviced land [...] inevitably results in higher land prices.”³¹⁹ Through the prisms of private property rights and consumer sovereignty, questions of intergenerational equity and socioecological justice were therefore refracted in suitably market-oriented terms that implied consumption, choice and convenience as overriding concerns. The research concluded, for instance, that “For reasons of cost, public health, and a responsibility to future generations, the design of communities, and the facilities provided, *should*

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 25-30.

³¹⁵ The City’s *GoPlan Public Opinion Survey* found that roughly two thirds of respondents found vehicles to be their most practical mode of transport, and surmised that fairly substantive changes would need to be made in order to make alternatives more viable and attractive. The idea that Calgarians and their vehicles were inseparable was ubiquitous among public opinion pieces on the plan, too, and although this skepticism was strongest in articles critical of GoPlan’s objectives, it also pervaded those that supported of its general themes. For an example of the former, see Marty Hope, “Stubborn Calgarians Urged to Employ Transit,” *Calgary Herald*, Jan. 22, 1994, E3; for the latter, see David Climenhaga, “Car-Loving Calgarians Conundrum for City,” *Calgary Herald*, Jan. 9, 1993, B1.

³¹⁶ Between 1992 and 1993 alone, 150 percent of the city’s new growth appeared in new communities. City of Calgary, *Calgary’s Future Suburban Growth*, 2.

³¹⁷ Without exception, this was pointed out to me in every interview I held with any planners who worked for the City while the GoPlan was being developed.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.* “Most [future] growth is expected to go into the suburbs. How do we know this? Because analysis of the development potential of sites, housing demand and community attitudes, suggests that even if major policy incentives are introduced that influence the housing market in a way that favours the redevelopment of established areas, the proportion of overall growth that will likely be accommodated in those areas will be relatively small.” See also City of Calgary, *Employment Distribution*.

³¹⁹ City of Calgary, *Calgary’s Future Suburban Growth*, 13.

encourage people to adopt more sustainable lifestyles without having to make unacceptable trade-offs to their quality of life.”³²⁰

These contradictions were matched by another: although GoPlan research had determined that land-use issues were critical for the formation of ‘sustainable’ transportation system, there was not yet a parallel land-use planning project in motion. Although a series of changes to Alberta’s Municipal Government Act in 1994 and 1995 had compelled the City to produce a new general municipal plan – which it had not done since 1978 – the City’s land-use planners were reticent to bring before Council a plan based on the unproven premise of sustainable development until after the GoPlan was complete.³²¹ Indeed, several planners reported in interviews that planners within the Transportation Department were skeptical about notions of sustainability as well, and remained committed to automobile-oriented transportation planning approaches.³²² In light of these tensions, the plan recommended increased spending on transit and modest increases to the City’s density – which, as a transportation plan, it was powerless to enforce – but resignedly concluded that “Calgarians’ historically strong preference for a ‘suburban’ lifestyle” would inevitably direct nearly all of the city’s future growth to new suburbs.³²³

Despite a prodigious output of publicly-available research material and constant citizen engagement through open houses, workshops, and information mail outs, news coverage of the GoPlan was scarce, and grassroots public support remained sparse.³²⁴ While over 100 Calgarians spoke in support of GoPlan when it was considered by Council in a May 1995 hearing that, in the words of a local columnist, “throbbed with the energy of a New Age therapy session,” much of this support was tethered to the plan’s promise to avoid building any new river crossings for the next 30 years.³²⁵ The plan was

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, 17, emphasis mine.

³²¹ On changes to the Municipal Government Act, see Elder, “Alberta’s 1995 Planning Legislation.”

³²² In an interview on October 16, 2012, a former planning manager averred that transportation planners resented working under Watson, a land-use planner. In an interview on December 13, 2012, another former planning manager claimed that “the bias of the Transportation Department was from the ‘60s, it was fast roads, safe roads ... roads, and we’ll put a bus on it.” Both interviewees suggested these tensions contributed to intradepartmental disputes over the plan.

³²³ City of Calgary, *Calgary Transportation Plan*, 1995, s. 2-1. Between 1991 and 2024, the City predicted that it would grow by 542,000, of which 535,000 were expected to settle in new-build suburbs.

³²⁴ Burton Reid, “Calgary: GoPlan – Looking into the Future,” *New City Magazine*, Spring 1995, 8-10. The lack of media coverage and public support were pointed out to me in a number of interviews with City planners, even though the City had produced 117 publicly-available background series papers, policy reports, working papers, fact sheets, newsletters, and other miscellaneous research documents related to GoPlan over the three years the project was active. Researchers also produced 5 school curricula models for local elementary and high school classes focused on transportation, urban planning, and sustainability.

³²⁵ Don Braid, “GoPlan Hits Sore Spots: Impacts are Tiny But They are Real,” *Calgary Herald*, May 30, 1995, B1; David Steinhart, “City Adopts Plan for Transit, Roads,” *Calgary Herald*, May 30, 1995, A1.

accepted by City Council, but never acceded to bylaw status, effectively meaning that it contained *no* legally binding obligations or enforceable regulations of any kind. The failure of this state project to connect with a substantial, supportive base in civil society would mean that the City's first real attempt to integrate sustainable development into policy – which *Calgary 2020* had not done – was dismissed not with a bang, but a whimper. In the terms of While et al., perhaps the GoPlan could be seen as a kind of minor sustainability fix, temporarily resolving tensions between growth imperatives on the one hand (ie: the need for supportive road infrastructure for new suburban developments) and a limited outbreak of resistance to this imperative. But the contradictions that the plan had sought to resolve had not disappeared; moreover, while it was clear that GoPlan could not enact any land-use reforms in the months before it reached Council, it was far from preordained that the plan would be accepted only as a symbolic, nonstatutory gesture. It was in the context of this indeterminacy, reflecting City planners' historical inability to contain urban sprawl, the Sustainable Suburbs Study was born.

3.7 SUBURBANIZING SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability addresses the causes of problems, not just the symptoms.

THE SUSTAINABLE SUBURBS STUDY³²⁶

In reality, every political movement creates a language of its own, that is, it participates in the general development of a distinct language, introducing new terms, enriching existing terms with a new content, creating metaphors, using historical names to facilitate the comprehension and the assessment of particular contemporary political situations, etc., etc.

ANTONIO GRAMSCI³²⁷

When I spoke to the planner who had organized the Sustainable Suburbs Study about the plan's origins, many rumours about his personality seemed to be confirmed. Throughout our conversation, I was told of how a lifelong commitment to environmental issues had been compromised by a career reproducing ecologically ruinous patterns of suburban development. From their perspective, Calgary's seemingly pathological tendency towards urban sprawl was inexorable rooted in the institutional arrangements governing local development: because developers constitute the most substantial source of campaign funds for candidates in local elections, this planner averred that Council were inevitably

³²⁶ City of Calgary, *Sustainable Suburbs Study*, 2, emphasis in original.

³²⁷ Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks Vol. I*, 1543.

acquiescent to their demands for fast approvals and scant regulations.³²⁸ In turn, because the senior City administrators overseeing planning and development receive direction (and discipline) from Council, these administrators were allegedly susceptible to this influence as well, and therefore liable to alter plans *before* they reached Council in order to maintain high ‘success ratios’ with the City’s elected officials.³²⁹ It was claimed that developers flaunted this influence over planners, often threatening to put pressure on senior City bureaucrats, members of Council, or even both in order to secure favourable regulatory conditions.³³⁰ But because the GoPlan had provided an opportunity to reconsider Calgary’s (sub)urban form and its ecological effects, the Sustainable Suburbs Study was an opportunity to not only recalibrate the city’s development trajectory, but also to atone for past regulatory sins; according to this planner, the political dominance of developers meant that “they held the pen” in regards to planning issues, but the Sustainable Suburbs Study was intended to “set out to change this, so we [planners] would hold the pen and *they* [developers] would have to react to *us*.”³³¹

Still, the political clout of developers was too well entrenched to be directly challenged through prohibitive regulations, design standards, or zoning restrictions. Other planners working on the project shared the view that the plan would be dead in the water if it appeared to unfairly restrict developers’ abilities to respond to price-setting market signals and cater to consumer demand, which developers could protest – as they had in the past – not only as a violation of their own right to property rights as landowners, but the seemingly irrefutable principles of consumer sovereignty and freedom of choice in Calgary’s housing markets. Nevertheless, for these planners the bulwark of ‘market choice’ which

³²⁸ One comparative study of municipal finance found that Calgary’s electoral rules are among the most permissive in Canada, and that developers constitute the single most significant source of campaign funds in local elections. Lisa Young and Sam Austin, “Political Finance in City Elections: Toronto and Calgary Compared,” *The Canadian Political Science Review* 2, no. 3 (2008): 88-102; see also Miller and Smart, “Ascending the Main Stage,” 56-58.

³²⁹ Though the historical sweep of Foran’s *Expansive Discourses* (1945-1972) precedes the period to which this informant refers, it is nevertheless littered with evidence to support this claim.

³³⁰ This perspective was shared by a number of planners I interviewed for this study; a former planning manager I interviewed on October 16, 2012 recalled that “developers pretty much had their way with everything that was going on at the time.” In our interview on December 22, 2013, the author of the Sustainable Suburbs Study also recalled these experiences through several evocative anecdotes, such as the following, which concerns meeting with a senior executive from Genstar: “I’d been out to lunch with him a couple of times and he’d say ‘our job is to make money for our shareholders.’ And Genstar was owned by some other company, all kinds of other businesses. He’d say, ‘I’m on the planning side of it, the development side of it, and my job is to make this prosperous. That’s my job. It’s not to save the city and get people on buses and walking, you know, that may be your job, [*but*] that’s not my job! My job is, we bought this piece of land to make the most money out of it.’ [...] And they would say to me, Tom, they would say to me that ‘if you keep trying to force us this way, we’ll just go over your head to the commissioners.’ They’d tell me that. ‘We’ll go over your head to the commissioners.’ And this is what happened.”

³³¹ This same metaphor was recirculated to me in an interview on October 11, 2012, when another planner noted that in the 1990s “we didn’t have a lot of control over things, because we weren’t holding the pen to begin with.”

upheld the hegemony of developers was ironic: in their view, the GoPlan research had unearthed a latent demand for new development models which were not only consistent with the City's fledgling sustainability principles, but left unsatisfied by developers' unwillingness to deviate from conventional (and reliably profitable) suburban formulas. If overt regulation was politically impossible, these planners conceptualized the Sustainable Suburbs Study as an 'enabling' designed-based project that would work within a market-supportive policy framework to wake Calgary's underperforming developers from their creative lassitude and help them realize inert market demands while achieving environmental goals. If sustainability principles couldn't be made *enforceable*, in other words, they would be made *marketable*.

Given the Planning Department's intent to wait until after the GoPlan was passed by Council to draft supporting policy, this project received only modest departmental resources. The six-person study team assigned to the project in the spring of 1994 was disproportionately staffed with junior-levels planners, whose inexperience was consequential for the project: fresh from graduate school, these planners supplied a conceptual armature and design-based sensibility strongly influenced by the then-burgeoning New Urbanist movement.³³² Alongside a critique of urban sprawl and car-oriented culture, these planners found within the New Urbanist's canonical texts ideal-typical design guidelines for a sustainable urban form. When planners began to develop their own design criteria for a sustainable community form, they blended themes from *Calgary 2020* and the GoPlan with the injunctions of the Charter for the New Urbanism, which had been passed only a year prior (Figure 3.3).³³³ While the GoPlan research had suggested introducing modest policy controls to meet social objectives – such as legalizing secondary suites, requiring developers to contribute ten percent of residential land for low-cost housing, and making a public commitment not to reduce expenditures on social programs in order to finance new urban growth – the Sustainable Suburbs Study sidestepped any mention of these redistributive gestures completely.³³⁴ Instead, the plan provided aforementioned design guidelines in order to promote the (voluntary) construction of more socially vibrant and ecologically balanced communities.

³³² Two planners I interviewed who had worked on the study (on October 11 and 17, 2012), both name-checked New Urbanist thinkers Peter Calthorpe and Andrés Duany as key influences on the project. Along with four other urban designers and architects, (including Duany's wife and business partner, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk), Duany and Calthorpe co-founded the Congress for the New Urbanism in 1993.

³³³ Although certain continuities can't be overlooked, the influence of *Calgary 2020* upon the Sustainable Suburbs Study should not be overstated. While Sustainable Suburbs Study approvingly cited *Calgary 2020* as a matter of course, planners who worked on the plan downplayed its influence: in the words of one of them, "I've seen it before but I wouldn't say it heavily influenced me or that I've had a lot of review of it [*sic*] [...] it probably didn't guide a lot of our work that time." The Charter for the New Urbanism can be found at <http://www.cnu.org/charter>.

³³⁴ City of Calgary, *Sustainability*, 16-23.

Components of a Sustainable Community (Sustainable Suburbs Study)	Charter for the New Urbanism	GoPlan (Background Research)	Calgary 2020
a) Discrete and recognizable focal points and boundaries that provide a distinct neighbourhood identity	✓		✓
b) A multi-purpose and multi-use centre designed to meet residents' everyday needs	✓	✓	
c) A mix of residential, public, and commercial uses	✓	✓	
d) Parks, schools, and shops within walking distance of homes	✓		
e) A pedestrian and cyclist-friendly street layout	✓	✓	
f) A range of housing types and costs to meet a variety of households types and lifestyles	✓	✓	
g) A range of local employment opportunities		✓	
h) An efficient public transit system that provides a viable option to the car	✓	✓	✓
i) A proliferation of protected and interlinked natural areas and open spaces	✓		✓
j) Connections to a regional pathway system which provide recreation and transportation options for pedestrians and cyclists			✓

Figure 3.3 Sustainable community design in comparison

Source: City of Calgary, *Sustainable Suburbs Study*, iii-iv

These guidelines were spread across 28 policies within five topical subfields (Figure 3.4), the titles of which reflect their authors' intent to avoid the impression of regulatory discipline. Policies in these fields were supplemented by an ensemble of performance standards which could be used to clarify the City's standards and provide benchmarks for determining the relative 'sustainability' of new community forms. Echoing the spatialities of *Calgary 2020*, the six policies collated under 'Community Centres and Neighbourhood Nodes', for instance, elaborated that new communities must be anchored by multi-use activity centres that would be centrally located, serviced by transit, conducive to pedestrian and cyclist access, and populated by both public and private land uses. Supporting guidelines specified, among other things, the spectrum of preferred land uses for supporting community needs (including schools, clinics, grocery stores, post office, coffee shops and the like); the ideal distance between activity centres and the edges of a community; recommended sidewalk widths, parking requirements, and building heights; the appropriate ratio of commercial development per expected community resident;

and numerous suggestions pertaining to the layout, orientation, and overall aesthetic of these community spaces.³³⁵ These directives were accompanied by sketches of these ideal-typical spaces, which several planners explained as mechanisms to make sustainability principles appear less abstract for Calgary's developers (Figure 3.5), whom they claimed would likely have difficulty imagining how sustainability principles could be incorporated into material development projects.³³⁶

Policy Subfield	No. of Policies
Community Centres & Neighbourhood Nodes: Meeting People's Needs Locally	6
Schools and Open Space: A Systems Approach	7
Housing: Providing More Choice	4
Transportation: Encouraging Walking, Cycling, and Transit	3
Environmental Issues: Reducing Waste and Pollution and Conserving Energy	8

Figure 3.4 Policy subfields in the Sustainable Suburbs Study

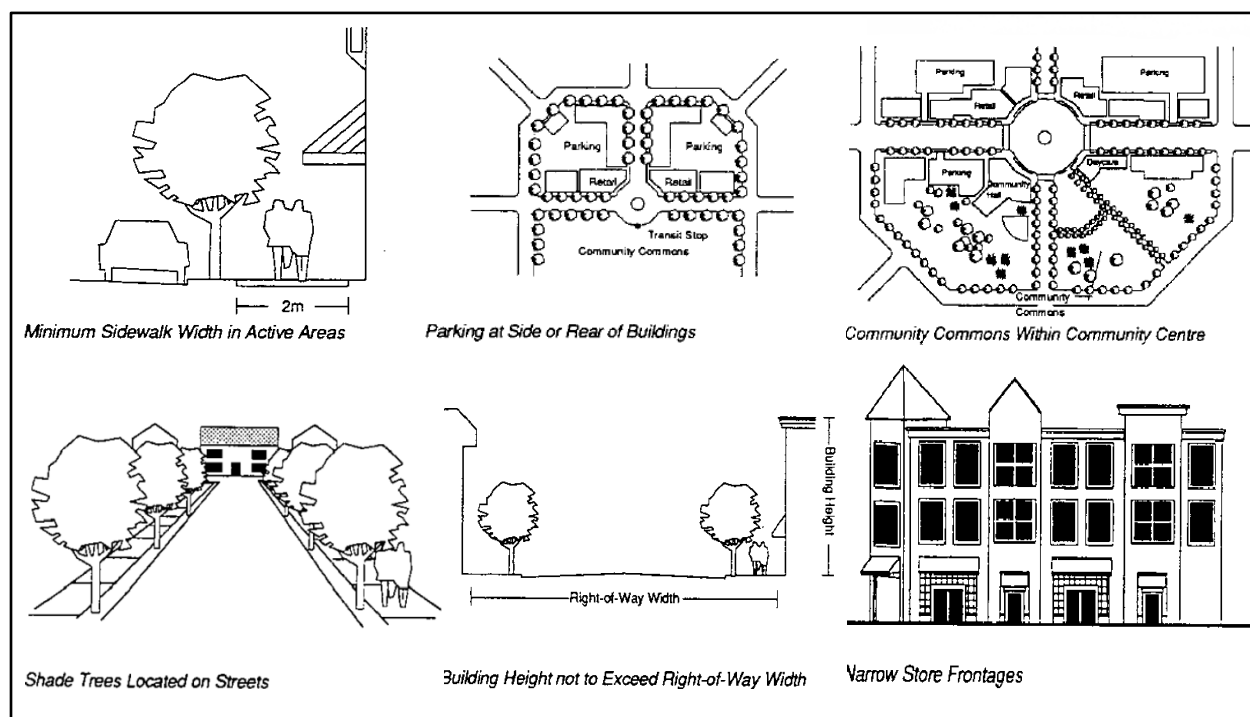


Figure 3.5 Visions of sustainability in the Sustainable Suburbs Study

Source: City of Calgary, *Sustainable Suburbs Study*

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 21-31.

³³⁶ This was confirmed in interviews on October 11, October 17, and December 22, 2012.

Despite persistent claims that these policies were intended to valorize community wellbeing and support Calgary's public realm, however, the plan nevertheless betrayed a sensibility that community-level sustainability was viewed as an effect of individuated market decisions. For instance, aside from creating transit service efficiency gains and reduced needs for car ownership, the real "public benefit" of creating higher residential densities near transit-intensive activity nodes was to "improve the marketability of multi-family housing," thereby ostensibly titling demand in local property markets towards greater aggregate efficiency.³³⁷ Elsewhere, to "ensure that all new communities include a percentage of housing that is affordable [for] medium to low income earners," the plan's (single) policy on affordable housing simply encouraged developers to construct a wide variety of different housing types in order to ensure "adequate choice" in the marketplace.³³⁸ Indeed, with the exception of the aforementioned housing policy, the plan refers to the social ecology of these proto-sustainable communities in politically anodyne terms ('users', 'pedestrians', etc.) which studiously avoided the contentious cultural divisions and socioeconomic inequalities that lurked in the margins of *Calgary 2020* and the GoPlan research. When the Sustainable Suburbs Study defined its titular object(ive) (Figure 3.6), the social conditions of the 'more sustainable community' forms it advocated could have passed for a real-estate advertisement; GoPlan's troubling question of whether "suburbs [...] discriminate against the poor" was replaced with an emphasis on market-based choice, while *Calgary 2020*'s meditations on the satisfaction of everyday social needs were gallingly transmogrified into a concern with "routine shopping needs."³³⁹

³³⁷ City of Calgary, *Sustainable Suburbs Study*, 49.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, 48. Notably, this policy was the *only one* in the study to eschew any measurable performance standards.

³³⁹ City of Calgary, *Calgary's Future Suburban Growth*, 8.

	A Less Sustainable Community	A More Sustainable Community
Fiscal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High development costs • High City infrastructure costs • High City maintenance costs • High City operating costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower costs through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More compact urban form ○ Better utilization of services ○ Less infrastructure
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little sense of community, belonging, or neighbourliness • Housing choices excludes certain household types and lifestyles • Design of public areas discourages walking and socializing • Few goods and services provided within community • Rigid separation of uses • Private vehicle essential 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong sense of belonging to a community; vibrant community life • Wide housing choice catering to many household types and lifestyles • Attractive public areas encourage walking and socializing • Most routine shopping needs met within community • Some mix of uses, including employment • Reduced need for private vehicles
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inefficient use of land • High level of air pollution through auto dependency • Community design promotes lifestyles where excessive water, energy, and resource consumption are largely unavoidable • No protection of environmentally sensitive areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More efficient use of land • Much reduced air pollution through reduced vehicle trips • Community design promotes lifestyles where consumption and waste can be reduced and conservation encouraged • Environmentally sensitive areas identified, protected and integrated into regional open space system

Figure 3.6 "Some characteristics of a sustainable community"

Source: City of Calgary, *Sustainable Suburbs Study*, 17

In October 1994, the City launched a series of roundtables to discuss the merits of these ideas with what one planner described as “the usual suspects” of Calgary’s development scene. In contrast to the ambitious consultation process of the GoPlan, these roundtables were held behind closed doors, and without citizen representation.³⁴⁰ The majority of the eighteen-member group assembled for this task consisted of senior-level City bureaucrats and representatives from Calgary’s development and homebuilding industries, with a scattering of consultants from adjunct disciplines and industries.³⁴¹

³⁴⁰ Although the premise of the Sustainable Suburbs Study alludes to that fact that planners had aired some of the study’s recommendations at GoPlan open houses, there remains no documentation to verify how feedback was collected from these exercises, if it was indeed collected at all. The GoPlan background material, for its part, is largely silent on the role that the Sustainable Suburbs Study played in GoPlan open houses.

³⁴¹ In addition the six members of the study team, this group included six senior City bureaucrats; five developers; two representatives from the Calgary Homebuilders’ Association; a consultant from the University of Calgary’s Faculty of Environmental Design; one representative from each of the Province’s school boards; and one

Although many developers had misgivings about the project, the Planning Department sponsored a public lecture from the influential New Urbanist Peter Calthorpe to explain both the cost-effectiveness of compact, transit-oriented development, and its growing market appeal.³⁴² In an unplanned, parallel move, Calthorpe's celebrated New Urbanist compatriot Andrés Duany also arrived in Calgary amidst the discussions surrounding the Sustainable Suburbs Study to design a massive, master-planned suburb on the city's southeast fringe for development giant Carma.³⁴³ One developer who collaborated on both the Sustainable Suburbs Study and the Carma project, titled 'McKenzie Towne', confirmed that Duany's neotraditionalist designs provided an opportunity to both capitalize on the public sentiments unearthed in GoPlan and provide a sense of design-based distinction for Carma's project that would give it a competitive edge against competing developments in the region.³⁴⁴ Because Duany's plan for McKenzie Towne incorporated the same narrow street layouts called for in the Sustainable Suburbs Study, other developers watched the project with interest, as these modified street designs presented a potential opportunity to save up-front capital costs.³⁴⁵

But while McKenzie Towne piqued the interest of (some) developers, the Sustainable Suburbs Study was still viewed with suspicion. Despite the City's emphatic insistence that it had "*no intent to impose any single design approach*," it was clear that increased residential densities would be a core element of the City's sustainability guidelines, as this had already been outlined as a prerequisite for a sustainable transportation system by the GoPlan.³⁴⁶ Moreover, as suggested by the idyllic New Urbanist landscapes that the plan promoted, increased densities were ostensibly required to support community services and businesses, and to facilitate increased street-level interaction. Because density increases were the condition of success for the plan's goals, it would also be the plan's Waterloo. Genstar vice-president Guy Buchanan later clarified the development industry's position on increased densities in frank terms:

representative each from the Alberta Association of Architects and the Federation of Calgary Communities (a Provincially-funded non-profit organization).

³⁴² Although I could not find documentation to confirm that this lecture happened, it was recalled without prompting in three separate interviews with planners and one interview with a developer.

³⁴³ McKenzie Towne would later grow to a master planned subdivision with five distinct 'villages' totaling over 16,000 residents. The levels of uncertainty surrounding sustainability *within* the City would later be testified by a disproportionately lengthy approvals process for the project. See Grant, "Theory and Practice," 20-23.

³⁴⁴ Interview with former developer, October 19, 2012.

³⁴⁵ This point was related to me by the aforementioned interviewee and by a former planning manager whom I interviewed on December 22, 2012.

³⁴⁶ *Sustainable Suburbs Study*, iii, emphasis in original.

Housing is the biggest investment people make and we all want to make sure its value is protected. If introducing higher density or housing diversity affects that [value] in their mind, then consumers are going to resist – and that'll be the biggest hurdle to overcome.³⁴⁷

One former planning manager paraphrased developers' response to the plan in even more caustic and direct language: "You guys are going to put up the cost of housing in Calgary, you guys are going to force people to live in houses they don't want to live in, you guys are full of shit."³⁴⁸

One former planning manager recalled the months leading up to the Sustainable Suburbs Study's consideration by council as an "unbelievable bloodbath," noting that "the industry just lined up against that plan and eventually just emasculated it." Although hesitant to provide specific details when I asked how the plan was 'emasculated', she recalled a meeting with other senior planners, representatives from the development industry, and the city manager in which tensions had flared:

TH You say that the development industry lined up against that plan...

FP [*interjects*] Totally.

TH By putting pressure on the [Planning] Director's office, or members of Council?

FP Both.

TH Or...

FP [*interjects*] Both. [*laughs*] Both. They had a committee that included industry, and of course there were no citizens on there in those days. [...] You know, I remember one day we had a meeting with the big guns of industry and the City Manager of the day, and the industry was very upset [...] and [the director of an influential development firm] pounded the table and said "*it's our land, we'll do with it what we want.*" The attitude was, "who are you? This is our land and we'll do what we'll darn well please with it." Oh, it was unbelievable.³⁴⁹

One developer later confirmed that he and his colleagues had "bristled" at the plan's proposed density increases, and that their response to the City had been "you're interfering in what we do best."³⁵⁰

Although no record exists to confirm what was said behind these closed boardroom doors, the notion that developers had exercised pressure on City Council to remove density targets in the plan was at the very least consistent with the history of Calgary's development politics. Moreover, this narrative

³⁴⁷ Quoted in Frank King, "Suburbs Study Opens a Dialogue," *Calgary Herald*, Jul. 15, 1995, D1.

³⁴⁸ Interview, December 22, 2012.

³⁴⁹ Interview, October 16, 2012. I have obligingly followed this interviewee's request to redact the name of the developer referenced in this anecdote.

³⁵⁰ Interview, December 21, 2012.

was repeated to me in a several interviews that I conducted with actors representing a variety of subject positions.³⁵¹ But while the particularities of closed-door exchanges over the plan may not be entirely clear, the final draft of the plan nevertheless incorporated a density target that was not only *within* the existing range of densities being constructed in new communities (five to seven units per acre); it was, in fact, *below* the already modest density increase suggested by the GoPlan (eight units per acre).³⁵² Like everything else in the Sustainable Suburbs Study, however, the relative merits of this target would be nullified by the plan's approval as a nonstatutory document, which nearly all interviewees active in development at the time attributed to developer pressure on City Council.³⁵³ Shortly after the plan's approval, Buchanan tellingly observed that collaboration on the Sustainable Suburbs Study had given planners "a greater appreciation of the market process and how developers think"; elsewhere, a UDI spokesperson observed that "in principle the report is a good idea," but insisted that "Public preferences [*sic*] must continue to be the overall guiding force behind development."³⁵⁴ Without any visible public presence, the Sustainable Suburbs Study, like the GoPlan before it, quickly sank from sight. In the meanwhile, McKenzie Towne was met with costly approvals delays by recalcitrant City administrators – particularly in the Transportation Department – who supported the direction of neither the Sustainable Suburbs Study nor the GoPlan.³⁵⁵ As frustrations mounted, higher-density components of the project were eventually abandoned, and McKenzie Towne was built to an average of six units per acre; thus, as the Sustainable Suburbs Study made its lame-duck entry into the City's policy repertoire, Carma vice-president David Harvie characterized Calgary's first proto-sustainable community, built on the same conceptual foundations as the Sustainable Suburbs Study, as "consumer-driven, not planner-driven."³⁵⁶

As rapid growth returned and the City began work on a new general plan in 1997, developers continuously and publicly asserted that Calgarians (still) wanted low-density growth, while warning that stringent regulations would result in "cookie-cutter developments that would meet civic guidelines but

³⁵¹ When asked how developers responded to the Sustainable Suburbs Study, this was pointed out in interviews with planners and former planners on December 12, 13, and 17, 2012; an interview with an architect on December 12, 2012; an interview with a former developer on October 19, 2012; and an interview with a former elected official on December 14, 2012.

³⁵² King, "Suburbs Study."

³⁵³ Two of the junior planners who had worked on the study – and had little to no contact with developers, which was handled by senior administrators – more cautiously attributed to the plan's halfhearted approval to the fact that City Council and Calgarian homebuyers "didn't yet have an appetite" for the plan's prescriptions.

³⁵⁴ The first quote is taken from King, "Suburbs Study"; the second, from Frank King, "City Endorses Visionary Goals," *Calgary Herald*, Jul. 22, 1995, D1.

³⁵⁵ On the recalcitrance of the Transportation Department see Grant, "Theory and Practice," 20.

³⁵⁶ Frank King, "McKenzie Towne: Ground-Breaking Project Sparks Debate," *Calgary Herald*, Jan. 15, 1994, F4.

be shunned by consumers.”³⁵⁷ In 1998 the City debuted the Calgary Plan, a new planning framework which approvingly quoted *Calgary 2020*, the GoPlan, and the Sustainable Suburbs Study as sources of inspiration and direction. Like its antecedents, however, the plan was silent on questions of annexation and conservative on matters of residential densities, where its only (non-binding) policy statement suggested that the City would “Endeavour to ensure” – rather than *require* – “that new communities will work to achieve a target of an overall density of 6-8 units per gross residential acre *over time*.”³⁵⁸ Although the plan called for more diverse, affordable, and efficient land-use arrangements throughout Calgary, it likewise failed to provide any substantive regulations that might produce a new urban form. As numerous planners and senior policy officials pointed out to me, the fallout of the Sustainable Suburbs Study had demonstrated that the City was not yet ready for ‘restrictive’ new regulations, and while conventional subdivisions continued to sprout in defiance of these plan’s suggestive visions, the hegemony of Calgary’s development bloc remained as secure as ever.

3.8 SUSTAINABILITY POLICIES AND THEIR (DIS)CONTENTS

The term ‘sustainable development’ has [...] been embraced by those on all side of the conservation/development debate and used extensively by government in round-table discussions, mission statements and long-range plans. The City of Calgary uses the phrase in Council’s Strategic Plan and in the *Calgary 2020* vision statement. But what does it actually mean?

GOPLAN RESEARCH STUDY³⁵⁹

Sustainable development is a phrase that seems to be on everybody’s lips. [...] But even more than many other ‘buzz words’ of recent years that have been used in urban geography [...] it is not always easy to attach a precise meaning to the idea. Not only has the term been used with alacrity in so many related contexts, but its meaning seems to have been transformed by advocates of very different ideas, especially when attempts are made to apply the ideas in a policy context.

WAYNE DAVIES³⁶⁰

Consciousness is in any conceivable sense ‘false’ only when it is detached from its variable cultural context and asked to answer questions.

PAUL WILLIS³⁶¹

³⁵⁷ Dave Pommer, “Council Sends City Plan Back to Drawing Board,” *Calgary Herald*, Apr. 22, 1998, B5. See also Dave Pommer, “Move toward Denser Suburbs Worries Aldermen, Developers,” *Calgary Herald*, Mar. 24, 1997, B3.

³⁵⁸ City of Calgary, *Calgary Plan*, 1998, 40, emphasis mine.

³⁵⁹ City of Calgary, *Sustainability*, 3.

³⁶⁰ Wayne Davies, “Sustainable Development and Urban Policy: Hijacking the Term in Calgary,” *GeoJournal* 43, no.4 (1997), 359

The actual technical side of planning is very interesting. The politics are awful.

LEAD PLANNER, SUSTAINABLE SUBURBS STUDY³⁶²

Only two years after the Sustainable Suburbs Study was passed, geographer Wayne Davies upbraided the plan for its incompleteness, noting that its vision lacked enforceable regulatory mechanisms. Although Davies surmised that the plan would “reinforce or extend existing practice[s]” in suburban development, he claimed that its substantive content was in fact based upon several “really *old ideas*” which could be traced back to either Clarence Perry’s early-twentieth century elaborations on the neighbourhood unit or Ebenezer Howard’s famous designs for the Letchworth garden city.³⁶³ In his terms, the concept of ‘sustainability’ had been “hijacked” in the project and “watered down to but a pale reflection of its fundamental meaning.”³⁶⁴ Davies’ suggestion that the Sustainable Suburbs Study would do little to alter existing development trends would be later confirmed by Calgary’s sprawling development over the next two decades, and in a sense, his suggestion that this study was founded upon time-worn concepts is correct. But Davies need not have relied on an essentialist definition of sustainability to draw these conclusions, nor cast his gaze as far as Letchworth, for the shopworn ideas at the heart of the Sustainable Suburbs Study draw their origins from a far more immediate geography.

For all of its invocations of the New Urbanism’s abstract idealism, the Sustainable Suburbs Study was above all a highly *pragmatic* and *strategic* response to the dilemmas posed by a hegemonic project that I have termed *developer-led suburbanization*. The ‘organically necessary’ ideology resting upon five interrelated coordinates: the *sovereignty of consumers* as an underlying policy metanarrative, testified by continuous affirmations of market trends from the Balanced Growth Strategy to the Sustainable Suburbs Study; an abiding *consensus upon private property rights and economic growth* as unquestioned and unspoken components of a general public interest; the *hegemonic primacy of developers* as agents capable of constructing, representing, and acting on behalf of consumers’ interests; the *maintenance of low housing prices and preservation of market-based choice* as organizing objectives for public policy; and the *predominance of suburbanity* as both normative standard for everyday life and metonym for the preceding four premises. Crucially, City planners did not stand outside of this hegemonic project, but instead participated in its construction and consolidation as a class of subordinate (but supportive)

³⁶¹ *Learning to Labor*, 122.

³⁶² Interview, December 22, 2012.

³⁶³ Davies, “Sustainable Development,” 367, emphasis in original.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 369.

intellectuals, organizing legitimacy and facilitating accumulation for this project through the work of public policy.

The sedimentation of these ideological waypoints was not a product of economic inevitability, but was instead rooted in material social relations that were both *historically contingent* and grounded in *particular places, spaces, and scales*.³⁶⁵ While similar processes of developer-led suburbanization took hold across Canada in the postwar era, this project took on a distinctive form in Calgary, where institutional arrangements regarding infrastructure payments and annexation surrendered a large amount of initiative and political influence to developers.³⁶⁶ Some of these arrangements stretched beyond Calgary's boundaries: federal lending programs designed to produce conventional subdivisions cheaply and abundantly, for instance, gave developers the necessary capital to consolidate their influence early on, while the Province's stance on annexation supported suburbanization initiatives as well. But this hegemonic project was neither self-sufficient nor autogenic. Inside of Calgary's mercurial hegemonic bloc, it was reinforced and upheld through embodied, affective encounters between developers, elected officials, and planning staff; for those outside of this structure, the hegemony of developer-led suburbanization was upheld by, among other things, the panoply of political discourses and policy frameworks which enshrined the sovereign, homebuying consumer as the central object of concern for local government.

These ideological currents and material relations were more than just abstractions. In Gramsci's terms, they constituted an "objective and operative" reality for Calgary's planners which set limits and exerted pressures on their possible horizons for political action, including their first, grasping attempts at producing sustainability policies.³⁶⁷ This is not to say, however, that these policy processes were determined *a priori*, or that hegemonic power relations were without contradictions. On the contrary, initial attempts to incorporate sustainability precepts into urban policy were intended to reconcile several countervailing pressures and contradictory tensions emerging from within the hegemony of developer-led suburbanization (Figure 3.7). In what follows, I shall try to specify these tensions in greater detail, and elaborate how Calgary's first sustainability policies constituted a particular type of 'urban sustainability fix' that reflected and refracted their contradictory origins.

³⁶⁵ Cf. Jessop, "Gramsci as Spatial Theorist," 422-428.

³⁶⁶ Foran, *Expansive Discourses*; Sandalack and Nicolai, *The Calgary Project*; and Stamp, *Suburban Modern*. Cf. Harris, *Creeping Conformity*.

³⁶⁷ Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks Vol II*, 4§15.

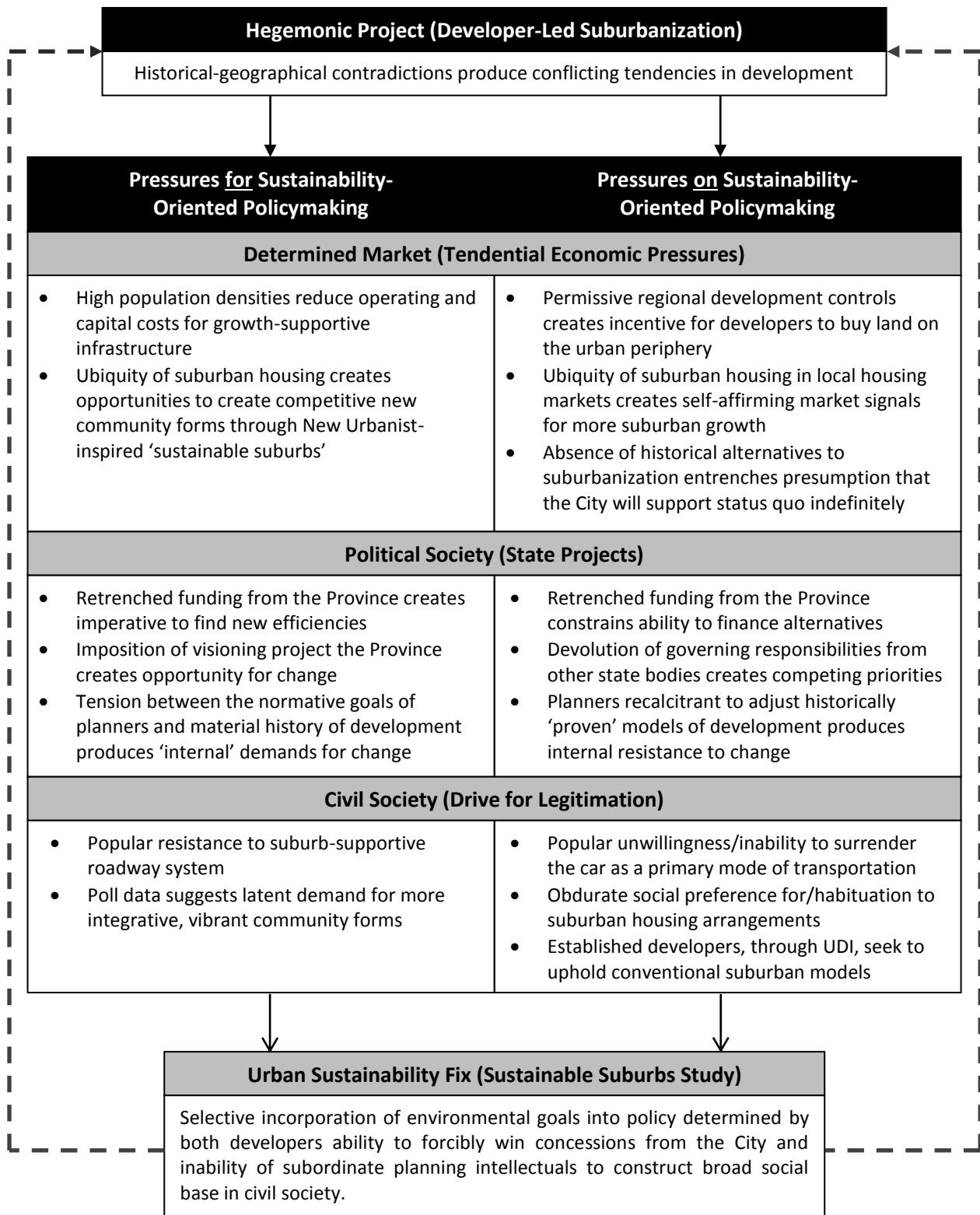


Figure 3.7 Developer-led suburbanization and Calgary's urban sustainability fix

At the level of Calgary's determined market, City officials faced some pressure *for* sustainability-oriented policy. On the one hand, the GoPlan research had pointed out several 'hidden' costs related to suburban growth that could be alleviated by more compact forms of development; likewise, as one former developer pointed out to me, the ubiquity of suburban housing in Calgary had meant that more compact, proto-sustainable community models (such as McKenzie Towne) would carry a degree of potentially lucrative distinction from their peers.³⁶⁸ On the other hand, however, the City's reliance upon annexation and permissive land-use controls had made suburbanization a relatively cheap and reliable model for developers. The historical normalization of this model from the 1950s onward had not only entrenched suburban housing as the dominant image of urban living, but also created expectations for regulatory continuity among Calgary's development community.³⁶⁹ Supported by a historically specific state-form, these relations in Calgary's determined market formed the material base for developer-led suburbanization, and creating an intransigent developer class who were heavily invested in the status quo and, unsurprisingly, strongly resistant to reform.

Aside from this open recalcitrance, the hegemony of this class produced several contradictions on the level of civil society, producing pressure both for and against sustainability policies. Through citizen consultation, *Calgary 2020* provided a resplendent vision of more socially and environmentally integrated forms of communal life embedded in a new urban form. This vision implied an unfulfilled longing for a different modality of city life, which was likewise recovered by the GoPlan research. Indeed, the very citizen protests which prodded the City to produce that plan implied the presence of germinal popular concerns with the environmental impact of Calgary's inherited growth pattern; perhaps a nascent kernel of 'good sense' growing within the contradictions of reigning 'common sense'. Nevertheless, the GoPlan research also revealed that the Calgarians' practical reliance on automobiles prevented the City from making a wholesale transition away from received growth models, and the continued affordability and availability of suburban-style living arrangements had produced no pressing need for Calgarians to demand alternatives.³⁷⁰ Moreover, while *Calgary 2020* had emphasized collective social and environmental values, it also paradoxically celebrated the virtues of bootstrapping self-help and individualistic entrepreneurship, reflecting the atomized parochialism (stereo) typically associated with suburban politics in general, and ideologies of consumer sovereignty 'organically necessary' to

³⁶⁸ Interview, former developer, October 19, 2012.

³⁶⁹ On the historical normalization of suburban life in Calgary, see Stamp, *Suburban Modern*.

³⁷⁰ Foran, *Expansive Discourses*; Sandalack and Nicolai, *The Calgary Project*.

Calgary's growth machine in particular.³⁷¹ In other words, if the social divisions and environment 'externalities' associated with suburban development generated civil societal pressure for alternatives, the hegemonic values inscribed in atomized housing plots and individual private property rights set limits on these selfsame demands, resulting in what Paul Willis called a "contradictory double articulation" of social interests.³⁷²

The inability of City planners to construct a broad social base for sustainability reforms in Calgary would, as several planners pointed out in interviews, delimit their ability to incorporate more meaningful sustainable reforms into policy.³⁷³ But the structure of urban policy in Calgary would also be shaped by a number of processes within the state apparatus, which produced their own suite of pressures for and against policy reform. In the context of regulatory devolution and Provincial budget cuts, the City had found a need to explore more compact and cost-effective patterns of growth. Indeed, the GoPlan research had revealed as much, and Province's prompt to create local 'vision statements' had provided an opportunity for change. But on the other hand, the City itself lacked the legitimacy to effect change on its own terms; when I asked one planner why the Planning Department paid for Peter Calthorpe to address developers at a time when the City was strapped for cash and resources, I was told that "the thinking was, if they won't listen to us, maybe they'll listen to them."³⁷⁴ Several planners also pointed out that in the context of competing budgetary priorities and declining revenues, their ability to take a hard stand on regulatory issues had been considerably diminished. Moreover, numerous planners also pointed out that significant numbers of City officials were suspicious, if not openly opposed to sustainability reforms.³⁷⁵

This crucible of forces produced a complex ensemble of contradictory pressures impinging upon local policymakers. Perhaps the most crucial of these contradictions, however, rested in the position of City planners as a subordinate class of intellectuals within Calgary's growth machine. While professional

³⁷¹ Although Canadian suburbs have grown increasingly diverse, the racial and class composition of postwar suburbs has made these spaces strongholds of a typically conservative and sectarian politics. See Boudreau et al., *Changing Toronto*; for a view on this process in America, see Jamie Peck, "Neoliberal Suburbanism – Frontier Space," *Urban Geography* 32, no. 6 (2011): 884-919 and Knox, *Metroburbia*.

³⁷² Willis, *Learning to Labour*, 120.

³⁷³ This was point out in interviews with every planner who had worked on the project; and several who hadn't.

³⁷⁴ Interview, former City of Calgary planning manager, December 22, 2012. Shortly afterwards, this planner informed me that it wasn't only developers that planners had to convince, as the City Engineer was so incensed by the content of the Sustainable Suburbs Study that he refused to vote on the plan when it came before the Planning Commission, and stormed out of the room.

³⁷⁵ This was pointed out in interviews on October 17, 2012 and December 17, 2012.

planning credos ostensibly committed these actors to orderly, ecologically-balanced development (or so they claimed) their subordination to developers had compelled them to produce policies which facilitated urban sprawl.³⁷⁶ Many (if not most) of these actors positioned themselves as helpless to alter suburban growth trends, which were viewed as a proxy for popular aspirations and desires. In tandem with the GoPlan and Sustainable Suburb Study's affirmations of suburban development as an inevitable force, these sentiments indicate how planners internalized and naturalized the organically necessary ideology of Calgary's growth machine, namely, the notion that market trends accurately reflected popular political desires; that consumer sovereignty and private property rights were politically inviolable; that the preservation of low prices and broad choice in Calgary's housing markets were legitimate primary goals for public policy; and an abiding belief that, with the right balance of incentives and regulations, meaningful socioecological change could be effected by private housing markets with the soft-touch guidance of a clientelist state. Crucially, these unreflexive beliefs do not reflect pallid forms of 'false consciousness', but rather a conception of the world that was adequate to their structural position within Calgary's hegemonic development bloc.

Combined with the political capacity of developers to preempt and restructure City policy to suit their needs, the limits and pressures imposed by these ideological foundations are manifest in the modesty of the Sustainable Suburb Study's reforms. Within the narrow envelope of solutions available in the complex of forces outlined in Figure 3.7, the utility of New Urbanist design standards was twofold. On the hand, as a number of scholars have pointed out, the New Urbanist's archetypal designs and canonical texts have remained largely indifferent to (if not actively avoidant of) the 'traditional' justice-based politics of class, race, and gender.³⁷⁷ Indeed, as shown by the incorporation of these designs in McKenzie Towne, these prescriptions were highly compatible with existing market prerogatives, and offered a minimally disruptive platform for pursuing sustainability objectives without becoming entangled in the broad social concerns that were identified in *Calgary 2020* and the GoPlan research, but ultimately left behind in both the latter plan and the Sustainable Suburbs Study. In addition, given the palpable deficit of legitimacy in the Planning Department, the growing international cachet of the New Urbanism afforded had convinced planners that these designs would grant them a greater degree

³⁷⁶ Cf. Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow*.

³⁷⁷ See Harvey, "New Urbanism"; Knox, *Metroburbia*, 104-11; MacLeod, "Smart Growth"; and Moore, "Best Practice." In their "Relationality/Territoriality," Eugene McCann and Kevin Ward affirm that the New Urbanism is "undoubtedly a pragmatic, free-market ideology" which resonates (if not reinforces) neoliberal values of competition and market-based decision-making. Perhaps the most egregious example of this dismissive attitude towards class-based politics can be found in Andrés Duany's boorish "Three Cheers for Gentrification," *The American Enterprise* 12, no. 3 (1993): 36-39.

of political leverage. When I asked the Sustainable Suburbs Study's lead author why the Planning Department paid for Peter Calthorpe to give a presentation to developers on sustainable urbanism at a time when the City was strapped for cash and resources, the answer was blunt: "the thinking was, well, if they won't listen to us, maybe they'll listen to him."³⁷⁸

The turn towards this market-supportive framework and away the redistributive mechanisms called for by *Calgary 2020* and the GoPlan research can be read as a diagnostically critical signifier of the policymaking dilemmas posed by the hegemony of developer-led suburbanization. The contradictions of this hegemonic project, which simultaneously impelled and inhibited a move towards sustainability policy, can be read in the Sustainable Suburbs Study, which reflects the ideological foundations of developer-led hegemony even as it tries to overcome them. It is in this sense that Davies's assertion that the Sustainable Suburbs Study was based on "really old ideas" is more true than he perhaps imagined, although for different reasons than he cited. And yet, given that the tenets of consumer sovereignty, developer supremacy, private property rights, and an unquestioned faith in growth were historically entrenched forms of *common sense* in Calgary's local government, the plan's logic to reform (but not impede) suburban development are considerably less anomalous than contemporary planners might suggest. Indeed, if contemporary planners saw the Sustainable Suburbs Study as both a product of and reaction to this common sense, perhaps it would give them pause; if they were to question the extent to which these sensibilities persist, perhaps they might reevaluate their own praxis even further.

³⁷⁸ Interview, December 22, 2012.

CHAPTER 4: GREENING THE GROWTH MACHINE

4.1 POSTMILLENNIAL MOVES: THE RETURN OF GROWTH AND REVIVAL OF SUSTAINABILITY

Dear God, let there be another oil boom: I promise not to piss it all away again.

POPULAR LOCAL BUMPER STICKER IN THE EARLY 1990S³⁷⁹

The word “growth” has different meanings and connotations to different people.

THE CITY OF CALGARY, *FINANCING GROWTH STUDY*³⁸⁰

No matter how conventionally it might be defined, the possibility of a sustainable future for Calgary seemed increasingly remote at the dawn of the millennium. If urban planning practitioners and theorists had settled on compact, mixed-use development as a basic template for green urbanism at that point in time, then the City’s *de facto* policy regime of tenacious annexation and full-throttle suburbanization had left Calgary “a city overwhelmed by its suburbs.”³⁸¹ While policymakers in the mid-1990s had attempted to reform the city’s seemingly pathological tendencies towards sprawl through a triumvirate of eco-conscious plans, these early dalliances with sustainability were thick in environmental rhetoric, but chronically thin on substantive regulatory content. Pithily described by one former planning manager as “shelf art,” these policies had left prevailing growth trends intact, while relegating the concept of ‘sustainability’ to a marginal position in local development dialogues.³⁸²

But while these circumlocutions had failed to reform Calgary’s gluttonous growth trajectory by the crest of the millennium, the city’s somnambulant economy was being shaken back to life. Rising oil prices in the late 1990s were accompanied by a surge in corporate relocations to Calgary, resuscitating its sluggish economy and jumpstarting a breakneck growth spurt which swelled the city’s population by 20 percent between 1996 and 2002 alone.³⁸³ As evidenced by the gap between formal population estimates and actual growth rates during this period (Table 4.1), this turnaround had caught City administrators offguard, even as the political fallout from the early 1990s’ Klein Revolution hamstrung

³⁷⁹ Quoted in Smart, “Restructuring,” 185.

³⁸⁰ City of Calgary, *Financing Growth Study*, 2005, 7

³⁸¹ Sandalack and Nicolai, *The Calgary Project*, 181.

³⁸² Interview, October 16th, 2012.

³⁸³ On the political-economic changes accompanying high growth rates during this period (including the expansion of Calgary’s head office and service sectors), see Smart, “Restructuring,” 184-191. See also Harry Hiller, “Gateway Cities and Arriviste Cities: Alberta’s Recent Urban Growth in a Canadian Context,” *Prairie Forum* 32, no.1 (2007): 47-66 for a discussion of the relationship between population growth and intermunicipal migration at this time.

their ability to adequately manage growth. Although Klein's war of attrition against city budgets had gradually abated after 1997, his bellicose anti-tax, pro-business rhetoric and relentless war against government debt and 'inefficiencies' continued to reign as political common sense.³⁸⁴ Prompted to bullishly focus on debt repayment during this period (Figure 4.1), the City was unwilling (or perhaps unable) to cover budgetary shortfalls through increased utilities charges, user fees, or business tax hikes within this hostile political climate, leaving City budgets increasingly dependent on property tax revenues.³⁸⁵ The spectres of intermunicipal competition and capital flight raised by Klein's abolition of regional planning commissions in 1995 did not help matters, and the City's unsurprisingly permissive stance on development matters saw a 12 percent drop in Calgary's overall density paralleled by a 43 percent expansion of its built footprint between 1991 and 2001.³⁸⁶ Bygone policy visions of 'sustainable suburbs' seemed increasingly naïve the millennium's dawn, as Calgary's future appeared to be written in the diffuse and expanding galaxy of single-detached homes ringing its urban frontier and orbiting the office-saturated nucleus of its downtown.

Table 4.1 City of Calgary growth projections versus actual growth rates, 1995-2003

	1995 Forecast	1996 Forecast	1997 Forecast	1998 Forecast	1999 Forecast	Actual Population
1995	748,000	-	-	-	-	749,073
1996	757,300	759,800	-	-	-	767,059
1997	766,800	769,800	781,000	-	-	790,498
1998	774,600	779,800	795,000	813,000	-	819,334
1999	783,000	789,600	809,000	835,000	848,400	842,388
2000	-	799,600	823,000	856,000	873,300	860,749
2001	-	-	838,000	877,000	893,700	876,519
2002	-	-	-	897,000	909,400	904,987
2003	-	-	-	-	926,400	922,315

Source: City of Calgary short term growth management projections, 1995-1999

³⁸⁴ Cf. Trevor Harrison and Gordon Laxer, eds., *The Trojan Horse: Alberta and the Future of Canada* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1995); Harrison, *Return of the Trojan Horse* and Miller, "Modes of Governance."

³⁸⁵ Between 1990 and 2000 the proportional share of taxes in the City's revenue stream jumped from 35 to 45 percent. Although inconsistencies in the City's financial reporting obscure what portion of this tax revenue can be attributed to property taxes alone (as opposed to businesses taxes and cash-in-lieu of taxes) property taxes are the largest single source of tax revenue for the City. Moreover, while the City imposed a moratorium on both property and business taxes in 1994, it began to raise property taxes in 1997 but left intact the freeze on business taxes (which remained among the lowest in the country). City of Calgary, *1999 Annual Report*, 2000, 20.

³⁸⁶ See Elder, "Alberta's 1995 Planning Legislation," 25-32 and Ghitter and Smart, "Mad Cows," 636-638. Density and footprint estimates are drawn from Neptis Foundation, *Growing Cities*, 25 and 33.

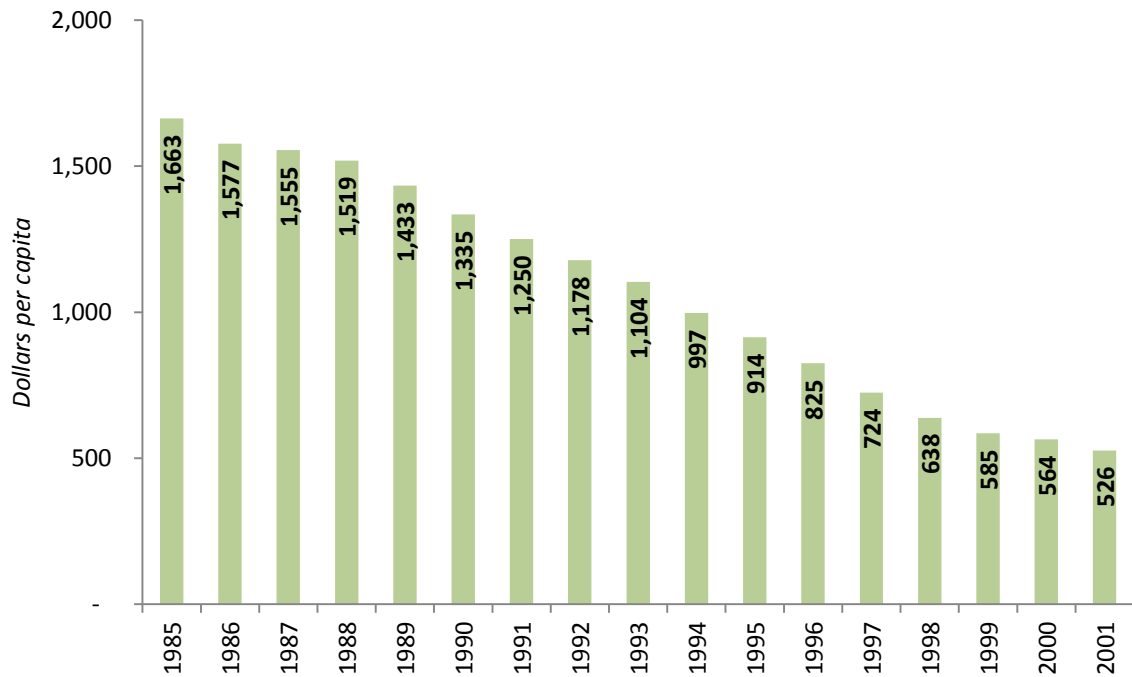


Figure 4.1 Tax-supported debt per resident, 1985-2001

Source: City of Calgary, 2001 Annual Report, 2002

By the decade's close, however, notions of sustainability were proliferating in local development circles as virulently as single-family bungalows and manicured front lawns had in the city's last boom. New developments began (selectively) incorporating environmentally-friendly rhetoric and eco-chic imagery into their branding, while local place-marketing strategies situated sustainability tropes beside familiar endorsements of the city's regime of low taxes, high wages, and more recently, creative city cachet.³⁸⁷ The City also undertook a number of high-profile sustainability initiatives which dragged ecological issues from the clandestine torpor of backroom policy offices into the broad daylight of public discourse, leading noted journalist Chris Turner to suggest that "the secret greening of Calgary" was becoming popular local knowledge.³⁸⁸ Plant-It Calgary, an ambitious master planning framework adopted by the City at the decade's close, was perhaps the most conspicuous bellwether for urban sustainability during this period. Not only did the plan use sustainable development as its primary focus and organizing metanarrative, but in contrast to earlier attempts at sustainability-oriented policy, it provoked intense media scrutiny and widespread public discussion. Adopted in 2009 amidst a maelstrom of controversy stirred by Calgary's ever-intransigent development community, Plan-It

³⁸⁷ Marty Hope, "Shades of Green," *Calgary Herald*, Sept. 5, 2009, I1; Smart and Tanasescu, "On Wanting,"

³⁸⁸ Chris Turner, "The Secret Greening of Calgary," *Globe & Mail*, Sept. 15, 2007, F1.

entrenched sustainability as *sine qua non* for future development dialogues in Calgary: as one prominent local architect put it to me, sustainable development “is now common sense; everyone knows that if you’re not sustainable, you shouldn’t be practicing.”³⁸⁹

And yet the path from risky business to common sense had been far from smooth, linear, or foreordained. Although Plan-It was perhaps the most auspicious articulation of this new common sense in Calgary, the plan’s substantive content had been ostensibly structured to satisfy the vision of imagineCALGARY, a massive public consultation project – purportedly “the largest community visioning process of its kind anywhere in the world” – which had used feedback from an estimated 18,000 Calgarians to develop a 100-year vision for the future.³⁹⁰ Paralleling its expansive timeline, this project also had an equally ambitious breadth, using an integrative ‘systems’ framework to consider a dizzying array of issues ranging from transportation and energy production to the cultural and aesthetic value of sustainable development. Replete with calls for walkable neighbourhoods, transit-oriented developments, eco-efficient housing, and accessible community facilities, the project suggested that among other shifts, sustainable development would require that growth priorities be (re)focused towards higher-density, mixed-use communities with more public spaces, stronger social services, and better access for transit-users, pedestrians, and cyclists.

Although this vision rearticulated many of the themes and tenants of existing sustainability plans for Calgary, its origins in public opinion was remarkable – or “revolutionary,” as one development pundit put it – especially given the long-running popular assumption that, in the words of one former City official, “Calgarians love their open spaces as much as they love their cars.”³⁹¹ But if imagineCALGARY’s appeals for sustainability represented a new common sense, these sentiments did not emerge spontaneously. In light of their serial inability to produce meaningful sustainability reforms, City policymakers incorporated a range of planning strategies, representational practices, and forms of policy expertise borrowed from extralocal contexts into the imagineCALGARY project. In what follows, I attempt to make sense of how the City’s adoption of these practices and procedures – particularly related to particular models of citizen engaged and ‘systems-oriented’ policymaking – by ‘following’ these approaches across various ports-of-call within global policy circuits of policy knowledge to their

³⁸⁹ Interview, architect, December 12th, 2012.

³⁹⁰ City of Calgary, *imagineCALGARY*, 2006.

³⁹¹ The byline that imagineCALGARY was ‘revolutionary’ is drawn from Geoff Ghitler, “Imagine a City Built to Last,” *Calgary Herald*, Feb. 27, 2006, A14; the second quote belongs to former City Planning Commissioner Bob Holmes, who was commenting on the long-term legacies of the Sustainable Suburbs Study and the GoPlan. It is taken from Marty Hope, “Market Forces Do What Policies Cannot,” *Calgary Herald*, May 26, 2001, HS04.

eventual integration within imagineCALGARY.³⁹² In interviews, City planners typically characterized these approaches as guileless, apolitical forms of best practice; by tracing the switchbacking arc and mutating form of these practices across multiple contextual arenas, this chapter attempts to determine how their mobilization in imagineCALGARY responded to the political-economic tensions inherent to the obdurate hegemony of developer-led suburbanization in the city. These peregrinations comprise the chapter's first half; the second half follows the implications of these approaches *after* imagineCALGARY to examine how the construction of a consensual, systems-oriented model shaped subsequent efforts to green Calgary's growth machine in Plan-It Calgary.

4.2 CITIES ON THE MOVE, POLICIES ON THE MAKE

The next three years is [*sic*] going to be very exciting, so fasten your seatbelts because this city is on the move.

CALGARY MAYOR DAVE BRONCONNIER, ON THE NIGHT OF HIS RE-ELECTION IN OCTOBER 2004³⁹³

Given the primacy of oil and gas in Calgary's economy, it is unsurprising that environmental concerns which highlight the limitations and consequences of hydrocarbon-intensive growth might be treated with skepticism (if not outright hostility) in local political circles. While it might be reasonably presumed that policymakers would find environmental questions to be issues in any locality dominated by growth machine-style politics, many City planners remarked feeling that Calgary's oil-slick political economy imposed exceedingly stringent restrictions on what could (and could not) be said in local policy during the late 1990s and early 2000s. Recalling that recent memories of recession and stalled recovery in Calgary's energy sector had made *all* environmental questions seem disruptive, one planner observed that environmentally-inclined planners had been virtually incapacitated during a time when the "the gas pedal of growth was being pushed to the floor"; in more pointed terms, a former planning manager noted that at the time, "you couldn't say 'climate change' locally: even the 's-word' ['sustainability'] was hot, politically."³⁹⁴

³⁹² Cf. Peck and Theodore, "Follow the Policy."

³⁹³ Quoted in Colette Derowitz, "Bronconnier Sweeps to Second Victory," *Calgary Herald*, Oct. 19, 2004, B1.

³⁹⁴ The remark about the "gas pedal being pushed to the floor" was made in an interview with a City of Calgary planner on October 11, 2012. In the City of Calgary's *Annual Report 2006, 2007*, 6, Mayor Dave Bronconnier would

But as with so many political issues, discussions of urban sustainability in the early 2000s looked considerably different beyond Calgary's boundaries. While sustainability may have held an expletive-like status in Calgary's policymaking circles, the rise of popular environmentalism and the growth of the United Nation's Local Agenda 21 program had pushed the concept into the global mainstream, tempting even the most unlikely corporate actors to flaunt (or in many cases, fabricate) their green credentials.³⁹⁵ As part of this trend, the International Gas Union responded to concerns over 'peak oil' in 2001 by sponsoring a transnational planning competition which challenged participants to develop 100-year plans for a post-carbon future. Although the City of Calgary did not participate, City officials could not have helped but notice when the competition's grand prize was awarded to a plan for the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD), which had served as Canada's entry in the contest.³⁹⁶ Entitled citiesPLUS (standing for 'Cities Planning for Long-term Urban Sustainability) and coauthored by a coalition of private sector consultants, GVRD planners, and representatives from local civil societal institutions, this plan not only offered a glimpse of a sustainable future, but a critique of planning orthodoxy which resonated far beyond Vancouver's borders.³⁹⁷

Acknowledging that the slow-burning threat of climate change required a coordinated societal response, citiesPLUS maintained that two factors stood in the way of urban sustainability. First, the plan suggested that many urbanites did not understand the long-term impacts of global warming, and accordingly underestimated the potential benefits of sustainable development. According to citiesPLUS, this collective action problem was compounded by the obduracy of a "traditional approach to urban planning" which "views cities as a set of components" rather than an ensemble of interconnected systems.³⁹⁸ Alleging that this anachronistic framework "only gives piecemeal solutions and creates barriers to finding common solutions," citiesPLUS argued that a new approach was needed for grasping long-term processes of urban change; one that could illustrate both the staggering costs of inaction on climate issues and the presumably common benefits offered by coordinated sustainability efforts. The

express the same sentiment that "if a city could be said to have a gas pedal, ours was to the floor in 2006." The remarks about climate change were made by a former planning manager in an interview on March 26, 2013.

³⁹⁵ Janet McFarland, "Firms Increasingly Trumpet Good Deeds," *Globe & Mail*, Dec 8, 2003, B3. Cf. Keil, "Sustaining Modernity."

³⁹⁶ First formed in 1967 to coordinate service delivery and planning amongst the municipalities surrounding Vancouver, British Columbia, the GVRD was renamed Metro Vancouver in 2006.

³⁹⁷ Vancouver-based consultants the Sheltair Group served as lead author on the project; support was provided by Ken Cameron, Director of Planning and Policy for the GVRD, and the International Centre for Sustainable Cities (ICSC), a federally-funded NGO specializing in sustainable urbanism. Other notable collaborators included former Vancouver Mayor Mike Harcourt and former Minister of Foreign Affairs Lloyd Axworthy, who joined the project as representatives for the University of British Columbia's Liu Institute for Global Affairs.

³⁹⁸ citiesPLUS, *A Sustainable Urban System: The Long-Term Plan for Greater Vancouver*, 2003, 10.

foundation of this (putatively) new framework lay in a crypto-functionalist form of ‘systems thinking’ which saw the city as an “integrated urban system, like a living organism.”³⁹⁹ Extrapolating from real-world trends, the plan forecast the consequences of business-as-usual development over 100 years in relation to four subsystems pertaining to issues of *people*, *place*, *infrastructure*, and *governance* (Figure 4.2). By breaking these systems into a series of constituent subfields – such as public health (*people*), ecological integrity (*place*), energy-efficient technologies (*infrastructure*), and economic development (*governance*) – the plan transposed the complexities of urban life into a quasi-scientific arrangement of inputs and outputs which could be objectively measured and technocratically managed.

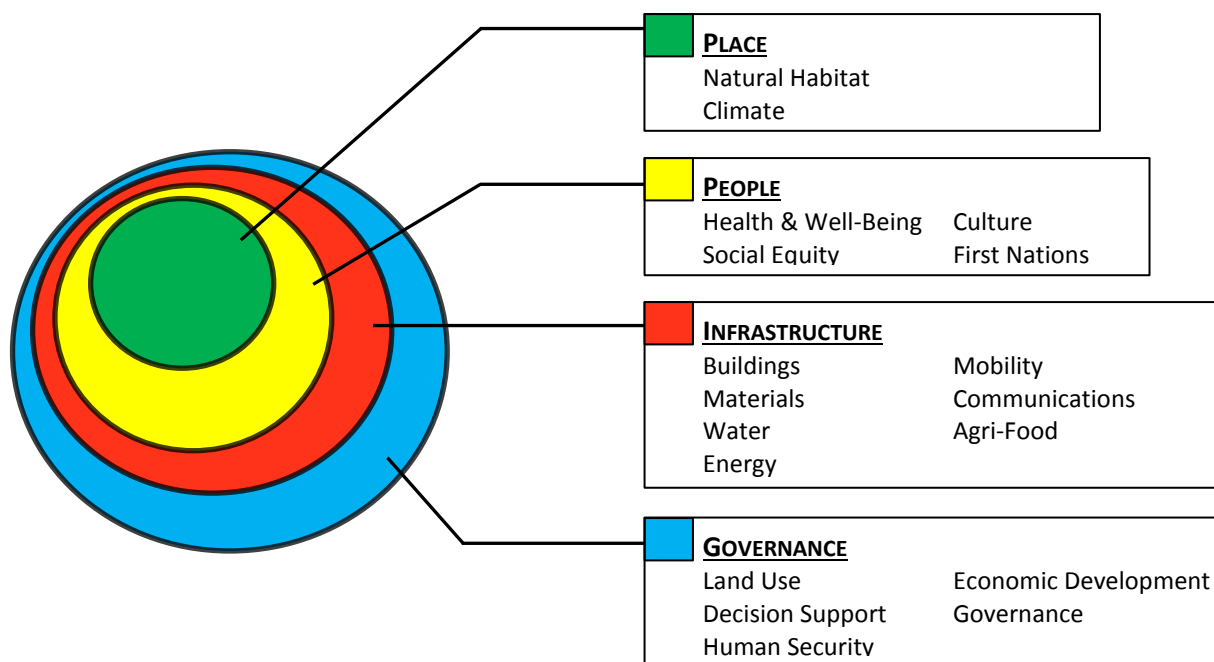


Figure 4.2 Urban systems and subsystems in citiesPLUS
Source: adapted from citiesPLUS, *Sustainable Urban System*, 12

In the dispassionate language of statistics and probabilities, citiesPLUS used measurements from different components within this framework to suggest that prevailing development trends would be untenable if extended by a timeline as short as forty years.⁴⁰⁰ To forestall crisis, the plan established over 200 ‘end-state goals’ for Vancouver’s long-range development through an extended consultation

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁴⁰⁰ By 2040, the plan claimed, the GVRD “will exceed[...] available land base, water and energy capacity, and air quality limits.” *Ibid.*, 20.

with government experts, business leaders, and civil societal interest groups. In support of these goals, which laid out a broad normative vision for the region, the plan identified a number of short-term targets for change based on an approach they termed ‘backcasting’. In essence, this was form of reverse calculation which worked backwards from a desired outcome to calculate how specific practices would contribute to its satisfaction. If, for example, the GVRD’s ecosystem could only handle a certain threshold of carbon emissions over 100 years, ‘backcast’ scenarios would use estimates of carbon reductions associated with specific practices (such as the adoption of green energy technologies, or a transit system that could take a certain number of cars off the road) to calculate the combination of practices that would be needed to effect change.⁴⁰¹ Based on these prognosticative models, citiesPLUS offered eight long-range ‘catalyst strategies’ outlining how “multiple end-state goals and targets can be achieved simultaneously and in an integrated way” alongside complementary ensembles of ‘implementation measures’ describing near-term strategies for systemic change (Figure 4.3).⁴⁰²

Catalyst Strategy #2: Design multi-use space and convertible structures	
Purpose: Increase the capability of all pieces of the urban system to be adaptable to multiple uses, simultaneously and in the short and long-terms	
Implementation Measures:	
<i>Planning Initiative:</i>	The Province can plan, design and retrofit schools to accommodate community uses during non-school hours.
<i>Research & Demonstration:</i>	The Federal government can develop and pilot Flex Neighbourhood Design Guidelines to accompany its Flexible-Housing Guidelines.
<i>Education & Inspiration:</i>	Professional institutes can spearhead in-house training of facility managers, architects, and developers to design buildings for adaptability and multiple uses.
<i>Legislation & Enforcement:</i>	Municipalities can expand comprehensive development zones to facilitate mixed land-use.
<i>Financial Instrument:</i>	Municipalities can adjust property taxes to encourage retention, renovation, and adaptive reuse of existing structures.

Figure 4.3 Vectors of change in citiesPLUS

Source: citiesPLUS, *Sustainable Urban System*, 31-32

⁴⁰¹ In the plan’s terms, “backcasting [...] outlines how specific strategies and best practices can be assembled over time to create a pathway leading from present conditions to desired end-state goals.” *Ibid.*, 25.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*, 28.

Primarily (but not exclusively) addressed to state authorities, these implementation measures outlined the regulatory standards, funding commitments, research agendas, education programs, and planning initiatives necessary to reverse (or at least delay) the GVRD's crash-and-burn development arc. In keeping with the notions of balance and equilibrium implied by the plan's quasi-biological reading of urban systems, these measures attempted a delicate Third Way balancing act between supply-side inducements (tax breaks, cost-sharing agreements, and incentives for green development) and demand-side interventions (higher taxes, stronger regulations, and stronger state services). In this view, both state inaction and corporate misbehaviour were seen as instances of market failure driving the region's hitherto *unsustainable* development. By recalibrating incentive structures and regulations, the plan aimed to help actors in both of these domains recognize their presumably shared interest in sustainable development. On this note, citiesPLUS did not find a need to fundamentally restructure (or even acknowledge) real power differentials within the integrated "living organism" of the GVRD's political economy; instead, it concluded that a meaningful sustainability transition (via its catalyst strategies) would simply require "collaboration amongst a much broader range of stakeholders, disciplines, levels of government, and industrial sectors than currently occurs."⁴⁰³

In a bid to lead by example, several of the actors and institutions behind citiesPLUS collaborated once again to launch the sustainability-themed +30 Network in late 2003, which aimed to bring 30 cities together in a policy-oriented "peer learning network" by 2006.⁴⁰⁴ The timing was auspicious: within months of the +30 Network's founding, Prime Minister Paul Martin had unveiled a national program to support sustainable urban development, thereby anchoring sustainability concerns within urban agendas nationwide. In a parallel turn, a veritable cottage industry of sustainability-themed trade shows, conferences, and intercity summits had emerged across the country to facilitate knowledge exchange on urban sustainability.⁴⁰⁵ By bringing together governmental officials with entrepreneurs, academics, NGOs, and other civil societal groups, these switching points for policy knowledge gave groups like the

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*, 28

⁴⁰⁴ The year 2006 and goal of 30 cities were both highly symbolic, as 2006 was the 30th anniversary of Local Agenda 21's foundation at the UN HABITAT summit. The +30 Network (now titled the 'PLUS Network') currently includes 33 cities, of which 20 fall outside of Canada; although the ICSC was (and still is) the network's driving force, its founding was supported by both Harcourt and Cameron. For an overview, see Nola-Kate Seymoar, *Planning for Long-Term Urban Sustainability: A Guide to Frameworks and Tools* (Vancouver: +30 Network, 2004), 8-11.

⁴⁰⁵ Focused explicitly on sustainability, Martin's 'New Deal for Cities and Communities' promised better financial and administrative support for cities through revenue-sharing arrangements, funding programs, and collaborative, multi-level governance through new state bodies. Following Stephen Harper's ascent to power in 2005, however, the program was emaciated and eventually dismantled. See Neal Bradford, *Whither the Federal Urban Agenda? A New Deal in Transition* (Research Report F.65, Canadian Policy Research Networks, Ottawa, ON, 2007).

+30 Network opportunities to respond to a widespread ‘extrospective’ search for expert-affirmed policy knowledge.⁴⁰⁶ Within this archipelago of institutional exchange was the Vancouver-based GLOBE series, which had run a biannual conference and trade fair on ‘business and the environment’ since 1990. At the slickly entrepreneurial GLOBE conference held in Vancouver in the spring of 2004 (theme: “accelerating the business of the environment”), the +30 Network sent the citiesPLUS team to join the roster of more than 200 presenters hocking policy models, technological innovations, and eco-conscious business ideas. The citiesPLUS team’s recent international accolades doubtlessly made them a draw for municipalities seeking green policy designs, and alongside a small contingent of senior City bureaucrats, Calgary mayor Dave Bronconnier was in attendance for their presentation at the conference.

Fatefully, the City of Calgary had joined the +30 Network only months prior to the conference. The exact reasons for this move are unclear: perhaps after a decade of failed policy experiments, sympathetic members of City Council hoped the network would provide resources to (finally) make the concept of sustainability palatable to Calgary’s conservative development bloc. It is also possible Council sought in the network a green image which might support the City’s long-standing aspirations for world city status.⁴⁰⁷ Or given the City’s aggressive stance on debt repayment and parallel reticence to raise taxes during the austere, anti-statist Klein years, perhaps City officials hoped that sustainability policies would create much needed operational efficiencies to increase budgetary solvency: after all, by the late 1990s this search had already led to a full-blown internal restructuring which saw City departments renamed ‘business units’, complete with corporate-style managerial structures.⁴⁰⁸

Whatever the reasons for the City’s accession to the +30 Network, its actions after GLOBE 2004 were decidedly clearer. Although the +30 Network didn’t (and still doesn’t) require its member to draft long-range sustainability plans, Bronconnier – who had reportedly experienced something of a Pauline conversion to environmental causes at the conference – directed City administrators to organize a 100-year sustainability plan for Calgary upon his return. But while planners speculated that the GVRD’s plan may have provided the creative spark for this move, it was nevertheless clear that this plan could not provide a one-to-one template for Calgary’s efforts: although citiesPLUS had won international acclaim,

⁴⁰⁶ McCann, “Policy Boosterism”; see also McCann, “Urban Policy Mobilities.”

⁴⁰⁷ Smart and Tanasescu, “On Wanting,”

⁴⁰⁸ Begun in 1998 and completed in 1999 by an American consulting firm, the City’s organizational restructuring was, in its own words, intended to find “ways for the Corporation [*sic*] to increase its capacity in the face of spiraling demand for services due to growth combined with pressure to exercise financial constraint.” City of Calgary, *1999 Annual Report*, 22. Later in 1999, the City signed a bellwether public-private partnership for some \$556 million in transportation infrastructure, signaling its search for non-traditional financing mechanisms.

it had not been adopted as statutory policy, thereby condemning it to the same stasis as the City's own bygone efforts.⁴⁰⁹ Furthermore, as several planners acknowledged in interviews, any relational ties to the quasi-progressive politics popularly associated with Vancouver – which were in fact *desirable* for many other cities seeking green policy innovations – posed another barrier to following in the footsteps of citiesPLUS, as the project could easily be dismissed as what one politician described to me as “latte-liberal urbanism” within Calgary's presumably conservative milieu.⁴¹⁰ One planner elaborated this dilemma in particularly pithy terms:

We couldn't even talk about Vancouver, because if we talked about Vancouver people would be like [*sarcastically*] “oh yeah, we should be like those dope-smoking gays and crazy hippies? OK, don't even go there.”⁴¹¹

Even if citiesPLUS had not been saddled with the political baggage associated with Vancouver, however, City planners agreed that the structure of growth machine politics in Calgary left little redoubt for policymakers from the slings and arrows of Calgary's development community. Explicitly market-friendly framings had not protected previous sustainability planning efforts from near total evisceration, and planners frequently remarked in interviews that developers, members of Council, and even some senior City bureaucrats were willing to discipline planners for drafting policies that contravened existing development prerogatives.⁴¹² This presented an acute (but not unfamiliar) quandary: since suburban growth had been rendered anathema to conventional eco-urbanist wisdom, any respectable sustainability plan for Calgary would need to abate suburban growth trends, yet developer resistance could be expected – even *respected* – *for this very reason*.⁴¹³ As a subordinate class of intellectuals within Calgary's growth machine, planners could do little to change this reality through conceptual innovation or advanced modeling techniques alone. A new form of policymaking praxis was needed to

⁴⁰⁹ In an interview on March 26, 2013, one former City of Calgary planning manager observed that citiesPLUS ““was done as an academic exercise, not as a planning exercise or a policy document [...] so it didn't give us much to draw on in terms of an actual methodology.”

⁴¹⁰ Interview, former City of Calgary elected official, December 14, 2012. Cf. McCann, “Policy Boosterism” and McCann and Ward, “Relationality.”

⁴¹¹ Interview, December 19, 2012.

⁴¹² In an interview on March 26, 2013, a former City of Calgary planning manager acknowledged that “working sustainability into land use and transportation plans is where it gets hard, because I mean, there were people even back in the 90s getting fired if they weren't doing what the developers were saying.”

⁴¹³ In the words of one planner: “The [*developers*] main idea is to make money. It's a business. And I want them to make as much money as possible; they have to, because it creates money further on in the city [*sic*]. So obviously they fight it [*sustainability policies*], because they can burn down your business. So these things have happened, and obviously it's a business they have to run, and if your business model changes or there's an influence from someone else or an outside factor that changes your business model, [*emphatically*] *obviously* you're going to push back. So I respect them completely for pushing back.” Interview, December 19, 2012.

shift local relations of force in their favour, and here, the GLOBE 2004 conference would again prove fateful.

4.3 A PANGLOSS FOR THE PRAIRIES

In cities, where all dimensions of human life are expressed, there are a number of challenges when it comes to creating anything that could be called a “shared vision.” One of the important questions to ask is *whose* vision is it? A statement issued unilaterally by people in power is not likely to capture the values of the whole community, and even less mobilize them to take the necessary initiatives to achieve it.

GWENDOLYN HALLSMITH AND BERNARD LIETAER⁴¹⁴

All environmental-ecological arguments [...] are arguments about society and, therefore, complex refractions of all sorts of struggles being waged in other realms.

DAVID HARVEY⁴¹⁵

Fresh from the citiesPLUS presentation at GLOBE 2004, Bronconnier and his entourage attended a presentation by American planning consultant Gwendolyn Hallsmith. Although no transcripts of this presentation remain, its topical foci – a comprehensive sustainability plan she had earlier prepared for the City of Burlington, Vermont – became the subject of numerous commentaries later penned by Hallsmith (and others).⁴¹⁶ The methodology Hallsmith developed for her work in Burlington also decisively influenced the mercurial imagineCALGARY project. While the lack of primary records for Hallsmith’s GLOBE 2004 presentation obscures the specific representational practices which made her work appear transferrable to Calgary, a broad overview of the ‘origin story’ of her work in Burlington provides several clues to the strategic utility that Calgary’s planners might have seen in her approach.⁴¹⁷ In particular, Hallsmith offered both a frame for reevaluating the causal bases of local problems and a strategy for reconfiguring institutional relations of force in the city.

⁴¹⁴ Gwendolyn Hallsmith and Bernard Lietaer, *Creating Wealth: Growing Local Economies with Local Currencies* (Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers, 2011), 164.

⁴¹⁵ Harvey, *Justice, Nature and Difference*, 372.

⁴¹⁶ My discussion of Hallsmith’s Burlington project largely draws from her discussion of it in Hallsmith and Lietaer, *Creating Wealth*; Gwendolyn Hallsmith, Christian Layke, and Melissa Everett, *Taking Action for Sustainability: The EarthCAT Guide to Community Development* (Global Community Initiatives, 2005) available at http://www.earthcharterinaction.org/invent/images/uploads/EarthCAT_Workbook.pdf; and City of Burlington, *Burlington Legacy Project: Action Plan*, 2000, available at <http://www.burlingtonvt.gov/Sustainability/Legacy-Action-Plan>. On ‘origin stories’, see Healey, “Circuits of Knowledge.”

⁴¹⁷ Cf. Cook and Ward, “Conferences” and McCann, “Points of Reference.”

Like citiesPLUS, Hallsmith's work in Burlington had been a long-range visioning project based on principles of 'systems thinking' and fashioned through a process of pan-institutional collaboration. But unlike citiesPLUS, Hallsmith's project had been fashioned in response to a series of territorial conflicts surrounding sustainable development in Burlington in the late 1990s.⁴¹⁸ In contrast to the messy political struggles besieging policymakers struggling with(in) Calgary's hawkishly market-oriented political climate and emaciated welfare state, Burlington's politics appeared in a much different hue: according to Hallsmith, Burlington had been the site of numerous socially and environmentally progressive campaigns over the 1990s which had proceeded with strong citizen support, making the city "a leader in [...] the arts, education, poverty alleviation, housing, urban revitalization and energy efficiency."⁴¹⁹ And yet, while preponderance of citizen-led progressive politics meant planners could rely upon "groups who knew a lot about different aspects of urban sustainability," and Burlington's mayor was furthermore committed to long-term sustainability planning, conditions were not as propitious they seemed.⁴²⁰ In defiance of the city's seemingly progressive political climate, two development projects in the late 1990s which aligned with mainstream notions of sustainability – namely, the expansion of a local food co-op and construction of a large affordable housing complex – had provoked shockwaves of controversy in Burlington's activist community, bringing multiple social and environmental interest groups into conflict. Fearing these political divisions would undermine popular support for a comprehensive sustainability program, Burlington's mayor hired Hallsmith as a consultant in 1999 to resolve this quagmire and develop a long-term sustainability vision for the city.

In Hallsmith's eyes, stalled progress on a sustainability agenda in Burlington did not reflect any irremediable divisions between local interests, nor irreducible antinomies related to the concept of sustainability itself. On the contrary, she insisted that because Burlingtonians were collectively reliant on a single ecosystem, sustainable development *really was* in their shared interest, and internecine conflicts over sustainable development therefore reflected a collective *misrecognition* of this interest. Hallsmith located this misapprehension two factors. In the first place, Hallsmith noted that civic policy often appeared gilded in complex planning jargon, and that public consultations on local policy matters were often *ex post facto* affairs which invited citizens to comment on policy options that had already

⁴¹⁸ My use of the term 'territorial conflicts' here broadly corresponds to Kevin Cox's definition of 'territoriality' as "action to influence the content of an area" (such as the political efforts of Calgary's developers, or the activities of Burlington's oppositional interest groups, discussed in the following section). See Cox, "Territoriality."

⁴¹⁹ Hallsmith and Lietaer, *Creating Wealth*, 165.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.* A partial overview of local development politics around this time can be found in Noah Terrell Maslan, "Realizing Sustainability: Implementing a Vision in Burlington, Vermont (master's thesis, MIT, 2001).

been scripted and fully-formed by City experts.⁴²¹ By concealing normative planning objectives behind a veil of technical language, and furthermore inviting residents only to speak *against* undesirable policy outcomes (rather than advocate *for* desirable alternatives), Hallsmith claimed that the design of local institutions kept Burlingtonians from recognizing certain policy objectives (such as sustainability) as reflections of their own common interest.⁴²² Related to this first problem, Hallsmith noted that conflicts between progressive civil societal organizations “illustrated a lack of understanding about all the various aspects of creating a sustainable future,” and “how all of [these] parts fit together.”⁴²³ To counter this information asymmetry, Hallsmith argued that community members needed to agree on a conception of sustainability that would incorporate a wide range of projects (such as local food production, accommodations for low-carbon transport, or affordable housing) as both *reciprocally confirming* and *mutually necessary* aspects sustainable development (and hence, their ‘collective interest’).

While this diagnosis resembled the critiques of institutional parochialism found in citiesPLUS, Hallsmith attempted to resolve these perceived problems *through* the planning process itself. People were more likely to recognize their (allegedly) shared interest in sustainability, Hallsmith reasoned, so long as they were treated as ‘stakeholders’ in a sustainable development project. In her words:

When a stakeholder is asked what kind of world they want for their grandchildren, it doesn’t matter if they are Democrats, Republicans, Progressives, Communists, Conservatives, Liberals, NDPs or Greens; it turns out they all want the same thing. They want a healthy environment and good job opportunities. They want their grandchildren to have a voice in their own destiny, to have safe, high quality housing, clean water, friendly neighbourhoods and good health.⁴²⁴

The construction of Burlingtonians as ‘stakeholders’ was substantial, as the term invoked not only a pragmatic shared *interest* in sustainable development, but also a common *responsibility* for change.⁴²⁵ Indeed, ‘responsibilizing’ Burlington’s putatively unitary political community was exactly what Hallsmith set out to do over the next 18 months, as she used an approach “modeled after traditional New England town meetings” to assemble hundreds of these ‘stakeholders’ and give them a chance to set aside their (seemingly illusory) differences to “build a common vision of Burlington’s future.” In a bid to reveal the common threads between Burlingtonians’ values, these engagements had participants outline preferred development outcomes (such as a healthier environment, more street-level vibrancy, or stronger

⁴²¹ Cf. Maslan, “Realizing Sustainability,” 39-40.

⁴²² Hallsmith and Lietaer, *Creating Wealth*, 161-164.

⁴²³ *Ibid.*, 164-166.

⁴²⁴ Hallsmith and Lietaer, 183-184.

⁴²⁵ Cf. Swyngedouw, *Antinomies*, 608-609.

economic self-reliance) rather than problems to be solved (such as the ruinous effects of income inequality, capital flight, or sprawl). To this end, consultations revolved around four simple questions:

1. What do you value about Burlington that you want to pass on to future generations?
2. What do you want to change?
3. What ideas do you have for the city's future?
4. How can you help make the city a better place?⁴²⁶

Working with a group of 'core stakeholders' drawn from City of Burlington staff and local civil societal institutions (such as schools, NGOs, businesses, youth groups, and volunteer organizations), Hallsmith drew upon responses to these questions to create a "30-year blueprint for change" entitled the *Burlington Legacy Project*. Using the same quasi-objective systems knowledge as citiesPLUS – where the constituent elements of urban systems appear as matter-of-fact phenomena available for direct observation, objective measurement and technical manipulation – this group articulated 14 goals aimed at five interrelated systems, encompassing Burlington's *economy, environment, neighborhoods, governance*, and its available opportunities for developing *youth and life skills* (Figure 4.4). If positively-charged public engagement was designed to unveil the shared community interest hitherto obscured by flawed institutional designs, then this 'systems' framing attempted to illustrate how multiple (and seemingly competing) objectives might converge within a unified, coherent framework.

System	Goal Statement Foci
<i>Economy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a vibrant urban centre • Economic security • Economic self-reliance • Transportation
<i>Neighborhoods</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of life • Housing
<i>Governance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsive government • Youth civic participation
<i>Youth & Life Skills</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools • Youth opportunities • Lifelong learning
<i>Environment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air quality • Water quality • Energy and resource conservation

Figure 4.4 Systems and goals in the *Burlington Legacy Project*

Source: City of Burlington, *Burlington Legacy Project*

⁴²⁶ Hallsmith and Lietaer, 167.

Like the implementation measures laid out in citiesPLUS, the *Burlington Legacy Project's* goals were accompanied by several 'priority actions' identifying the short-term, pragmatic steps needed to satisfy the plan's long-term vision. Echoing the former plan's concluding sentiments, the *Burlington Legacy Project* likewise insisted that effective implementation of these strategies hinged upon continued collaboration between the state and civil society. But where citiesPLUS had attempted to (meekly) allocate responsibilities for sustainable development between state, corporate, and civil societal actors, the *Burlington Legacy Plan's* priority actions were vague on their desired distribution of responsibilities among local institutions, and furthermore provided only fleeting insights into the regulatory conditions that might be required for change.⁴²⁷ This is not to say that responsibility for the plan's goals fell to nobody in particular; on the contrary, because the plan purportedly disclosed the "common vision" of a representative group of "Burlington residents of all ages and backgrounds," responsibility for the fulfillment of the plan's vision fell to *all members of the locality, tout court*.⁴²⁸ In the plan's terms:

Progress towards the goal of a [...] sustainable city will require broad-based collaboration among a diverse range of government entities, businesses, organizations, educational institutions, health care providers, neighborhood groups, and individual citizens. *Each much take responsibility for portions of this plan*, providing the direction, commitment, and resources it will take to make this vision a reality.⁴²⁹

Rather than providing explicit regulatory direction, the *Burlington Legacy Project* was therefore pitched as a guiding "framework for an ongoing community dialogue" on sustainable development, wherein state intervention – such as regulatory changes – might only be one (of many) possible options.⁴³⁰ The implications of this arrangement were twofold. Because the plan claimed that "every city resident has a personal responsibility to take actions that help improve and preserve the health of our environment," the local state was relieved of the sole responsibility for change, while non-state actors would now be expected to voluntarily and independently organize to pursue 'community' goals.⁴³¹ But because the plan purportedly represented the normative values and aspirations of Burlington's entire

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*, 8. Of 87 'priority actions' outlined in the plan, for instance, only 7 make reference to formal regulations or other forms of state action required for change; conversely, out of the 40 implementation measures contained in citiesPLUS, 37 called for specific forms of state intervention. Cf. citiesPLUS, *Sustainable Urban System*, 30-44.

⁴²⁸ Ultimately, the plan identified six classes of actors responsible for the plan: government, the local business community, NGOs, 'educators', youth, and private individuals. Regarding the latter group, the plan observed that "Increased knowledge, skills, changing attitudes, and community involvement by *each* city resident will all be vital to the success of this plan." *Ibid.*, 43, emphasis mine.

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.*, 40, emphasis added.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴³¹ Hallsmith later reflected on the project that it was made "clear from the start the city [of Burlington] would not be the sole entity responsible for the plan's implementation. That was the reason for convening a large stakeholder process to begin with." Hallsmith and Lietaer, *Creating Wealth*, 169.

political community, then any state actions that *did* pursue the plans objectives – be they investments in social housing or zoning regulations to increase density – could presumably claim legitimacy in a pre-existing political consensus.

The utility of this approach for Calgary’s policymakers doubtlessly outmatched anything offered by citiesPLUS. But there was another vital distinction between the two plans for a Calgarian audience; Hallsmith’s project seemed to be having a material effect. Burlingtonian officials altered multiple pieces of civic legislation to reflect the *Burlington Legacy Plan*’s goals within a year of the plan’s adoption in 2000, and notwithstanding some minor controversies surrounding a few of the plan’s objectives, citizen support for sustainable development campaigns was reportedly on the rise.⁴³² Building on this localized success, Hallsmith began proselytizing with her sustainability gospel throughout the region as an active ‘transfer agents’ for her own ideas, eventually convincing 23 cities and towns across Vermont to endorse the United Nations Earth Charter by 2003.⁴³³ By evangelizing these early successes at a series of international conferences and summits, Hallsmith also drew attention (and funding) from several high-status international figures, including billionaire philanthropist Steven Rockefeller and the World Resources Institute, who commissioned her to develop an implementation guide for the Earth Charter – a document that Rockefeller had co-authored – after witnessing one of her presentations.⁴³⁴

Perhaps hoping to capitalize on this record for success, City of Calgary officials reached out to Hallsmith in the fall of 2004 and asked her to consult on their own nascent sustainability project. By this time Hallsmith had completed a draft version of her Earth Charter implementation guide; entitled EarthCAT (standing for ‘Earth Charter Community Action Tool’), it spelled out a series of pragmatic steps for realizing the cooperative agenda that the *Burlington Legacy Project* and citiesPLUS had both deemed necessary for change.⁴³⁵ As a necessary precondition for such cooperation to occur, EarthCAT suggested the need for an epistemological shift in how residents of a locality perceived development issues. Building from the *Burlington Legacy Project*, EarthCAT provided step-by-step instructions for developing

⁴³² *Ibid.*, 167-176.

⁴³³ Cf. Cook and Ward, “Conferences”; McCann and Ward, “Relationality”; Prince, “Policy Transfer.”

⁴³⁴ As a frequent collaborator with the World Bank and the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Resources Institute is governed by a veritable who’s who of transnational business and government elites. At present, this high-profile coterie includes former Mexican president Felipe Calderón, former American Vice President Al Gore, Bloomberg President Daniel Doctoroff, Deutsche Bank Vice Chairman Caio Koch-Weser, and former Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson.

⁴³⁵ Although this document was published in 2005, Hallsmith specifically mentions in *Creating Wealth*, 182, that she had pitched the EarthCAT model to the City when they first contacted her to consult on the plan in mid-2004; One former planning manager also confirmed as much in an interview on March 26, 2013.

consultative, long-term community visioning exercises aimed at affecting such a shift. These projects, EarthCAT affirmed, would give target audiences a chance to recognize their shared stake in sustainable development, and by having community members set future goals for five community ‘systems’ – *social, economic, environmental, and governance* systems, plus *services and infrastructure* networks – EarthCAT suggested that participants would be able to see connections between different sustainability programs more clearly.⁴³⁶ Perhaps most tantalizing, however, was EarthCAT’s suggestion that collaborative visioning projects aimed at optimizing ‘system dynamics’ would “build trust among people and improve the odds of getting their support for future community enhancement efforts.”⁴³⁷

While this formulation hardly offered an *ad hoc* schema for regulatory mimesis, it purportedly offered a way to create political conditions that were conducive to future regulatory change. The quasi-scientific logic of *optimizing* and *recalibrating* urban systems (rather than interrogating their political bases) would give planners the ability to position themselves as a class of intellectuals capable of identifying, organizing, and acting upon a general public interest. For a policymakers accustomed to walking on eggshells in local development dialogues, the attractiveness of this approach was plain, and notwithstanding substantial differences between the policy contexts of boomtown Calgary and small-town Burlington, Hallsmith was brought aboard the imagineCALGARY project team as a consultant, while her EarthCAT guide was adopted as a crucial source of inspiration.⁴³⁸ As Hallsmith headed toward Calgary with her how-to manual in hand, it appeared that the City had found their Pangloss.

4.4 IMAGINING URBAN SUSTAINABILITY, GOVERNING CIVIL SOCIETY

A vision helps unite people by identifying what people truly care about. In developing a community vision, citizens will have many opportunities to consider what is important to them personally and collectively. When the public has successfully understood these points, they will usually support the activity.

*THE EARTHCAT GUIDE TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT*⁴³⁹

Really, I hated the idea when people said “did we develop this [imagineCALGARY] in Calgary?” I would roll my eyes, like, “you’ve got to be fucking kidding me.” This was truly made in Calgary,

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*, 107.

⁴³⁸ In 2004, Calgary (population: 933,495) was nearly *twenty-seven* times larger than Burlington, and its population *increase* in 2006 alone (35,681) exceeded Burlington’s *total* 2004 population (approximately 30,000).

⁴³⁹ Hallsmith et al., *Taking Action*, 43.

but we had to remake the idea to be sellable to the public. And the public in Calgary are actually ready for these sorts of things.

CITY OF CALGARY PLANNER⁴⁴⁰

Sometimes you've actually got to lead a community. You can't just go and ram something down their throat until they're ready. And Calgary's now ready.

CALGARY MAYOR DAVE BRONCONNIER⁴⁴¹

Ideas and opinions are not spontaneously 'born' in the individual brain: they have had a centre of formation, of irradiation, of dissemination, or persuasion – a group of men [*sic*], or a single individual even, which has developed them and presented them in a political form of current reality.

ANTONIO GRAMSCI⁴⁴²

According to Gramsci, the introduction of new social epistemologies plays a vital role in effecting historical power shifts. For a class of intellectuals to assume political leadership and “make politics-history,” Gramsci claimed they need to construct a “sentimental connection” with the polity they sought to lead by “connecting the elementary passions of the people” to “a superior conception of the world, scientifically and coherently elaborated.”⁴⁴³ As evidenced by the term ‘politics-history’, Gramsci is not just talking about political victories within existing systems of leadership – replacing one head of state with another, for instance – but forms of political victory that fundamentally rewrite the very *conditions* for leadership itself. In Gramsci’s eyes, accomplishing such lasting historical changes not only requires prevailing forms of common sense to be discredited, but also the introduction and popularization of new conceptual understandings of the world capable of legitimizing new leadership arrangements.

By the mid-2000s, it was plain to City planners that the intransigence of Calgary’s politically powerful development bloc constituted a monumental barrier to the introduction of any meaningful sustainability reforms. It was also clear that the hegemonic primacy of developers was underwritten by a form of common sense which rendered consumer sovereignty, suburban growth, and low-cost housing as the foundations of a general public interest and overriding concerns for public policy. While planners were hardly reflexive of their own role in the consolidation of developer-led suburbanization, it was nevertheless apparent that this prevailing common sense was not without its contradictions; the GoPlan research and *Calgary 2020* had revealed that there *really was* a latent popular interest in a broader set

⁴⁴⁰ Interview, December 19, 2012.

⁴⁴¹ Quoted in Turner, “The Secret Greening of Calgary.”

⁴⁴² Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, 192-193.

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*, 418.

of policy issues and development options than the status quo. Gramsci remarked that the “popular element ‘feels’ but does not know or understand” such unfulfilled political passions; to change Calgary’s developmental trajectory, planners would attempt to promulgate a new conception of the world which would help Calgarians *re-cognize* their collective political interests and identities in terms that would win their support for developmental forms that the city’s reigning development elite had failed to provide.⁴⁴⁴

With its panoramic scope and comprehensive ‘systems logic’ (described to me by one planner as a “very scientific framework”), Hallsmith’s EarthCAT model was a prime candidate for this task.⁴⁴⁵ If questions of real estate prices and market-based choice had dominated previous discussions of the city’s future, EarthCAT offered an alternative epistemology which, like citiesPLUS, saw the city as an ensemble of interconnected and discrete systems whose constituent parts could be technocratically optimized and managed to achieve systemic balance. In contrast to received wisdom that Calgary’s political community consisted of atomized, sovereign consumers, this approach would interpellate Calgarians as a coherent, unitary body of mutually responsible ‘stakeholders’ united by a (putatively) common interest in the maintenance of a shared ‘community system’. In the terms of Peter Marcuse, the term ‘community’ was here a “perverse metaphor” which submerged real class antagonisms and established a putative shared interest among all members of a locality.⁴⁴⁶ And yet, if rampant suburban development was creating broad environmental dilemmas and social divisions, this perspective would presumably help citizens recognize the magnitude of problems posed by status quo development. In this respect, the mobilization of this approach in Calgary wasn’t enabled by its *alignment* with existing political-economic processes and prerogatives, but rather by its potential to *disrupt* existing logics of development.⁴⁴⁷

I asked several City planners in interviews whether imagineCALGARY was designed to create the groundwork for regulatory change by fostering popular support for sustainability projects. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this suggestion was categorically denied. When I asked one planner to describe whether imagineCALGARY was designed to affect a shift in popular attitudes about sustainability, he replied

Really, imagineCALGARY was about talking to Calgarians and setting this long-term plan. There was no political impact of that decision [*sic*]. It was, you know, “we’re going to create this 100-year plan, we’re going to create some strategies and targets that look out 30 years.” That’s it.⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁵ Interview, December 19, 2012.

⁴⁴⁶ Marcuse, “‘City’ as Perverse Metaphor.”

⁴⁴⁷ Cf. MacLeod, “New Urbanism”; McCann, “Policy Boosterism”; Peck, “Creative Class.”

⁴⁴⁸ Interview, October 11, 2012.

In another interview with a planner who had worked closely on the project, I asked

TH Do you think part of the point of imagineCALGARY was to create a broad base of citizen support for sustainability?

CP That was one of the outcomes, absolutely.

TH Do you think it was an objective?

CP No [*firmly*]. It wasn't an objective to create a broad movement. The objective was to have as many people as possible participate in a vision for Calgary. That was the point. The unintended consequence was that people became quite educated, and once people become educated and interested, then they want to be part of it.⁴⁴⁹

When I asked one senior-level planning official whether imagineCALGARY was designed to build public support for sustainability initiatives, she not only rejected the suggestion, but quickly (and tellingly) changed the topic to discuss how *developers* might have seen the project:

There was no agenda from my perspective at all, it was really open and it was ... it was available to everyone, even developers. And you know, when you're asking what people value, a developer generally values the same things about the city [as everyone else], right? You know, 'employment is great, the area is clean, good educational opportunities for my kids, etcetera'.⁴⁵⁰

These narratives position imagineCALGARY as a technically-qualified, bureaucratically-organized survey; an(other) evolutionary next-step in the City's sequential refinement of more inclusive civic engagement practices. In reality, however, imagineCALGARY was designed in the image of the EarthCAT model, which was explicitly aimed at winning hearts and minds in support of local sustainability efforts. City planners tended to downplay the salience of Hallsmith's consultancy on imagineCALGARY in interviews – the sensibility that it was a made-in-Calgary solution was nigh universal – while insisting on the project's political innocence: the actual production of imagineCALGARY, however, tells a different story.

Like the *Burlington Legacy Project*, imagineCALGARY would be a vision founded on broad citizen consultation. Instead of establishing new regulatory standards or policy-based solutions for Calgary's development woes, the project aimed to "engage public, business, community, and government stakeholders in a broad-based based dialogue" that would create "a long range vision and goals which reflect the diversity of aspirations and interests of the community [*sic*] for the future."⁴⁵¹ Beginning in June 2005, the City advertised its search for public input through an aggressive public relations

⁴⁴⁹ Interview, December 19, 2012.

⁴⁵⁰ Interview, March 26, 2013.

⁴⁵¹ City of Calgary, *imagineCALGARY*, 185.

campaign which used a variety of media to promote the project including ubiquitous ads on City buses and transit stations; an estimated 350,000 inserts in City utility bills; an estimated 120,000 inserts in local newspapers; stamped advertisements on library due-date slips; and a host of postcards, newsletters, and other printed advertisements.⁴⁵² Although not the City's first attempt to solicit public feedback for a long-term developmental vision, it diverged strongly from past attempts: in the place of closed-ended questionnaires and yes-or-no opinion polls centred upon pre-scripted policy scenarios, the City invited participants to provide free-form answers to open-ended questions about the city's future. At a number of open houses, meetings with community groups, and an open survey hosted on the City's website, Calgarians were asked to answer five questions which bore an unsurprising family resemblance to the *Burlington Legacy Project*. They were:

1. What do you value about Calgary?
2. What is like for you to live here?
3. What changes would you most like to see?
4. What are your hopes and dreams for the next 100 years?
5. How can you help make this happen?

Participants were led to consider these questions in the context of 'sustainability', which they were encouraged to think about sustainability in relation to two issues: the long-term satisfaction of '*universal*' human needs, and the ability to leverage *community assets* to meet these needs.⁴⁵³ Asking citizens to think about their long-term needs was intended to prompt participants to not only consider commonalities in their interest, but also to consider how a wide range of social and environmental needs – ranging from the need for social interaction and effective transportation system to potable water and clean air – constitute reciprocally confirming, mutually necessary components of a comprehensive sustainability program. Because "[h]uman needs are universal," the plan declared, asking questions about the satisfaction of these needs "allows for a broad understanding of the key issues facing a community."⁴⁵⁴ 'Community needs' were defined broadly as anything in place within a locality that could satisfy the aforementioned needs: rapid-transit network that satisfied mobility needs, businesses that facilitated social interaction, and so on. Aside from obscuring issues of who *owned* these assets – an issue that both *imagineCALGARY* and *EarthCAT* judiciously avoided – having participants think about 'community assets' was intended to encourage participants to view sustainable

⁴⁵² These numbers are taken from a personal communication with a City of Calgary planner, May 9, 2013.

⁴⁵³ The plan later defined 'community assets' in these (broad) terms: "Community assets are the ways in which we meet human needs. These assets include people, organizations, infrastructure, legislation or any other way that we meet our needs." City of Calgary, *imagineCALGARY*, 191.

⁴⁵⁴ City of Calgary, *imagineCALGARY*, 190.

development as an extension of processes they *already* appreciated in their everyday lives; as one participant described it, this framing made sustainability seem like “motherhood and apple pie.”⁴⁵⁵ One planner later commented that this approach aimed to “have people look at what’s working – and not what has a negative effect on what’s in your city – and build on that.” He went on:

If you base your problem-solving on that fact that there are puddles in the road, you’re just going to fix the potholes [*that caused them*]. In six months’ time, there’s potholes again [*sic*], and you’ve fixed them. But might the solution lie in perhaps changing the road, getting more cars off the road, or closing the road completely? [...] So that’s what you get with a systems approach, with an assets-based approach.⁴⁵⁶

Pitching questions about Calgary’s future in these terms, the plan later reflected, was designed as a “positive frame to take individuals out of the conventional problem-solving frame [*sic*] and ask them to build on what is working well and what needs to be improved.”⁴⁵⁷ And yet this self-regarding description of the project, alongside the aforementioned planner’s defense of it, could have have been taken straight from the pages of EarthCAT. Like citiesPLUS, EarthCAT distinguished its epistemological approach to urban problems from ‘traditional’ planning processes. In its terms:

Traditionally, community management focuses on fixing problems as they arise. City managers fix potholes, allocate resources to improve test scores, or clean up degraded waterfronts. A narrow focus on attacking individual problems – on the specific negative aspects of what happens in a community – is not an effective long-term strategy. Problems persist, and new ones arise, because strategies born from a narrow focus will more often than not miss the true causes of the problem.⁴⁵⁸

Having community members collectively articulate their long-term needs, EarthCAT suggested, created an opportunity to show how different needs are connected; it was, ostensibly, a first step in conferring a “deep and effective understanding of the whole [community] system” and the relations between its constituent parts.⁴⁵⁹ Likewise, having participants identify potential ‘assets’ for change was intended to focus community dialogues on “*achieving* positive outcomes, rather than *overcoming* negative problems.”⁴⁶⁰ EarthCAT waxed rhapsodically on the purported effects of this methodological approach:

⁴⁵⁵ Interview, community activist, October 11, 2012.

⁴⁵⁶ Interview, City of Calgary planner, December 19, 2012.

⁴⁵⁷ City of Calgary, *imagineCALGARY*, 192. Another planner later reflected: “People were fairly excited about it [*imagineCALGARY*] because the project wasn’t talking about day-to-day issues that they might have anger over, like the traffic or whatever, but kept things to a high level that people really valued.” Interview, Oct. 11, 2012.

⁴⁵⁸ Hallsmith et al., *Taking Action*, 8.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 8, emphasis in original.

People do not get excited about a meeting on zoning changes, but they do get excited about preserving what is special about their home towns and having their ideas heard in the process. Historically, meaningful change has often followed a *fundamental cultural shift led by people who have captured the hearts of a broad group of followers* [...] Engage people based on the basis of their faith in the future, their concern for their children and grandchildren, and their love for their neighbors, and you won't be able to stop [them].⁴⁶¹

In truth, the EarthCAT guide did not simply suggest that such a sea-change would come about simply by asking positively-framed questions. The guide also suggested more targeted exercises, such as community-oriented focus groups which would allow planners to outline 'systems' thinking in greater specificity.⁴⁶² City planners took up this challenge with gusto, collaborating with a local consultancy firm (titled 'the Praxis Group', no less) to hold over 160 'visioning sessions' with youth groups, community associations, cultural organizations, and even other City departments to focus on development issues in regard to five systems. Drawing almost directly from EarthCAT, these systems pertained to *economic*, *social*, and *governance* systems, as well as the city's *built environment* and *natural environment*.⁴⁶³

The particular way that these systems were conceptualized was of paramount importance. Like citiesPLUS and the *Burlington Legacy Plan*, EarthCAT had viewed urban systems as unified, coherent arrangements of discretely measurable variables which could be 'optimized' or brought to 'equilibrium' to suit a set of pre-existing community needs. As an example of a problem within these systems, the EarthCAT guide discussed a congested road network obstructing the (ostensibly universal) mobility needs of a community: rather than responding to this problem by simply building more roads, EarthCAT suggested that planners would need to identify how demand for roads are produced by the dynamics of other systems – such as the location and density of housing, jobs, and recreation space – which could be technically managed in order to achieve systemic balance.⁴⁶⁴ Rather than apprehending system dynamics as *political constructs*, this view rendered urban systems as *technical* problems amenable to scientific forms of management. With questions of power judiciously placed beyond the bounds of discussion, exchanges over the 28 'universal human needs' that City officials identified in these systems (Figure 4.5) were decidedly pragmatic, technical, and matter-of-fact; precisely the sort of arrangement where, in Erik Swyngedouw's terms, "there may be conflicts of interest and opinion, [but] there is a

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 20, emphasis mine.

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*, 43-48.

⁴⁶³ The five systems suggested in EarthCAT consisted of *economic*, *social*, and *governance systems*, plus *services and infrastructure* and the *local environmental system*.

⁴⁶⁴ Hallsmith et al., *Taking Action*, 82.

widespread agreement over the conditions that exist and what needs to be done.”⁴⁶⁵ In the context of ‘systems thinking’ and ‘universal human needs’, the plan noted, for example, that discussions of water supply would simply ask: “We need water today, and we will need water in 100 years. How do we make this happen?”⁴⁶⁶

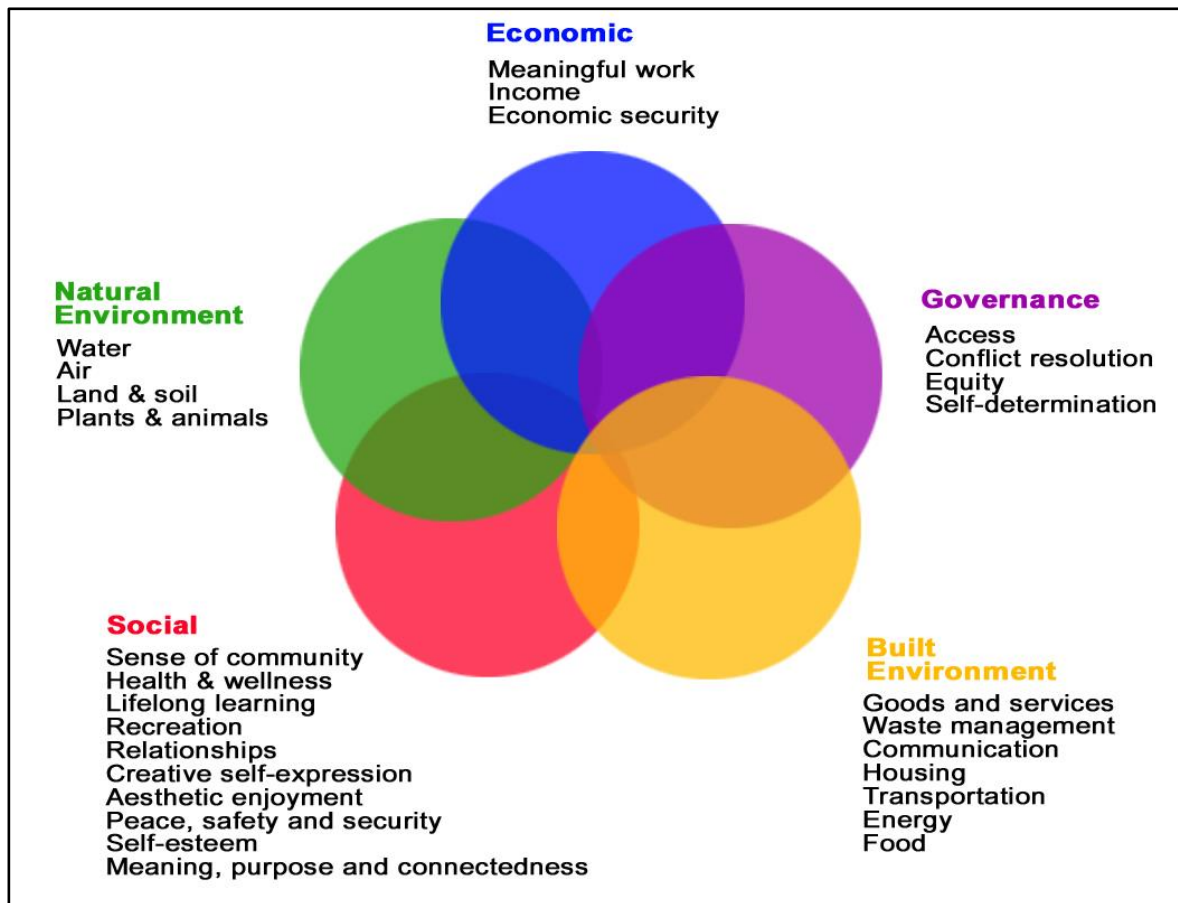


Figure 4.5 Urban systems and ‘universal human needs’ in imagineCALGARY

Source: City of Calgary, *imagineCALGARY*, 190

Several of these sessions were conducted with the assistance of MetroQuest, a computer modeling tool designed to simulate and compare future growth scenarios which had in fact been used as the basis for ‘backcast’ modeling in citiesPLUS.⁴⁶⁷ In essence, the program allowed users to chart the long-term impact of choices made in a variety of fields, such as energy use; transit planning; recycling

⁴⁶⁵ Erik Swyngedouw, “Interrogating Post-Democratization: Reclaiming Egalitarian Political Spaces,” *Political Geography* 30, no. 7 (2011): 370-380. See also Swyngedouw, “Antinomies” and MacLeod, “Smart Growth.”

⁴⁶⁶ City of Calgary, *imagineCALGARY*, 190.

⁴⁶⁷ Seymoar, *Urban Sustainability*, 9.

programming; economic activity; land preservation; water generation and disposal; and issues related to the location and density of jobs and housing. For example, the program allowed participants to compare the long-range annexation needs of business-as-usual development versus a development based around compact growth, or to compare the impacts of spending on roadways versus transit systems (Figure 4.6). Although these abstractions did not identify the causal political forces driving these trends, they did emphasize their aggregate, long-term consequences; as one member of the imagineCALGARY team observed, these procedures were simply oriented towards imparting “a real clear sense that all these [different] things are interconnected” within Calgary’s community system.⁴⁶⁸

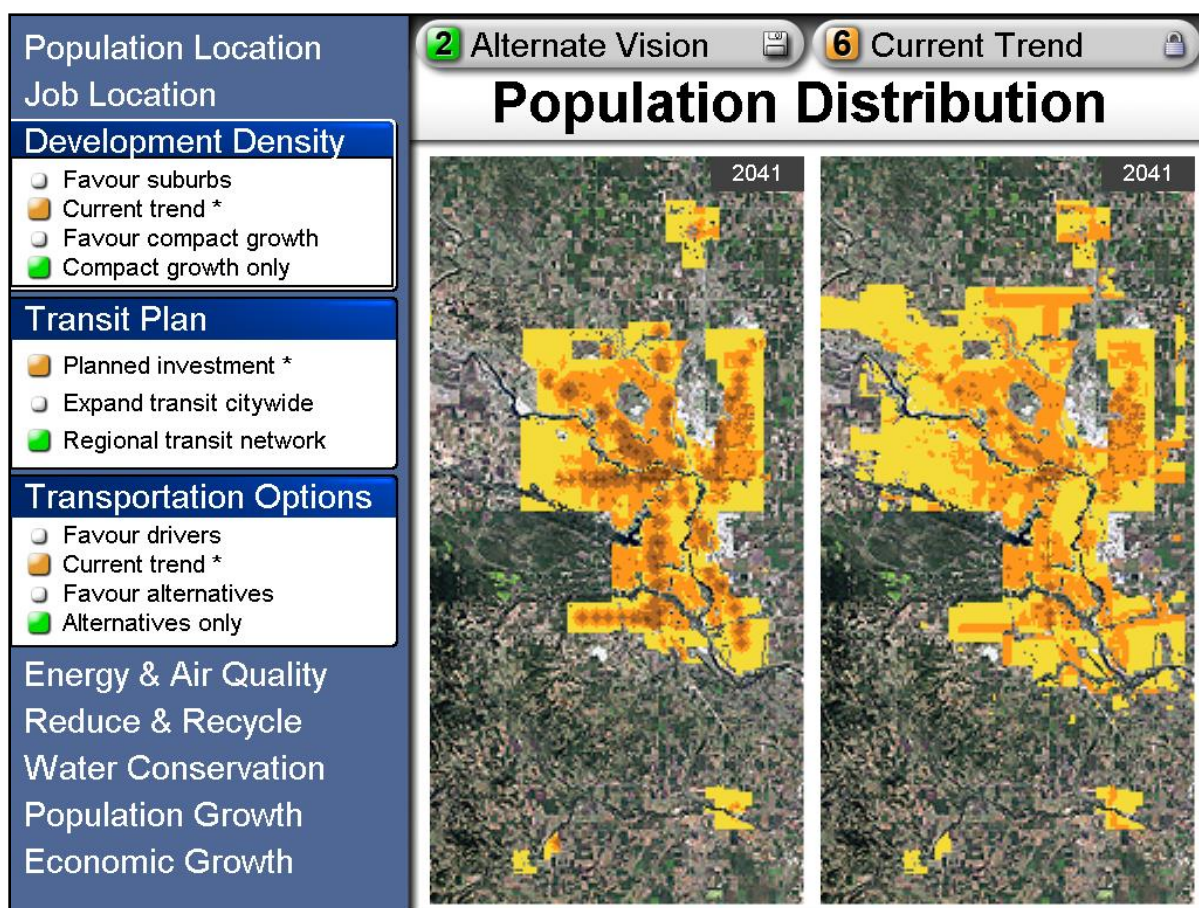


Figure 4.6 Cartographies of change: alternative growth scenarios in MetroQuest

Source: personal communication, City of Calgary planner, May 9, 2013

Elsewhere this same planner noted that MetroQuest scenarios led participants to the realization that that they “can’t think of any one area in isolation anymore”; instead, she claimed that participants

⁴⁶⁸ Quoted in Sandee Wong, “Tool Forecasts City’s Future,” *Calgary Herald* Oct. 6, 2005, N3.

would be prompted to see multiple issues (such as transportation, infrastructure, and energy use) “as strands of spaghetti knotted together in a big bowl. Slurp one up and the others are affected.”⁴⁶⁹ Like the evocative anecdote about fixing potholes on roads, this culinary metaphor was also lifted from the EarthCAT guide, which observed that urban systems are “really somewhat like a bowl of spaghetti: all the parts are connected and inextricably intertwined.” By helping participants recognize the relational ties between different aspects of their local community, Hallsmith suggested that visioning exercises would convey “that it is impossible to achieve narrowly defined goals in a community without taking all of the other sectors into account.”⁴⁷⁰ These technologies and practices, it was hoped, would form the basis for a new developmental common senses, and as project participants pondered ‘universal needs’, collective assets, and future growth trajectories, these forecasted cartographies loomed large.⁴⁷¹

4.5 CONSOLIDATING THE VISION

I know it sounds really shitty, but they [developers] aren’t big thinkers, they’re businessmen [*sic*]. They’re not paid to think big, they’re paid to build houses and get land and put the sewer lines in and shit like that. [...] The trouble is, their business model, which they’re convinced is the right model, isn’t geared towards anything else but suburban development. That’s all they do!

FORMER CITY OF CALGARY PLANNING MANAGER⁴⁷²

[...] it is absurd to think of a purely “objective” prediction. Anybody who makes a prediction has in fact a “programme” for whose victory he [*sic*] is working, and his prediction is precisely an element of contributing to that victory.

ANTONIO GRAMSCI⁴⁷³

While public surveys were designed to shape popular opinion in particular ways, careful editorial work was still required to transform massive volumes of public feedback into a coherent vision. EarthCAT suggested that feedback should be reviewed and translated into a unified narrative by a group of ‘core stakeholders’ consisting of “usually no more than 30-40 people” and including “various town leaders – department heads, for example, and the heads of significant local institutions.”⁴⁷⁴ City officials formed a 38-member Round Table to oversee the formation of this vision, which included five members

⁴⁶⁹ Quoted in Daniel Libman, “Holy Vision of the Future, Batman!” *Calgary Herald*, June 17, 2005, SW24.

⁴⁷⁰ Hallsmith et al., *Taking Action*, 10.

⁴⁷¹ Cf. MacLeod, “New Urbanism”; Moore, “Best Practice”; and Temenos and McCann, “Local Politics.”

⁴⁷² Interview, March 26, 2013.

⁴⁷³ Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, 171.

⁴⁷⁴ Hallsmith et al., *Taking Action*, 28.

of City Council, three senior City administrators, and a variety of representatives from local school boards, voluntary organizations, post-secondary institutes, and businesses.⁴⁷⁵ For each of the 28 human needs identified in the project (Figure 4.5), this Round Table developed a corresponding list of 100-year goals for the city's development (Figure 4.7). Crucially, these goals were not themselves substantive policy objectives or measurable development targets; indeed, many 'needs' addressed by these goals (such as the need for 'aesthetic enjoyment' or a 'sense of community') would be impossible to address through policy alone. In the project's terms, these goals were designed to "create a shared focus for the community" that was "Based on the values and aspirations of Calgarians" themselves.⁴⁷⁶ Having already interpellated participants as mutually responsible stakeholders, these goals outlined the normative aspirations around which they were apparently unified.

System	Need	Goal
Built Environment and Infrastructure System	<i>Transportation</i>	Calgary is built at a human scale with a transportation system that serves the access and mobility needs of all people through a choice of convenient, comfortable, affordable and efficient transportation modes. The transportation system connects people and goods locally, regionally and globally. Transportation needs are met safely and in a manner supportive of human and ecosystem health.
Natural System	<i>Land and Soil</i>	Fertile soil is vital to maintaining life. Calgarians are responsible stewards of land, maintaining the life-supporting processes integral to healthy, intact ecosystems. We use and share our land wisely and equitably.
Social System	<i>Sense of Community</i>	We have a sense of belonging, friendship and identity within the context of our groups and neighbourhoods. We honour and celebrate diversity. We act as collective stewards of our values, traditions, institutions and the natural environment.

Figure 4.7 Systems, needs, and goals in imagineCALGARY

Source: City of Calgary, *imagineCALGARY*

Deviating slightly from the EarthCAT model – which did not call for sub-groups within a visioning project – City officials created five Working Groups consisting of ten to fifteen volunteers, each of which corresponded to one of imagineCALGARY's urban systems. These groups were tasked with giving

⁴⁷⁵ Academics were the largest constituency in this group: seven faculty from the University of Calgary and three from Mount Royal University (then Mount Royal College) sat on the Round Table, and were drawn from disciplines ranging from business, urban design, and economics to journalism, religious studies, and medicine. Future mayor Naheed Nenshi – then a professor at Mount Royal – was among them. City of Calgary, *imagineCALGARY*, 106-107.

⁴⁷⁶ City of Calgary, *imagineCALGARY*, 197.

substance to the plan's broad vision by attaching relevant variables to each of its goals in order to "provide useful reference points for organizations and individuals to determine what action can be taken to reach the [project's] goals" over a 10- to 30-year timespan.⁴⁷⁷ Where public feedback called for more ecologically-sensitive transportation options, for instance (Figure 4.7), for instance, the project's Built Environment Working Group created targets for the expansion of bikeways and public transit, with parallel reductions in private automobile use (Figure 4.8). By defining the particular variables germane to sustainable development, these targets (114 in total) specified the 'human needs' intended to replace the preservation of (low) housing prices and unbounded suburban growth as primary policy objectives; in this sense, they were the foundation of a "scientifically and coherently elaborated' conception of the world that imagineCALGARY officials were connecting to the "elementary passions of the people" (at least as far these passions were filtered, organized and rearticulated by the project's Round Table).

System	Need	Targets (Selected)
Built Environment and Infrastructure System	<i>Transportation</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. By 2036, we reduce the annual private vehicle kilometres travelled per capita by 20 percent. 2. By 2016, we increase the residential population within walking distance (600 metres) of major transit nodes by 100 percent. 3. By 2036, there is a 50 percent reduction from 1990 levels in the pollution (greenhouse gases) associated with automobiles. 4. By 2036, the number of on-street bikeways increases by 200 percent, and the number of pathways by 100 percent.
Natural System	<i>Land and Soil</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. By 2036, land use efficiency increases by at least 30 percent, as measured by public transit threshold and increased density. 2. By 2036, urban food production increases to 5 percent. 3. By 2036, Calgary's ecological footprint decreases below the 2001 Canadian average of 7.25 hectares per capita.
Social System	<i>Sense of Community</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. By 2010, 90 percent of Calgarians agree that there is a strong sense of community in Calgary, and at least 80 percent of Calgarians report high levels of satisfaction, sense of belonging, attachment and civic pride. 2. By 2010, at least 75 percent of Calgarians report that they volunteer for the benefit of others who are outside their circles of family and friends.

Figure 4.8 imagineCALGARY targets

Source: City of Calgary, *imagineCALGARY*

⁴⁷⁷ *Ibid.* Like the project's Round Table, these Working Groups were heterogeneously organized, bringing together business professionals, activists, academics, representatives from voluntary groups, and of course, planners

To ensure these targets were sufficiently comprehensive, Working Groups were provided with background training in Hallsmith's approach to 'systems thinking'.⁴⁷⁸ As shown by the already sweeping purview of the plan – which had created goals for issues ranging from waste management and housing to social inclusion, public health, and greenhouse gas emissions – this approach impelled a search for global, omniscient comprehension, wherein the components of each system could be objectively identified, measured, and managed. The ensemble of sustainability-relevant variables identified by the Working Groups was accordingly broad, and many of these variables fell outside of the cities legislative grasp: for instance, the plan included targets for public health, education, food production.⁴⁷⁹ Nevertheless, several of the plan's goals (especially related to housing, transportation, and energy) directly broached issues related to the form and pattern of urban development: for instance, the plan's first target for housing called for the development of "'complete communities' that enable people to meet most of their daily needs within a reasonable walking distance from home."⁴⁸⁰ Additionally, while it was claimed that imagineCALGARY was a 'community vision' (and not an exercise in drafting statutory policy), project Working Groups created hundreds of short-term implementation strategies for the plan's targets which at times held clear policy implications. To support the aforementioned 'complete communities', for instance, imagineCALGARY called for an "increase in residential density, particularly in strategic locations at transit stations" and "increased mix of uses within communities"; elsewhere, one transportation strategy stated the need to "[l]imit suburban office development in areas not served well by transit," while a strategy to promote 'aesthetic enjoyment' (target: "90 percent of citizens report that Calgary is a beautiful city" by 2036) called for "design performance standards for new residential, commercial, and industrial construction to ensure beauty is considered in all new development."⁴⁸¹

Admittedly, these scant examples do not represent the vast array of issues considered within imagineCALGARY. Furthermore, while the plan's near-term strategies may have *implied* the need for policy correctives to the status quo, they typically did not identify responsible agents for change to the same extent as citiesPLUS. Like the *Burlington Legacy Project*, change would be the diffuse responsibility of *all* community stakeholders. Nevertheless, these examples do convey that while imagineCALGARY stopped short of *directly* indicting suburbanization, elements of its vision were structured to suggest

⁴⁷⁸ Hallsmith's role in this part of the process remains unclear. While planners noted in interviews that Hallsmith had provided City officials with training in 'systems thinking', they did not mention whether she had actually participated in training the project's Working Groups; nevertheless, these planners did confirm – as does the finished *imagineCALGARY* plan itself – that Working Groups *were* trained in systems thinking by City staff.

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 2-4.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.* 23, 33, 80.

that extant development trends did not align with the “values and aspirations” of Calgarians; indeed, the plan was consistent in arguing that new developmental forms were needed to meet ‘universal human needs’ in the city. Nestled in its sweeping vision of urban life, imagineCALGARY therefore attempted to articulate a germinal popular sensibility that the status quo could not hold.

While Calgary’s development and homebuilding sectors had relatively scant representation on the project’s Round Table, they were considerably more involved in the Working Groups. Given the slant towards developmental alternatives expressed in plan’s vision, it would have been unsurprising if these developers had been dissenting voices within the project Working Groups, looking to prevent the plan from setting development targets which might subvert their hegemonic project of profligate, rapid-fire suburbanization.⁴⁸² Yet, there are several reasons why this did not occur. In the first place, the plan’s Working Groups were not designed as forums for debating the plan’s normative vision, but were instead oriented towards identifying and measuring relevant ‘system variables’ and short-term strategies that were unattached to particular responsible agents. In interviews, numerous planners pointed out that ‘backcasting’ procedures taken from citiesPLUS oriented discussions within Working Group discussions towards measuring quantifiable ‘system’ trends and identifying broad forms of action that would be necessary to optimize them. Discussions of political values, or responsible parties for these actions, were “beyond the scope” of these groups.⁴⁸³ In addition, because imagineCALGARY was not intended to be statutory policy, several planners recalled that developers did not take the project seriously.⁴⁸⁴ Indeed, the City itself seemed to eschew any direct responsibility for the plan’s substantive vision: in a phrase that was recirculated to me in *all* of the interviews I conducted with planners who had worked on the project, imagineCALGARY was pitched as a “City-led, community-owned initiative.”⁴⁸⁵

By the time imagineCALGARY was complete in the summer of 2006, City officials had connected popular sentiments to a new conception of city life that emphasized both collective responsibility for the

⁴⁸² One centrally positioned former planning manager observed in an interview on March 25, 2013 that the only substantial voices of dissent in the imagineCALGARY Working Groups were a group of neoclassical economists from the University of Calgary. One of these economists later wrote a scathing review of the project: Christopher Bruce, “A Tale of Two Cities: Public Participation Processes in Banff and Calgary” (Policy Brief No. 07001, Institute for Advanced Policy Research, University of Calgary, Calgary, AB, 2007).

⁴⁸³ Although citiesPLUS wasn’t mentioned specifically, this point about ‘backcasting’ was brought up in interviews on October 11, 2012, December 19, 2012, and January 2, 2013.

⁴⁸⁴ In an interview on January 2, 2013, one planner recalled that developers in the Working Groups “didn’t always show up for meetings, and they didn’t think it was going anywhere. Definitely, I had the impression that the industry thought ... they didn’t take it seriously, they thought it was just another planning study.”

⁴⁸⁵ City of Calgary, *imagineCALGARY*, 185.

wellbeing of Calgary's urban systems and the need for developmental alternatives. In their eyes, they had merely uncovered a latent popular consensus on sustainability that was *already in place* and waiting to be discovered. Crucially, developers themselves were now party to this consensus. But as City officials would soon discover, it was one thing to declare the existence of consensus, and another to act on it.

4.6 "WHERE DO WE GROW FROM HERE?"

imagineCALGARY was not a City project. It was a community project. That's a very, very, very key point.

CITY OF CALGARY PLANNER⁴⁸⁶

Planners cannot socially engineer people into desired behaviours through policy [*sic*].

DEVELOPMENT INDUSTRY SPOKESPERSON GRACE LUI⁴⁸⁷

Is it the government's role to restrict choice? When we restrict growth, we're basically saying our city is no longer open for business.

CALGARY HOMEBUILDING MAGNATE JAY WESTMAN⁴⁸⁸

It is common to assume that the community system is dominated by formal structures established by your local government. However, these formal structures are only a part – sometimes a small part – of the overall system. The informal relationships, the natural resources, history, cultural mindsets, and commerce [*sic*] often have far greater influence than formal institutions.

THE EARTHCAT GUIDE TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT⁴⁸⁹

By the time imagineCALGARY was finished in the summer of 2006, the scope of that project's vision was not the only form of 'sprawl' on local political agendas. Skyrocketing oil prices had ballooned Calgary's population by nearly a quarter of a million people over the previous ten years, for a total population increase of almost thirty percent.⁴⁹⁰ Although the City maintained its acquiescent stance on suburban development this period, inflationary forces caused housing prices to spiral by nearly 40 percent between 2005 and 2006 alone (Figure 4.9).⁴⁹¹ With the broad majority of this growth occurring

⁴⁸⁶ Interview, December 19, 2012.

⁴⁸⁷ Lui,, "What Plan."

⁴⁸⁸ Quoted in Kathy McCormick, "Plan It Chill," *Calgary Herald*, Mar 14, 2009, I1.

⁴⁸⁹ Hallsmith et al., *Taking Action*, 143.

⁴⁹⁰ Civic censuses report the city's population at 991,759 in 2006, up from 767,059 in 1996.

⁴⁹¹ According to figured obtained from the Calgary Real Estate Board, the average price of single-detached homes jumped from \$287,125 in 2005 to \$400,081 in 2006, for a 39 percent rise. Prices in condominium apartments rose

in new subdivisions – which was, according to two local pundits, “a development pattern [that] has taken on a life of its own” – City budgets strained to finance capital infrastructure, particular in the domain of road construction.⁴⁹² Between 1998 and 2007, the City had spent nearly more than \$1.5 billion on new road construction alone, with an additional \$1.16 billion dedicated to maintenance and operating costs for its existing, overextending road network during the same period. While Klein’s scorched-earth fiscal policies had cleared the Province’s sovereign debt load by the year 2000, the paucity of revenue streams available to the City forced it borrow heavily to cover its costs, and the City’s debt soared from a nearly twenty-year low of \$1.2 billion in 1999 to over \$2.1 billion in 2007.⁴⁹³

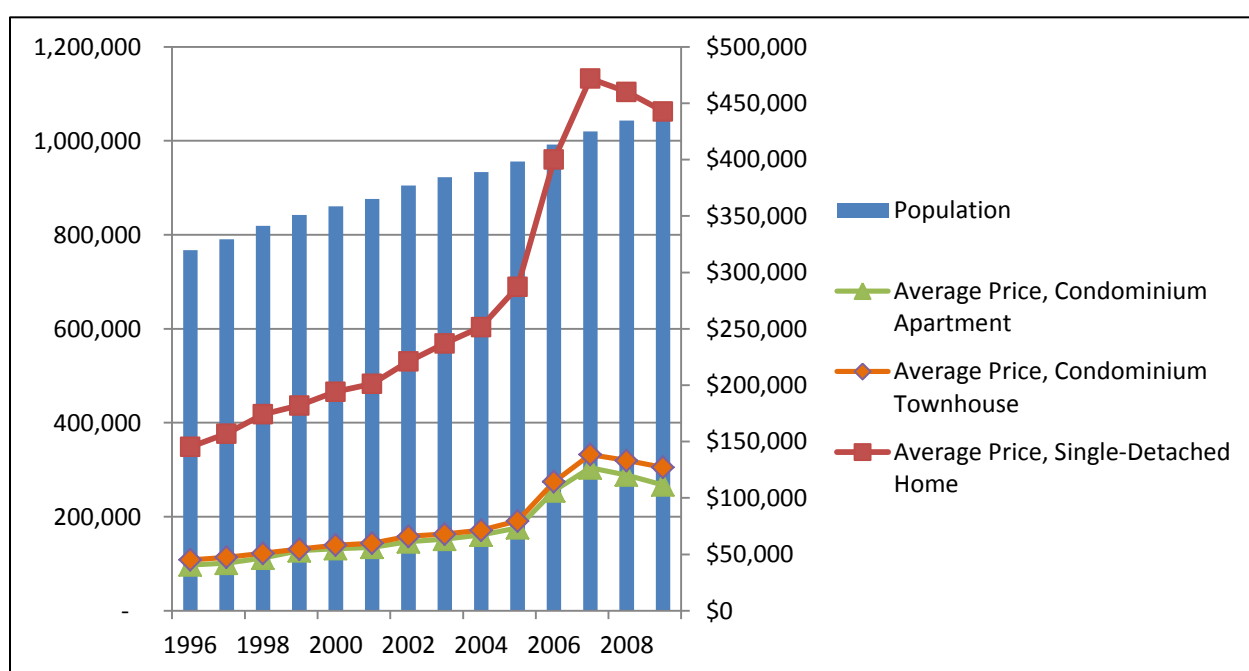


Figure 4.9 Housing prices and population growth, 1996-2009

Source: Calgary Real Estate Board

Although similar contextual pressures had in the past produced intense pressure to expand the City’s planned land supply (in the alleged interest of keeping housing prices down), City officials saw

from \$176,000 to \$255,063, for an increase of 45 percent, while the cost of condominium townhouses rose 44 percent from \$191,053 in 2005 to \$274,560 in 2006. According to two University of Calgary business professors, this increase reflected a “typical market correction fuelled by hype, greed over fear and panic over civility.” Jim Dewald and Gordon Sick, “Urban Sprawl Isn’t Evil, but It’s Expensive,” *Calgary Herald*, Sept. 28, 2007, A29.

⁴⁹² The quote is taken from Beverly Sandalack and Jim Dewald, “Density ‘Magic Bullet’ Needs Decoding,” *Calgary Herald*, Oct. 7 2006, I6. Between 2006 and 2007, a full 93 percent of Calgary’s growth occurred in new suburbs as downtown populations actually decreased. City of Calgary, *Calgary and Region Social Outlook 2007-2012*, 2007, 82.

⁴⁹³ City of Calgary, *A Case of Fiscal Imbalance: The Calgary Experience*, 2010.

opportunities for change in the aftermath of imagineCALGARY. One planner reflected that the project's wide public engagement had left "a lot of people in general excited about creating diverse communities, looking at the way cities grow, recognizing that it's changing and that we can't have the communities we had in the past."⁴⁹⁴ Detailed scenario modeling and technical systems-thinking frameworks had indeed channeled public input towards a vision that suggested a new developmental arc for Calgary, and by the end of 2006 planners had distilled imagineCALGARY's vision into a shortlist of eleven principles that the former project had shown as reciprocally confirming aspects of sustainable development (Figure 4.10).

1. Create a range of housing opportunities and choices.
2. Create walkable environments.
3. Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.
4. Provide a variety of transportation options.
5. Preserve open space, agricultural land, natural beauty and critical environmental areas.
6. Mixed-land uses. [*sic*]
7. Strategically direct and manage redevelopment opportunities within existing areas.
8. Support compact development.
9. Connect people, goods and services locally, regionally and globally.
10. Provide transportation services in a safe, effective, affordable and efficient manner that enables reasonable accessibility to all areas of the city for all citizens.
11. Utilize green infrastructure and buildings.

Figure 4.10 The City of Calgary's sustainability principles for land use and mobility

Source: City of Calgary, *Grow from Here*, 1.

After endorsing these principles in January 2007, Council directed planning staff to use them as the basis for rewriting the City's land-use and transportation frameworks in a project that would eventually be dubbed Plan-It Calgary. Perhaps hoping to capitalize on the apparent success of civic engagement in imagineCALGARY, Plan-It would likewise incorporate broad public consultations on its proposed reforms, and as a basis for these dialogues, planners turned again to MetroQuest to 'backcast' three potential growth scenarios over the next 60 years: a 'compact scenario', which would direct all

⁴⁹⁴ Interview, October 11, 2012.

future growth within the city's existing footprint; a 'dispersed scenario' that would extend status quo development trends, with only a "modest progression of the city towards the sustainability principles"; and a 'hybrid scenario' which represented a middle ground between the other two approaches, and, reportedly, a preemptive peace offering to developers.⁴⁹⁵

By the time the City released the Plan-It growth scenarios for public commentary at the end of 2007, however, the financial strain of rapid suburban growth had mounted considerably. In same month that these scenarios were published in a pamphlet titled *Where Do We Grow from Here?*, City officials determined that waning fiscal capacities had left them unable to provide planning support and funding for infrastructure in five proposed developments within recently annexed suburban land. Seeing the handwriting on the wall, Calgary's developers were decidedly less latitudinarian than they had been during the imagineCALGARY process. Even though the City claimed a 15-year supply of planned land within city limits – wherein a full 31 new communities were already being constructed at that time – developers once again blamed mounting housing prices on shortages of developable land.⁴⁹⁶ As the City began hosting public consultations on Plan-It in early 2008, developers relentlessly pushed forward on this familiar axis of advance, with an industry spokesperson from the Urban Development Institute (UDI) claiming that land shortages, delays in City approvals, and high housing prices were all "directly related to Plan-It Calgary" and its proposed "strict new set of rules" for development.⁴⁹⁷

These early warning shots suggested that Calgary's 'community system' was perhaps not as unified as imagineCALGARY had presumed. Yet, as public deliberations on Plan-It's growth scenarios continued over 2008, any discussion of Calgary's future would be shaped by three political-economic developments. The meteoric economic boom which had been the context for imagineCALGARY began to crumble mid-year with the onset of a global financial crisis which, in words of one energy analysis, constituted a "doomsday scenario" within Calgary's energy economy.⁴⁹⁸ Over two weeks in 2008, oil prices dropped from nearly \$150 US per barrel to less than \$40 US, while housing prices fell for the first time since 1995, creating a general climate of economic insecurity.⁴⁹⁹ Amidst falling commodity prices

⁴⁹⁵ City of Calgary, *Where Do We Grow from Here?*, 2007, 2-5. The proposed 'hybrid scenario' would direct 62 percent of new population growth and 92 percent of new employment growth within the city's extant boundaries.

⁴⁹⁶ Collette Derowitz, "Don't Defer Projects, City Told," *Calgary Herald*, Jan. 28, 2008, B1.

⁴⁹⁷ Kathy McCormick, "City Planning Delays Raise Affordability Fears," *Calgary Herald*, Feb. 2, 2008, I2.

⁴⁹⁸ Scott Norval, "'Armageddon' in the Oil Patch," *Globe & Mail*, Oct. 9, 2008, B1. Housing prices continued to fall into 2009, the year Plan-It was considered by City Council. Based on figures provided by the Calgary Real Estate Board, the price of single-family homes fell by 6 percent between 2007 and 2009, while the price of condominiums fell by 12 percent. In comparison, prices in both of these fields rose by 200 percent between 1997 and 2007.

⁴⁹⁹ Estimated oil prices are taken from the City of Calgary, *2008 Annual Report*, 2009, 5.

and a real decline in homeowner equity, the City's practical need to raise property taxes – which had remained frozen for much of the 1990s – compounded the effects of this squeeze. While Mayor Bronconnier had nudged property taxes upwards by an average of 5 percent per year from 2001 onwards to offset the effects of spiraling inflation, one member of City Council warned of a potential “tax revolt” a proposed three-year, 22 percent tax increase was announced that year (despite the fact that property taxes in Calgary were – and still are – among the lowest in the country).⁵⁰⁰ As a final twist, several attempts to foster high-density redevelopments in established communities – which had been a vital part of the imagineCALGARY vision and a central plank of the nascent Plan-It recommendations – had encountered stiff resistance and strident criticism from residents' groups, extensively covered in local news media.⁵⁰¹

Amidst this outpouring of *sturm und drang*, developers and homebuilders began uncovering the power relations that imagineCALGARY tried to paper over. Alongside familiar claims that new planning controls would inflate housing prices, developers accused the project of containing hidden costs for which Calgarians were being “asked write a blank cheque.”⁵⁰² Building on these charges of bureaucratic mismanagement, developers characterized the Plan-It as a(nother) violation of consumer sovereignty that would restrict housing choices. UDI executive director Michael Flynn castigated Plan-It as “a social engineering document trying to make a market that isn't there,” noting that the City “would be better off just letting (free) market forces dictate what's going to happen with our city.”⁵⁰³ Developers also played on anxieties over redevelopment and densification in established communities by commissioning a phone survey which allegedly entailed several (mis)leading questions about Plan-It; one question, for instance, reportedly asked whether respondents wanted to “raise [their] kids in a high-rise jungle,” or wanted “the City to take away [their] right to single-family housing.”⁵⁰⁴ While finding that 73 percent of respondents agreed in principle that the city should be developed more densely, this survey also

⁵⁰⁰ Kim Guttormson and Joel Kom, “Mayor Faces ‘Tax Revolt,’” *Calgary Herald*, Nov. 1, 2008, A1.

⁵⁰¹ Kathy McCormick, “Transit-Oriented Projects Stall,” *Calgary Herald*, Apr. 14, 2007, I15; Marty Hope, “Neighbours’ Objections Frustrate Developers,” *Calgary Herald*, Feb. 16, 2008, I4; Jason Markusoff, “Transit Plan Alarms Residents,” *Calgary Herald*, Nov. 24, 2008, B1. For a target to create “complete communities’ that enable people to meet most of their daily needs within a reasonable walking distance from home,” imagineCALGARY had recommended an “increase in residential density, particularly in strategic locations at transit stations.” City of Calgary, *imagineCALGARY*, 23.

⁵⁰² Quoted in Kathy McCormick, “Industry Says Plan It Document is Too Vague,” *Calgary Herald*, Mar. 21, 2009, I2.

⁵⁰³ Quoted in McCormick, “Plan It Chill,” parenthetical remarks in original. In this same article, another developer argued that Plan-It “will limit consumer choice and everything from jobs to lifestyle and types of homes. Affordability of housing will be slowly eroded over the years.”

⁵⁰⁴ These quotations were taken from a web-based new release from local talk-radio station CHQR titled “Alderman Raises Flags About Pushy Telephone Pollsters” which is unfortunately no longer available online.

claimed that an equal share of respondents had aspired to owning a single-detached home; developers latched on to these figures, claiming that the *real* consensus on Calgary's future was still found in housing market trends.⁵⁰⁵

An ensemble of intellectual forces in Calgary's hegemonic bloc echoed this *cri di couer* about the danger that 'social engineering' posed to 'market freedoms'. While Calgary's sole paper of record (the *Calgary Herald*) had regularly published articles authored by two local university professors that were frequently critical of development trends, this column was jettisoned in early 2008 after one of their articles critiqued Calgary's development and homebuilding sectors for their resistance to Plan-It. One of the authors of this article – who was in fact a former developer – recounted these events as follows:

- FD We actually wrote about Plan-It and how the development industry should get behind it, and what happened is the industry went to the *Herald* and asked that we be fired.
- TH [laughs] It was just too controversial to have a former developer speaking out like that?
- FD [interjects] Yep. And actually the *Herald*, the editor called us in and told us the story and said, "well, I won't stand for that." But then she said [lowers voice, conspiratorially] "but, I would really like it if you guys could, you know, don't write anything negative about the industry [sic]." So we quit. I mean, what happened to freedom of the press?⁵⁰⁶

While the *Herald* would later publish a handful of op-ed pieces written in support of Plan-It as the plan drew greater public scrutiny, the paper's own editorials tended to criticize the plan for its alleged ignorance of market realities.⁵⁰⁷ One such article characterized both Plan-It and imagineCALGARY's visions as "empty jargon" and "ethereal feel-good statements"; elsewhere, another editorial opted for inflammatory, red-baiting terms to suggest that Plan-It's proposed density increases near transit stations (which was a goal taken straight from imagineCALGARY) and technocratic concern with systemic efficiencies posed an affront to the cultural values ostensibly represented by suburban development. It read:

The people who advocate living near the office [...] toss around terms such as 'vibrant', 'sustainable' and 'intensification' along with its cousin 'densification'. Add two more to the mix – 'Soviet' and 'grey'. The urban enthusiasts love to heap their visceral scorn on the idea of the suburbs being a good place to live [...] In the utopian village this faction dreams of, where you

⁵⁰⁵ Jason Markusoff, "Majority Backs Denser City ... For Others," *Calgary Herald*, Apr. 17, 2009, B2; Kathy McCormick, "Vision versus Reality," *Calgary Herald*, May 16, 2009, J1.

⁵⁰⁶ Interview, former developer, October 19, 2012.

⁵⁰⁷ See also "60-Year Plan Makes No Sense," *Calgary Herald*, Mar. 25, 2009, A14; Paula Arab, "Who Will Build the Plan It Vision Without a Market?" *Calgary Herald*, Mar. 26, 2009, A14; Al King, "Good Time Charlies," *Calgary Herald*, Nov. 18, 2008, A15; and Richard White, "Plan It,"

work and how you get to work are all that matter. That's probably what the apparatchiks who ran the old Soviet tractor factories thought, too.⁵⁰⁸

Although Molotch had long ago observed that newspapers' dependence on locally-generated made them integral components within growth machine arrangements, the *Herald's* alleged reliance on advertising revenue from developers and homebuilders lent much of its coverage of Plan-It a particularly acerbic tone.⁵⁰⁹ But because developers and homebuilders *also* comprised the most significant source of campaign funding for candidates in Calgary's loosely-regulated municipal elections, several members of City Council lined up against the plan along similar lines to the *Herald's* editors.⁵¹⁰ While one developer charged that Plan-It would compel "the whole city to move into concrete towers," for instance, one member of Council played on similar concerns of displacement and dislocation by suggesting that new planning regulations would "force people out to other municipalities." Elsewhere, other members of Council raised concerns that Plan-It would unfairly bracket options in local housing markets and "increase the price of housing by reducing supply."⁵¹¹ But these attacks on Plan-It by members of City Council were not solely rooted in their clientelist relationships with developers; most electoral districts in Calgary's ward-based governance system were (and still are) primarily composed of suburban constituencies, and several members of Council appealed to this audience by characterizing the plan as an assault on suburban-style living arrangements.⁵¹²

If imagineCALGARY had sought a pacific consensus on development issues by framing them in the innocuous, technocratic terms of systems management, then these issues were actively *repoliticized* by oppositional intellectual forces within Calgary's hegemonic bloc in the context of changed economic fortunes. Crucially, these engagements did not *directly* contest the legitimacy of imagineCALGARY, but merely *asserted* existing common sense by positioning market choice and low prices as the central objectives for urban policy, and by claiming that sovereign, homebuying consumers (rather than state

⁵⁰⁸ The first quote is from "Plan This, Council – Stop Wasting Our Money," *Calgary Herald*, Mar. 14, 2009, A22; the second, from Naomi Lakritz, "Sorry for Living ... But Where's My Bus?" *Calgary Herald*, Dec. 24, 2008, A16.

⁵⁰⁹ Cf. Molotch, "Growth Machine." This point was raised in several interviews; one former planner I interviewed on April 18, 2013, elaborated that "the *Calgary Sun* and the *Calgary Herald* rely on a lot of advertising revenue from the homebuilders. There's the 'Homes' section, which is a significant portion of the Sunday paper, and it's basically just filled with advertising [for new developments]. It's big business, so the homebuilders and the developers are ... they put food on the table for the people who work for the newspapers. So the media was not uninterested in the debate over Plan-It, because they have a client relationship with developers. So that drove public discussion. That's why there was more of an inflamed discussion."

⁵¹⁰ Cf. Young and Austin, "Political Finance" and Brunet-Jailly, "Civic Culture," 304-305.

⁵¹¹ This first quote is taken from Jason Markusoff, "Transit Key to 60-Year Plan," *Calgary Herald*, Mar. 10, 2009, A1; the second, from Colleen Derowitz, "Mayor to Offer Planning Solution," *Calgary Herald*, Jan. 29, 2008, B1.

⁵¹² The structuration of Calgary's governance system around mainly suburban wards has been a major lacuna in the literature on Calgary's political economy.

policies) were the appropriate mechanism for determining change. While tensions internal to Calgary's hegemonic bloc had been submerged during imagineCALGARY, they had now reemerged with a vengeance.

4.7 TRANSLATIONS AND RECUPERATIONS

When you're looking at sustainability, I think it means different things to different people, so you've got to be able to tell it in different languages, if you will.

CITY OF CALGARY PLANNER⁵¹³

Sure, we are biased because that is our business, but because it is our business, we know what our customers want or else we wouldn't be in business for long. We are the only ones who can give the city real feedback from the citizens of Calgary who are buying the houses.

CALGARY HOMEBUILDER SAM ATTIA⁵¹⁴

The discourse of sustainability became the dominant language of development ... and everyone had to speak the language.

COMMUNITY ACTIVIST⁵¹⁵

Put on the defensive, City officials redoubled their public engagement efforts in attempt to drum up additional public support for sustainability reforms. From 2008 until mid-2009, the City engaged another 5,000 Calgarians in a series of charrettes, open houses, and planning summits, many of which provided participants with design materials that allowed them to conceptualize Plan-It's visual impact on across the city's morphological profile in a comprehensive sense.⁵¹⁶ The City also commissioned several reports and background studies by third-party consultants which provided expert testimony on the efficiencies offered by Plan-It, trumpeting, *inter alia*, the public health benefits associated with pedestrian-friendly urban forms; the possibilities for alternative energy production that would be facilitated by increased urban densities; and the relationship between Plan-It's 'smart growth'-style reforms and housing prices (which were found to hold only a modest correlation).⁵¹⁷

⁵¹³ Interview, January 2, 2013.

⁵¹⁴ Quoted in McCormick, "US Expert."

⁵¹⁵ Interview, January 2, 2013.

⁵¹⁶ Jason Markusoff, "Calgarians Weave Dreams for City," *Calgary Herald*, Nov. 16, 2008, B3.

⁵¹⁷ These reports are available at <http://www.calgary.ca/PDA/PD/Pages/Municipal-Development-Plan/Engagement-and-Research.aspx> (Accessed January 15, 2015).

In the context of changed economic fortunes, the most significant of these attempts was a report which claimed that Plan-It's 'compact' growth scenario would save the City \$11.2 billion in infrastructure costs over 60 years compared to the status quo.⁵¹⁸ One senior planning official later admitted in an interview that large parts of this report had in fact been authored by the City of Calgary: sensing a lingering deficit of political legitimacy, however, the City had assigned sole authorship for the report to the IBI Group, a large Canadian planning consultancy firm.⁵¹⁹ Another planner later clarified that the IBI Group was chosen because they were private sector actors "very closely related to the development industry" who could "speak in their language."⁵²⁰ Speaking in the language of developers (value-added, cost savings and return-on-investment) was both a strategic response to conjunctural concerns about public spending and an attempt to subvert the claim that urban sustainability implied unbearable costs for taxpaying Calgarians. Yet, this would not be the City's only drift towards the language of developers, nor its only attempt to organize legitimacy through civil societal interventions.

In the fall of the 2008, several city planners and allied members of City Council met with a group of citizens concerned about the fate of the sustainability consensus which had presumably been crystallized within imagineCALGARY.⁵²¹ City officials reportedly imparted that Plan-It would likely be eviscerated by developer resistance without a strong base of civil societal support militating on behalf of the plan. Although several members of this group had in fact formed charitable organizations years prior focused on issues of sustainability ('Sustainable Calgary') and local governance (the 'Better Calgary Campaign'), these previous efforts had reached too small of an audience to act as a meaningful counterweight to the influence of developers. Calling themselves CivicCamp, this group worked at arms-length from City officials to try and revive the popular support for sustainability which had presumably been registered in imagineCALGARY. Increasingly concerned with the interference of what they termed a "sprawl lobby" on Plan-It deliberations, CivicCamp organized a series of public events and forums to generate public support for sustainability planning in general and Plan-It in particular.⁵²² Groups of CivicCamp members descended upon public events for Plan-It Calgary to mollify fellow citizens'

⁵¹⁸ City of Calgary, *The Implications of Alternative Growth Patterns on Infrastructure Costs*, IBI Group, 1992.

⁵¹⁹ Interview, March 26, 2013.

⁵²⁰ Interview, December 17, 2012.

⁵²¹ This account draws upon multiple interviews including several community activists (interviewed on January 4, 5, and 6, 2013) and former City of Calgary planning managers who played instrumental roles in the project (interviewed on October 16 and 17, 2012, as well as March 25, 2013).

⁵²² This phrase was repeated in every interview I held with members of CivicCamp.

concerns about redevelopment and to voice support for the plan. Members also published a series of op-eds in the *Calgary Herald* which espoused the putative benefits of the plan.⁵²³

Notwithstanding this handful of editorials, however, media coverage of CivicCamp remained scarce, and citizens' forums on sustainability received virtually no mention in local news. But even if the group *had* received greater media attention, CivicCamp was organized on the principle that it would be a non-hierarchical, leaderless group with no fixed political agenda.⁵²⁴ In the first place, this meant that although CivicCamp was a visible and vocal presence and Plan-It information sessions and in City Council Chambers, one member recalled that the group had difficulty organizing a consistently organized base, which "consisted at its peak of a couple hundred people on our mailing list."⁵²⁵ Furthermore, although CivicCamp had rallied around imagineCALGARY and several individuals within the group (most notably including future Mayor Naheed Nenshi) became *de facto* spokespersons for civil societal support for Plan-It, the group's nascent intellectuals declined to publically identify themselves as representatives for CivicCamp. As one of CivicCamp's founding members admitted, the group was mostly composed of "white, upper-middle class professionals" who were not bound together by any class solidarity, but only a putative shared interest in sustainability; as this activist went on to explain, rather than adopting a unified, coherent agenda *as a group*, CivicCamp "largely helped people speak out as individuals" in support of projects that they supported.⁵²⁶ Another founding member was more direct in describing the group's politics: "Nobody is in charge. That makes it messy as all get out."⁵²⁷

In the absence of any firm organizational coherence, CivicCamp's advocacy vacillated between four positions. Some members of the group directly critiqued developers themselves, claiming that these actors were more concerned with realizing profit in their sizable suburban landholdings than in satisfying any general public interest.⁵²⁸ Relatedly, other activists attempted to establish legitimacy for

⁵²³ See Naheed Nenshi, "Sixty Year Plan Better than Alternative," *Calgary Herald*, May 7, 2009, A16. Bob Morrison, "Building a Better City," *Calgary Herald*, May 11, 2009, A10; and Byron Miller, "Planning for a Resilient City," *Calgary Herald*, June 18, 2009, A17. Before the founding of CivicCamp, two of the groups founding members also published the following op-ed in support of Plan-It: Byron Miller and Noel Keough, "City Must Plan for a Sustainable Future," *Calgary Herald*, October 14, 2008.

⁵²⁴ One of the group's founders later noted that this form of organization was inspired by the structure of high-tech conferences. See Turner, "Calgary's New School."

⁵²⁵ Interview, community activist, January 4, 2012.

⁵²⁶ Interview, community activist, January 5, 2012.

⁵²⁷ Quoted in Marcello Di Cintio, "An 'Ungroup' of Happy Campers," *Calgary Herald*, Oct. 22, 2010, SW32.

⁵²⁸ One member of the group – a developer who had specialized in established community redevelopment – noted in advance of a key Council meeting on Plan-It in June 2006 that the "industry point of view" was understandable: "They own a lot of farmland on Calgary's outskirts and want to make as much money as they can." Quoted in Jason Markusoff, "Growth Plan Showdown Looming," *Calgary Herald*, June 21, 2009, B3; see also Naheed Nenshi, "People Do Care about Their City, After All," *Calgary Herald*, July 2, 2009, A10.

Plan-It's objectives by foregrounding their relation to imagineCALGARY's consensual vision. Elsewhere, several intellectuals associated with (but unable to act as representatives for) CivicCamp emphasized, imagineCALGARY-style, the supposed benefits that Plan-It's proposed reforms would ostensibly portend for Calgary's social and environmental systems.⁵²⁹ One element of this critique saw CivicCamp members repeatedly invoke the City's claim that Plan-It would save over \$11 billion in long-term costs. In what one member of the group termed as a "strategic move" within Calgary's shaky economic circumstances, this approach blossomed into a "business case for Plan-It."⁵³⁰ Here, civil societal advocates for the plan not only emphasized its reputed cost-efficiencies, but suggested that Plan-It's reforms would generate new opportunities for local businesses while facilitating a wider degree of choice in local housing markets.⁵³¹

Perhaps for similar reasons, the City echoed a similar view. While City officials continued to tout the plan's \$11.2 billion in savings, questions of market choice became a recurrent theme in the City's defense of the plan, which one former planning manager claimed was focused on "creating a wide range of housing choices."⁵³² In the months leading up to Council's deliberations on Plan-It in June 2009, supporters claimed that it would create new efficiencies and support more options in the housing market, while critics charged that the plan would constrain the options of homebuying consumers while driving up housing prices. But underneath these divergent positions, intellectual forces on both sides of this debate had agreed on the importance of providing choice within Calgary's housing market. This convergence was not unprecedented; within the politically sanitized epistemology of imagineCALGARY, the importance of facilitating choice in private housing markets was both assumed and naturalized.⁵³³

There would be further convergences between these two positions. In advance of a three-day public hearing on Plan-It in June 2009, a UDI spokesperson announced developers' commitment to the plan's sustainability ambitions, but contested the claim that strong public policy was the proper means for achieving them. Commenting on the large audience expected to show up the hearing, she noted:

⁵²⁹ Miller, "Planning"; Morrison, "Building."

⁵³⁰ Interview, community activist, January 4, 2012.

⁵³¹ In the terms of one member: "Plan-It's more compact city will [...] improve economic productivity by keeping taxes low. [...] The biggest winners in terms of greater productivity, though, will be local businesses. A more compact city will shift Calgary's retail mix to more local, community-oriented shopping areas. It will also create a larger, more secure customer base and more efficient business network." Morrison, "Building." See also Miller and Keough, "City Must Plan" and Nenshi, "Sixty Year Plan."

⁵³² Quoted in McCormick, "Plan It Chill." See also Jason Markusoff, "Denser City Will Save \$11.2B, Says Report," *Calgary Herald*, April 4, 2009, B5.

⁵³³ The project's goal for housing, for instance, was for "Calgarians [to] have a choice of housing options that are affordable, accessible and eco-efficient and that support a variety of lifestyles." City of Calgary, *imagineCALGARY*, 26.

I believe some of the people who [will] show up to speak are preparing for a debate over the fundamental principles of Plan-It. They will speak passionately about those principles, but it is a debate that doesn't need to happen, as I believe there is already a consensus on the principles of Plan-It. [...] The development and building industry, for example, one of the biggest groups to express concern about Plan-It, has publically stated a number of times that they are in support of the [plan's] key directions. They are not in support of sprawl and they support sustainable development principles. The discussion that needs to happen is on how we achieve those aspirations.⁵³⁴

In part, developers were backtracking. Earlier in the year, the UDI had sponsored a talk by senior CATO Institute fellow and self-appointed 'antiplanner' Randal O'Toole to preach the vices of public policy and the virtues of 'free market forces'. Predictably, O'Toole's presentation echoed claims that Plan-It would drive up housing prices and diminish consumer choice, but in an attempt to play on the perceived parochialism of his audience, O'Toole had unfavourably compared Plan-It to planning efforts in Portland and Vancouver. If planning reforms had contributed to higher housing prices in these regions (according to O'Toole), the example of sprawling Houston was presented as a showcase model for the supposed benefits of rescinding *all* planning regulations and leaving the animal spirits of real-estate to determine the city's future.⁵³⁵ This gambit had paid off poorly. The developer-aligned *Calgary Herald* acknowledged that the developers and homebuilders have "legitimate enough concerns" about Plan-It, but compared the presentation to "hammering a nail in the coffin of their own cause."⁵³⁶ Planners and community activists echoed this sentiment in interviews, noting that O'Toole's poorly gauged comparisons had swayed public opinion in support of the plan, and as even the UDI itself had predicted, the majority of the crowd who attended the summer hearing on the plan – more than 100 in total – spoke in support of it.⁵³⁷ As Council prevaricated and deferred a vote on Plan-It until September, developers regrouped.

If Calgary's developmental elite had been placed in a Canute-like position, their actions hardly reflected it. On the hand, developers and homebuilders continued to expound their own green credentials and commitments, claiming that new-build suburbs were already making strides towards the principled goals of Plan-It (Figure 4.10), but without state direction.⁵³⁸ The prescriptive built form called for by Plan-It was not itself the problem, this story went: rather, as powerful homebuilding tycoon Jay Westman put it, local real-estate interests demanded that "the customer will lead [...] change, not a

⁵³⁴ Grace Lui, "Plan It Public Hearing Time to Be Heard and Informed," *Calgary Herald*, June 20, 2009, I7.

⁵³⁵ McCormick, "US Expert"; Jason Markusoff, "US Economist Attacks Calgary's Growth Blueprint," *Calgary Herald* Mar. 25, 2009, B6; Jason Markusoff, "US Expert Calls for Calgary to Create Toll Highways," *Calgary Herald*, Mar. 26, 2009, B1.

⁵³⁶ Arab, "Who Will Build."

⁵³⁷ Remington, "City Planning"; Nenshi, "People do Care."

⁵³⁸ Kathy McCormick, "New Burb Fits Plan It to a T," *Calgary Herald*, June 13, 2009, I3; Hope, "Shades of Green."

government-imposed policy.”⁵³⁹ With the foreknowledge that the City was about to enter an election year, developers and homebuilders also launched a website (www.votecalgary.ca) which outlined each member of Council’s respective position on Plan-It. Ubiquitous bus advertisements for this website were emblazoned with a slogan that carried all the subtlety of a backhoe tearing up prairie soil to clear room for a new subdivision: “*DECISIONS MADE AT CITY HALL AFFECT HOUSING PRICES.*” Indeed, several members of City Council had already begun soliciting developers for campaign funds even in advance of the summer hearing on the project, and in a particularly vulgar display of power, UDI executive director Michael Flynn’s noted that the city’s developer czars would have to “look at who’s been supportive of our positions and who hasn’t” when considering donations for next year’s election.⁵⁴⁰

While members of CivicCamp inveighed against these transgressions, much (if not most) of its intellectuals’ support for the plan revolved around its alleged \$11.2 billion in long-term savings, even as developers continued to rail against its proposed density increases. Any discussion of the legitimacy that imagineCALGARY would have presumably conferred to the Plan-It Calgary process had receded into the background, and notwithstanding the advocacy of CivicCamp, *every* person I interviewed for this study (both inside and outside of the City) noted that there was a significant chance that the plan would not make it past City Council. But in reality, the developers’ public repudiation of planning controls had been a red herring: indeed, developers and homebuilders had been consulting with City planners from the *very outset* of the Plan-It Calgary process to negotiate favourable conditions. Only a week before a vote on the plan in September, City officials preemptively ratcheted down the plan’s density targets in order to appease developers. Mayor Bronconnier insisted that the changes reflected a plan that would “keep a healthy development industry [and] provide lots of consumer choice,” while erstwhile GoPlan chief and top City bureaucrat David Watson beamed that the changes would “give developers more flexibility.”⁵⁴¹ The middle ground offered by City officials, however, was quickly turned to scorched earth as developers continued their assault on the plan unabated. In an effort to unify Council behind the plan, Bronconnier orchestrated *another* reduction in density targets in a closed-door meeting with developers

⁵³⁹ Quoted in Jason Markusoff, “Developer’s Oppose City’s Density Targets,” *Calgary Herald*, June 26, 2009, B2.

⁵⁴⁰ Quoted in Naheed Nenshi, “Bridges to Political Engagement and Cynicism,” *Calgary Herald*, June 18, 2009, A16.

⁵⁴¹ Both quotes taken from Jason Markusoff and Kim Guttormson, “City Softens Growth Plan,” *Calgary Herald*, Sept. 22, 2009, B1; see also Jason Markusoff, “Council Gears up for Heated Debate on Calgary’s Future,” *Calgary Herald*, Sept. 28, 2009; B2. Initially, the plan had called for densities of 70 residents per hectare, which would ostensibly be calculated using the average number of residents occupying certain forms of housing. In advance of the plan, however, this rate was dropped to 70 residents or jobs per acre: several planners that I interviewed expressed concern that this metric could be used to approve status quo suburban densities under the pretence that strictly residential districts could be expected to have a certain number of a people working from home.

mere days before Plan-It was put to a vote, and although density remained the overriding topic of debate in Council's deliberations, Plan-It was then passed unanimously.

In the aftermath of this controversial ascension, both developers and City officials were pleased. One UDI representative crowed that developers were "very encouraged that the City was able to arrive at a compromise" in order "to ensure that the preferred consumer product – i.e., the single-family detached home – remains available and affordable to the homebuyer."⁵⁴² Another UDI spokesperson defended the compromised plan by reasserting that the "majority of Calgarians still prefer single-family homes," adding the further caution that City "cannot force changes in societal preferences through policy."⁵⁴³ City officials, for their part, were relieved to see a statutory sustainability plan that contained *some* regulatory power beyond mere (re)statements of principled commitment to environmental goals. Two senior-level planning officials who occupied central roles on the project both agreed in interviews that a compromise on the plan was better than no plan at all; both figures furthermore agreed that Plan-It would not have made it as far as City Council without the support of CivicCamp.⁵⁴⁴ For their part, CivicCamp's intellectual core – who could not act as spokespersons for the apparently leaderless group – lamented that billions of dollars in potential savings had been undermined by lowered density targets, and that the City had capitulated to "people and companies who have made poor decisions or are unable to respond to a changing market."⁵⁴⁵ Days before the final vote on the plan, Nenshi commented on negotiations between Bronconnier and developers by asking, "Why negotiate with people who have no intention of compromising with you?"⁵⁴⁶ In the short term, at least, no answer was forthcoming.

4.8 RECOMBINANT SUSTAINABILITY

[...] in my work on cities, I have found that people tend to value the same sorts of things. The concepts of 'left' and 'right' are almost completely irrelevant at the municipal level.

CIVICCAMP ORGANIZER AND FUTURE MAYOR NAHEED NENSHI⁵⁴⁷

⁵⁴² Quoted in Kathy McCormick, "Ambitious Planning Blueprint Approved," *Calgary Herald*, Oct. 3, 2009, I2.

⁵⁴³ Grace Lui, "Plan It Change Does Not Render It Broken," *Calgary Herald*, Oct. 3, 2009, I4.

⁵⁴⁴ These opinions were offered in interviews on October 16, 2012 and March 26, 2013.

⁵⁴⁵ Noel Keough and Bob Morrison, "Backroom Politics Cost Taxpayers \$2 Billion," *Calgary Herald*, Oct. 13, 2009, A11.

⁵⁴⁶ Naheed Nenshi, "Give Calgarians What They Want – Plan It," *Calgary herald*, Sept. 24, 2009, AA18.

⁵⁴⁷ Nenshi, "People Do Care."

Public opinion is strictly linked to political hegemony. It is the point of contact between civil society and political society, between consensus and force. The state, when it wants to initiate an unpopular action, preventatively creates the adequate public opinion: that is, it organizes and concentrates certain elements of civil society.

ANTONIO GRAMSCI⁵⁴⁸

By the early 2000s, the hegemony of what I have called developer-led suburbanization remained intact within Calgary's political culture. City policymakers had been positioned as a subordinate class of intellectuals within the power bloc of social forces driving this political project, conferring a requisite degree of stability and legitimacy through public policies which had aided and abetted a particularly virulent pattern of urban sprawl that had begun to strain City finances to their limits by mid-decade. While conventional sustainability policies (focusing on dense, mixed-use, transit-intensive development) had been recognized as a mechanism for restoring the City's financial viability since *at least* the GoPlan research of the early 1990s, a pronounced deficit of political legitimacy in the local state had precluded the introduction meaningful sustainability reforms. At the same time City officials were swept up in what has been called an 'extrospective' imperative to scan for expert-affirmed 'best practices' and portable policy frameworks in the field of sustainability policies.⁵⁴⁹ Through one particularly fateful node within "global circuits of policy knowledge" (the GLOBE 2004 conference), the City found potentially transformative policy frameworks in citiesPLUS and EarthCAT, and likewise found a willing 'transfer agent' in Gwen Hallsmith.⁵⁵⁰ But the mobilization of these approaches in Calgary was driven by more than a search for *prêt-à-porter* policy knowledge, or the Svengali-like influence of any particular guru: instead, incorporations of the consensual, systems-based sustainability planning reflected an attempt to reconfigure institutional structures of authority over development matters in favour of City officials.

When City officials encountered citiesPLUS and EarthCAT at GLOBE 2004, both policies had been enshrined as 'best practice' in urban sustainability planning.⁵⁵¹ But rather than appearing "detached from their origin and the conditions which made them 'practically useful' in the first place" – as with so many 'mobile' platforms – these model policies were attached to selectively framed and fastidiously cultivated 'origin stories' which gave their prescriptive content particular meaning and impact among

⁵⁴⁸ Quoted in Thomas Bates, "Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 31, no. 2 (1975): 363.

⁵⁴⁹ McCann, "Policy Boosterism".

⁵⁵⁰ Cf. McCann, "Urban Policy Mobilities"; Peck and Theodore, "Recombinant Workfare."

⁵⁵¹ Seymoar, *Urban Sustainability*.

target audiences.⁵⁵² Insofar as policy models “comprise their own social ontologies,” both citiesPLUS and EarthCAT (*qua* the *Burlington Legacy Project*) had suggested that imperfect information and institutional myopia had withheld progress on local sustainable development by occulting its putatively common benefits for a locality.⁵⁵³ In this sense, these models provided City policymakers a lens for reinterpreting past policy failures (*viz.* the absence of consensus and clear information) and for formulating solutions in the form of a collaborative, systems-based visioning project. Although City officials were wary of claiming direct lineage with citiesPLUS and any association it held with Vancouver’s “easy-living cosmopolitanism,” EarthCAT’s apparently successful track record of conflict resolution and consensus-building in Burlington gave this model particular appeal for City policymakers seeking to quietly shift relations of force within Calgary’s hegemonic leadership bloc.⁵⁵⁴

EarthCAT and citiesPLUS both incorporated a particular conception of the world that saw cities as an aggregate of discrete systems which could be objectively identified, measured, and managed in the service of a unified and coherent community interest. In this view, differences of class or structural power were subsumed by a shared stake in optimizing local system dynamics, or at the very least finding some degree of systemic equilibrium. Ideally, promulgating this view of the city within a collaborative visioning exercise would not only reveal the purportedly common benefits of sustainable development, but also show how a wide range of projects – such as the land-use reforms sought by the City in Plan-It – were mutually necessary, reciprocally confirming aspects of this common interest.⁵⁵⁵ By establishing the shared benefits of sustainable development and the parallel need for a reformed developmental arc as a new form of common sense, City officials hoped to eclipse developers as the dominant intellectual force capable of identifying, organizing, and acting upon a general public interest in Calgary. In this respect, like other mobile policy frameworks, the mobilization of systems-based modeling and collaborative community visioning were shaped by political-economic conditions. But rather than *extending* status quo political-economic prerogatives and patterns, the utility of these approaches lay in their averred potential to reconfigure local relations of force and structures of institutional authority.⁵⁵⁶

As Eugene McCann has pointed out, “Policies, models, and ideas are not moved around like gifts at a birthday party or jars on a shelf,” but instead subject to constant transmutation, translation, and

⁵⁵² Healey, “Circuits of Knowledge,” 1511. Cf. Moore, “Best Practice”; Peck, “Recreative City.”

⁵⁵³ Peck, “Geographies of Policy,” 784.

⁵⁵⁴ This description of Vancouver is taken from Jamie Peck, Elliot Siemiatycki and Elvin Wyly, “Vancouver’s Suburban Involution,” *City* 18, no.4-5 (2014): 386-415.

⁵⁵⁵ Cf. Marcuse, “‘City’ as Perverse Metaphor.”

⁵⁵⁶ Cf. Peck, “Creative Class”; Peck and Theodore, “Recombinant Workfare”; Raco and Lin, “Sustainability.”

tweaking while in transit between different policymaking sites.⁵⁵⁷ While Hallsmith's EarthCAT approach arrived in Calgary (mostly) intact, particular aspects of this model were expanded and modified in order to suit the City's aims: the development of subsidiary Working Groups within imagineCALGARY, for instance, allowed City officials to bracket discussions of developmental targets in a way that precluded any debates over the plan's actual normative aims and objectives. Likewise, incorporations of the 'backcasting' techniques used in citiesPLUS helped channel dialogues within these groups into technical questions of measurement and system optimization, while simultaneously offering a tool for illustrating the broad consequences of status quo development – and putative benefits of 'systems'-based reform – to participants at community visioning sessions.

While planners tended to present this approach as a politically innocent form of best practice, it was nevertheless clear that these practices and procedures were intended to reframe existing dialogues about development beyond a narrow focus on market-based choice and housing costs. Nevertheless, the systems-based epistemologies of citiesPLUS and EarthCAT did not actively interrogate the normative foundations of existing power structures; indeed, the mawkish view of 'common' social interests in these approaches attempted to obviate the very existence of divergent political agendas or structural prerogatives altogether. What these approaches offered instead was a way to measure and compare 'systems' that were *already in place*, thereby affirming certain aspects of dominant social processes – such as a property rights, private land markets, or the imputed need to respond to 'consumer choice' – as natural components within urban systems.⁵⁵⁸ While a focus on 'universal human needs' ostensibly provided the normative political foundations for making long-term governing decisions, the naturalization of existing community system paradoxically left intact notions of consumer sovereignty as legitimate concerns with the sphere of governing. Moreover, while this view allowed planners to quantify the shortcomings associated with status quo development, it provided no direction for adjudicating *how* collective problems were to be solved. In this sense, while the systems framework used in imagineCALGARY may have had the *potential* to rearrange extant governing priorities by introducing 'human needs' as preferential foci, it nevertheless maintained a degree of pragmatic flexibility (insofar as the means to resolving collective action dilemmas remained an open question) without *directly* challenging notions of consumer sovereignty and private property rights within dominant political grammars.

⁵⁵⁷ McCann, "Urban Policy Mobilities," 111.

⁵⁵⁸ I draw this argument in part from the discussion of liberal theories of justice in Harvey, *Social Justice*, 120-152.

In a world untethered from the realities of private homeownership, property-based equity, and structural imperatives to pursue growth machine-style governance platforms, the popular audience who participated in imagineCALGARY *had* created a consensual vision of green development that contrasted sharply with the status quo.⁵⁵⁹ But within the “City-led, community owned” structure of responsibilities implied by the plan, it was far from obvious that the City – rather than ‘market forces’ channeled and (re)directed by developers – should hold a privileged position in acting upon this consensus. Where bygone Chicago School impressions of the urban systems (or ‘ecologies’) had placed competition and succession as natural components of city life, imagineCALGARY (via EarthCAT) had incorporated a vision of urban systems corresponding to a pre-existing, coherent, and unified political ‘community’ wherein class antagonisms were absent, common interests were prevalent, and pacific forms of consensus were possible.⁵⁶⁰ But these invocations of collective interests clearly would not hold as soon as the City moved to turn this vision into formal regulations.

Indeed, while imagineCALGARY had been *structured* to transpose political questions about the future into technical questions of systems management, political antagonisms did not somehow disappear altogether, as imagined by adherents to ‘post-political’ theories of urban governance.⁵⁶¹ As City officials attempted to formalize imagineCALGARY’s vision into policy, the counterattacks of developers were explicitly political in tone and tenor, calling into question both the appropriate mechanism for satisfying collective interests (state policy versus ‘market forces’), but also for identifying collective interests in the first place. The fact that developers’ claims to ‘let the market decide’ had threatened the viability of Plan-It reflects in part the obduracy and power of clientelist relations between developers, local news media, and City Council within Calgary’s growth machine. But that developers’ charges of ‘social engineering’ posed a threat to Plan-It’s legitimacy not only demonstrates that hegemonic ideals of consumer sovereignty had not been decisively overturned within Calgary’s political culture, but also that developers were still capable of responding to the real anxieties of some Calgarians regarding redevelopment and ‘densification’.

⁵⁵⁹ Cf. Foran, *Expansive Discourses*; Miller and Smart, “Ascending the Main Stage”; Smart, “Restructuring.”

⁵⁶⁰ On the Chicago School and spatial ecologies, see Hannerz, *Exploring the City*, 26-30.

⁵⁶¹ MacLeod, “New Urbanism”; Raco and Lin, “Sustainability”; Swyngedouw, “Antinomies.” The weakness of this literature is, as Jodi Dean points out, its tendency to write as if the disappearance of politics were *actually possible*. Her critique is incisive: “[T]he claim for post-politics erases its own standpoint of enunciation. Why refer to a formation as post-political if one does not have political grounds for doing so? If one already has such grounds, then how exactly is the situation post-political? If one lacks them, then what is the purpose of the claim if not to draw attention to or figure this lack?” Jodi Dean, *Democracy and Other Neoliberal Fantasies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 12.

As advertised, the EarthCAT approach *did* generate some civil societal support for the City's post-imagineCALGARY project of sustainability planning. But where imagineCALGARY interpellated Calgarians as mutually responsible 'stakeholders', this vision of political community provided a weak foundation for groups such as CivicCamp to form a stable, coherent group identity. While CivicCamp was indeed anomalous in the context of Calgary's austere political landscape, the group nevertheless could not mobilize a broad base in civil society, and struggled to become a political force that was more than the sum its individual parts. To borrow a phrase from Marx, CivicCamp's identity *as a group* appeared as an "addition of homologous magnitudes, much as potatoes in a sack form a sack of potatoes."⁵⁶² As members indicated in interviews, the absence of a firm group identity and organizational coherence largely led to CivicCamp's unraveling after Plan-It's accession to policy, and if sustainability was the new 'common sense' (even for developers), then the group's very *raison d'être* seemed to have dissipated.⁵⁶³

The distinction between this new common sense and the presumably 'old' common sense of developer-led suburbanization is considerably murkier than City officials might have hoped. Within the context of a sudden economic downturn, anxieties over redevelopment in established communities, and tensions regarding tax increases, both the City and CivicCamp mounted a defense of the plan premised upon both the savings it would reputedly bring for Calgary's taxpayers and the range of housing options that it would support for Calgary's homebuyers. But these were extensions rather than betrayals of the vision projected in imagineCALGARY. In truth, that project's 'systems' logic both presumed and affirmed the existence of a private housing market that could be *supported* (through not *supplanted*) by state planning. As evidenced by the City's continued attempts to organize civil societal support *after* imagineCALGARY was completed – to say nothing of their imputed need to publish their reports under the name of third-party consultants – the City's legitimation deficit had not been wholly surmounted. Moreover, as developers were able to exercise naked authority over City Council without any popular reprisal, it appeared that their claims to universality had not been fully undermined.⁵⁶⁴ But while the maintenance of consumer choice remained central items of concern for urban policymakers, the City nevertheless *had* produced statutory policy which reflected a broader set of priorities. Consensus on sustainability had been reached in the abstract, but the meaning of the term – and the identity of the intellectual class who get to define it – remained, at best, open to contestation.

⁵⁶² Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (New York: International Publishers, 1975), 124.

⁵⁶³ This was mentioned in three interviews with community activists on January 4, 5, and 6.

⁵⁶⁴ Of the ten members of the Council which approved Plan-It seeking reelection the following year, nine would retain their seats.

CHAPTER 5: SUSTAINABILITY BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

5.1 URBAN POLICY AMIDST AN INTERREGNUM

If the ruling class has lost its consensus, ie. is no longer “leading” but only “dominant,” exercising coercive force alone, this means precisely that the great masses have become detached from their traditional ideologies, and no longer believe what they used to believe previously, etc. The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear.

ANTONIO GRAMSCI⁵⁶⁵

Although the one-two punch of the City’s adoption of Plan-It and Nenshi’s accession to the mayor’s set seemed like watershed breaks with the Calgary’s checkered past, sustainability doctrines had been slowly developing in Calgary for two decades prior. *Calgary 2020* had marked the City’s faltering early steps towards some conception of sustainability in local policy, but this project was more of an exercise in symbolic policymaking than a serious attempt at reform. Subsequent attempts at writing sustainability into local policy through the GoPlan and the Sustainable Suburbs Study represented more substantive efforts, motivated by the practical need to respond to political concerns over the impacts of development while maintaining a suitably permissive regulatory stance in new growth areas. Insofar as these policies attempted to strike a provisional compromise between several antinomian pressures within the hegemony of developer-led suburbanization, the historical conditions of possibility for these early attempts lay in their status as a prototypical ‘fix’ for development.⁵⁶⁶ These early attempts were, however, crushed underfoot by an ascendant developer class, to which City officials had acted as a supporting (yet subordinate) class of intellectuals within Calgary’s growth machine. Future attempts at sustainability-oriented policy would be framed by and responsive to this subordination; indeed, internecine struggle between the City and developers remains the central *leitmotif* in the stumbling pursuit of sustainable development in Calgary.

Early attempts at sustainability-oriented policy were modest and highly pragmatic attempts to amend (rather than abate) the form of suburban development. These policies reflected an unambiguous acceptance that suburban development would remain the dominant modality of Calgary’s growth, and that respect for consumer sovereignty and private property rights were primary foci for urban policy. In

⁵⁶⁵ Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, 275-276.

⁵⁶⁶ While et al., “Environmental and Entrepreneurial City.”

the postmillennial era, however, the exigent financial strain of suburban development had made this acquiescent position no longer feasible. Attempts to introduce sustainability policies would take the form of struggles to redefine ideological commitments, restructure political-economic power relations, and recalibrate path-dependent development practices; in short, to change the hegemonic terrain upon which bygone efforts had been constructed (and defeated). Through the imagineCALGARY project, the City would incorporate mobile sources of policy expertise in order to popularize a new political grammar and developmental epistemology that would support the City's ability to instantiate sustainability-oriented policy reforms. The outcome of this gambit was, however, ambiguous. On the one hand, not only did developers succeed in lowering proposed density targets, but as several planners pointed out to me, developments approved within the City's 15-year planned land supply (which was *already* in place before Plan-It went to Council) was free from Plan-It's new regulatory controls, effectively meaning that status quo development would continue long after the plan was approved.⁵⁶⁷ But on the other hand, the fact that Calgary's developmental elite had been compelled to resort to naked forms of coercion over City Council in order to secure their agenda is perhaps indicative of their fraying disciplinary control over policy outcomes, or waning confidence in their own ability to lead by consensual means.

This struggle has not yet abated. Indeed, while Naheed Nenshi was able to use his association as a sustainability advocate as a central component of his 2010 mayoral bid, he has remained locked in a series of inconclusive struggles with developers since then. As Nenshi's first term as mayor drew to a close in 2013, for instance, the Mayor found himself immersed in a bitter dispute with land developers about the fees that developers would be expected to pay to cover the costs of new suburban growth. Amidst the rancorous debate, a video was leaked of a closed-door meeting wherein the city's leading homebuilders and developers revealed that they had raised over \$1 million to fund "developer-friendly candidates" in the next election.⁵⁶⁸ Although Nenshi was reelected in the fall, the City has stalled in its bid to extract higher fees from suburban development. While perhaps unable to exert influence over local politics in the way it once did, Calgary's *ancien régime* remains far from deposed.

If the historical development of sustainability policies has been responsive to the hegemony of what I have called developer-led suburbanization, then the present moment – where the inevitable next steps towards another round of sustainability-oriented policy must be taken – might be best understood as an interregnum between development paradigms. As Gramsci observes, such periods emerge when

⁵⁶⁷ This was pointed out in interviews on October 11 and December 17, 2012.

⁵⁶⁸ Jason Markusoff, "Home Builder Ups Election Ante," *Calgary Herald*, Apr 23, 2013, B5.

the unquestioned primacy of old paradigms (such as suburbanization) starts to disintegrate, and political power reaches the end of its tether by resorting to bald coercion and overt forms of discipline. This is precisely the situation in Calgary, where suburban developers howl that they are being squeezed by City Hall, but planners – such as those that I interviewed for this study – remain reticent to claim that they have definitively seized political authority over development matters.⁵⁶⁹ In this context, it is not clear who can assume the mantle of hegemony from Calgary’s existing development bloc. No coherent fraction of capital has congealed to challenge the authority of the city’s suburban developers, CivicCamp has withered to a shadow of itself in the aftermath of Plan-It Calgary, and the City lacks both the financial resources and political legitimacy necessary to enforce a wholesale transformation in Calgary’s development paradigm. Indeed, as long as private land markets are required to furnish housing for the city, it is not clear whether City intellectuals can assume anything *but* a subordinate position with Calgary’s growth machine. Even in the midst of a well-publicized struggle with the city’s development barons over lot levies and development fees, Nenshi himself asserted that he wants “the building industry to be deliriously successful [...] to be crazy wealthy because their prosperity is a symptom, or a symbol I should say, of the prosperity of the whole community.”⁵⁷⁰

If the long night of developer-led hegemony has not yet ended, while a new developmental era has yet to dawn, the City remains caught in a political twilight zone, wandering between one ailing paradigm and another powerless to be born. Although Gramsci’s symptoms of morbidity are perhaps yet to take hold, the only secure conclusion about the city’s apparent consensus on sustainability can be the assurance of continued struggle over how the term is defined, and who which intellectual forces will hold the power to define them. In the place of a definitive conclusion – for sustainability in Calgary must, like Gramsci’s notebooks, remain a work in progress – I offer here some reflections on how this twilight world might be explored and understood.⁵⁷¹

5.2 REFLECTIONS ON METHOD

The scholastic and academic historico-political conception: the only authentic and worthy movement is one that is one hundred percent conscious and that, furthermore, is governed by a

⁵⁶⁹ Bill Pringle, “Is a Suburban Development Freeze Coming?” *Calgary Herald*, Mar. 13, 2013, A11; Chris Nelson, “Suburb Builders Feeling Squeezed,” *Calgary Herald*, Mar. 9, 2013, A15.

⁵⁷⁰ Quoted in Jen Gerson, “Forces Aligning Against Popular Calgary Mayor,” *National Post*, Mar. 18, 2013, A5.

⁵⁷¹ Cf. Buttigieg, “Prison Notebooks.”

preestablished, minutely detailed plan or (and this amounts to the same thing) corresponds to abstract theory. But reality is teeming with the most bizarre coincidences, and it is the theoretician's task to find in this bizarreness new evidence his theory [*sic*], to translate the elements of historical life into theoretical language, but not vice versa, making reality conform to an abstract scheme.

ANTONIO GRAMSCI⁵⁷²

Paraphrasing Lukács [...] we could say that Gramsci is more concerned with 'method' than with the validity or lack of validity of individual theses.

PETER THOMAS⁵⁷³

Although sustainability was increasingly becoming a keyword for urban planning in the 1990s, this widespread popularity alone cannot account for *why* the City began to incorporate sustainability-oriented precepts into policy, *how* these policies took the form that they did. This period was well-documented as an epoch of 'neoliberal' transition for both Calgary and other municipalities across the province of Alberta.⁵⁷⁴ But invoking the 'rascal concept' of neoliberalism is not enough to explain the form of Calgary's sustainability politics either, particularly given the term's analytical (over)use as an omnibus explanatory first cause ("*neoliberalism did it!*").⁵⁷⁵ But if there is a tendency to indiscriminately apply neoliberalism as a fig leaf for preemptive (and often fatalistic) explanation, then there is surely an equal temptation with the concept of hegemony. Indeed, after a lifetime spent producing a surfeit of trenchant social-scientific analyses structured around the concept, no less a Gramscian than Stuart Hall warily cautioned near the end of his own lifetime that "[h]egemony is a tricky concept and provokes muddled thinking."⁵⁷⁶

To preempt the temptation to invoke hegemony as a crude pseudo-explanation ("*hegemony did it!*"), I have tried to emphasize that the value of this concept in studies of urban political processes is chiefly *methodological*. Chapter 2 constitutes an attempt to unpack the "*Konstellation* of concepts" that Gramsci associates (and responds to) with notions of hegemony in his texts, and to synthesize these concepts with the insight offered by While et al.'s schematic conception the 'urban sustainability fix' and the emergent literature on policy mobilities.⁵⁷⁷ In either case, I have tried to outline how the concept of hegemony does not offer a sort of explanatory master-key, but instead points towards a series of

⁵⁷² Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks Vol. II*, 3§49.

⁵⁷³ Thomas, *Gramscian Moment*, 359.

⁵⁷⁴ Miller, "Modes of Governance"; Harrison and Laxer, *Trojan Horse*; Harrison, *Return of the Trojan Horse*.

⁵⁷⁵ Cf. Jamie Peck, "Explaining (with) Neoliberalism," *Territory, Politics, Governance* 1, no. 2 (2013): 132-157.

⁵⁷⁶ Stuart Hall, "The Neo-Liberal Revolution," *Cultural Studies* 25, no. 6 (2011): 727.

⁵⁷⁷ Cf. Thomas, *Gramscian Moment*, 134.

processes and problems worthy of future investigation. Regarding the sustainability fix, I have used the concepts of the determinate market, political society, and civil society to specify the particular forces that While et al. view as impinging upon local policy processes (Figure 2.3). These different categories of analysis, I suggest, cannot be assumed in advance. Rather, the challenge of this model is ‘fill in the blanks’, so to speak, and explore the specific tendential momentum and internal contradictions at these interdigitated explanatory ‘levels’ through historical analysis.

Chapter 3 constitutes an attempt at such an analysis, where I have tried to map the full breadth of countervailing, contradictory forces to which Calgary’s first attempts at sustainability policy were forced to respond (Figure 3.7). Whereas While et al. try to locate contradictions at the macro-scale of analysis – the tension between competitive growth imperatives and economic imperatives for green development – I have to use a Gramscian sensibility to explore tensions *within* hegemonic frameworks. Insofar as this approach outlines the broad matrix of forces within which policy processes operate, I maintain that it is useful for establishing the context of particular policy turns. And yet, if hegemony implies a form of consent extending beyond powerful actors within the state and civil society – who are the primary focus of my investigation – then surely a more adequate exploration of this model would need to consider the formation of contradictions and countermovements amidst the everyday political subjectivities of subaltern and subordinate class groups on the terrain of civil society.⁵⁷⁸ The limitations of this study preclude such an emphasis here, but this remains a vital line of inquiry.

With respect to policy mobilities, I have again tried to tease out the value of hegemony in largely methodological terms. Whereas this literature remains relatively fluid and open-ended, I have tried to avoid formalizing it to the same extent as While et al.’s sustainability fix. Instead, I have opted to point out a series of analytical issues with which this literature grapples, including the relationship between mobile policies and specific political-economic conditions; the sources of political agency and forms of representational practice that enable long-distance policy mobilizations; incessant shifts in the content of travelling policy ideas and configurations of institutional authority relevant to given policy issues; and the possible (post-)political implications stemming from these processes. Gramsci’s prison notes do not contain answers for questions in all of these fields. Nevertheless, conceptualizing policy actors – and not just magnetic personae of consultants and guru transfer agents – as intellectuals helps elucidate how the mobility of particular policy strategies are bound up in struggles for political authority, even (if not especially) *within* seemingly stable hegemonic blocs. Moreover, by foregrounding the contradictions of

⁵⁷⁸ Kipfer, “Urbanization.”

hegemonic arrangements and the ineradicability of political conflict within them, this perspective moves beyond notions of ‘post-political’ impasses to investigate the contingencies of political power.

Taking up the challenge of ‘following’ policy in Chapter 4, I have tried to follow the movement of policy ideas not only *across* distant points of reference, but also *within* Calgary as critical case site. In so doing, I have attempted to outline a panoramic view of both *why* the City of Calgary turned towards deliberative decision-making and systems-based modeling and *how* these practices effected the shape of sustainability politics in the aftermath of imagineCALGARY. As testified by the sprawling length of this exposition, this task requires more room than can be accommodated within the confines the present study. This is particularly true for examining the civil societal countermovements whom I have tried to pull into my frame of analysis. Indeed, an unremarked (but nevertheless salient) component of policy mobilities scholarship has been that in its rush to understand the intricacies of policy processes, it has neglected the governed populations at whom these processes are aimed. Owing to both the paucity of documentary sources on CivicCamp and the limitations of my abbreviated fieldwork for this study, I have been unable to provide adequate attention to the civil societal groups that alternately accommodate, resist, and respond to mobile sources of policy expertise. This too, I maintain, remains a crucial avenue of future research; it also leads to the normative thrust of analyses structured around hegemony, on which I must conclude.

5.3 THE USES OF HEGEMONY AND THE PROBLEM OF MONDAY MORNING

None of these observations is absolute; they have to be “relativized” according to the various moments of history and different states.

ANTONIO GRAMSCI⁵⁷⁹

Antonio Gramsci’s motto – “pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will” – was never more relevant than to the uncertain domain of climate politics.

ANDREW ROSS⁵⁸⁰

Calgary is an overnight millionaire fresh from the sale of a gas exploration company, complaining about the greed of all those farmers who jacked up the lease rates. Calgary is the home riding of the prime minister abutting the home riding of the premier, and still insisting that it doesn’t get a fair shake in Ottawa or Edmonton. Calgary is the highest per capita income in Canada in a province with no sales tax, indignant that its property taxes are going up. Its

⁵⁷⁹ Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks Vol. II*, 4§66.

⁵⁸⁰ Ross, *Bird on Fire*, 241.

conservatism sometimes scans as a youngster's I-got-mine insolence [...] but between the lines you can hear the place trying to talk about another kind of youthful exuberance that doesn't need to holler in cartoon cowboy slang. Despite the cowboy hat bluster, Calgary doesn't know what it is yet, and so it can still be shaped.

CHRIS TURNER⁵⁸¹

I am a former City of Calgary employee; prior to my employment with City, I was involved in activism related to Plan-It Calgary. Although I have not been able to adequately position myself within this already-overstuffed narrative, I was in fact living in Calgary while debates over imagineCALGARY and Plan-It Calgary resonated within the serial echo chamber that is Calgary politics. Accordingly, while a standpoint of complete political innocence may not exist for any author, this thesis has certainly been written from a perspective indelibly shaped by own experiences working within, against, and beyond the local state to try and secure developmental alternatives for Calgary. More specifically, this thesis has been written with what Paul Willis calls "the problem of Monday morning" in mind.

In his classic study of working class identity and primary schooling in the 1970s, Willis warned of hermetically-sealed forms of scholarship that comment on the need for social change without providing resources for doing so. Parallel to – or perhaps in an ideal world, dialectically enmeshed with – the task of theorizing the reproduction of class power is the material challenge of overcoming it, and while state bureaucrats doubtlessly play a (crucial) role in reproducing systems of domination, Willis maintains that progressive forces are better off working with potential allies within the state than working at totally cross purposes. Such figures are faced with the day-to-day challenge of containing the contradictions and crisis-tendencies of capitalist accumulation, only to see these dilemmas reemerge with vigor as they return to their desks on Monday morning. "If we have nothing to say about Monday morning," Willis writes, then the field of radical politics is "yielded to a purist structuralist immobilizing reductionist tautology [*sic*]: nothing can be done until the basic structures of society are changed but the structures prevent us making any changes."⁵⁸² It is easy to fall into this trap with questions of hegemony or categories of Marxian analysis: even I conclude that Calgary's local state will be unable to fully wrest hegemonic authority from developers so long as public policies must support private land markets as the dominant provision of housing in the city.

⁵⁸¹ Chris Turner, "Calgary Reconsidered," *The Walrus*, June 2012. <http://www.thewalrus.ca/calgary-reconsidered> (accessed June 8, 2013).

⁵⁸² Willis, *Learning to Labor*, 186.

It is all too easy to point out political developments to which one is opposed. James Ferguson calls this “the politics of the ‘anti’”: a denunciatory standpoint which defines itself in opposition to a plenitude of phenomena (‘anti-globalization’, ‘anti-neoliberalism’, ‘anti-privatization’, and so on) with no capacity to define what it wants in a *positive* sense.⁵⁸³ But it is undoubtedly a challenge of a greater order of magnitude (and political significance) to define vectors of potential political change, to speak to the problem of Monday morning. Even Marx’s acerbic take on the return of authoritarian structures in France’s post-Thermidorian moment (“Well grubbed, old mole!”) must be read alongside his injunction for would-be proletarian revolutionaries faced with the “crapulent depression” of bourgeois rule and seemingly ineffable tendencies for self-criticism: “*Hic Rhodus, hic salta!*”⁵⁸⁴

It has not been my attempt here to create a programmatic plan for action, or to crate ‘policy relevant’ analytical frames. On the contrary, my analysis has shown that while City officials rankle against the hegemony of developer-led suburbanization, they are in many ways deeply complicit with this project. For their part, CivicCamp— who I worked alongside as an activist in Calgary – appears in an equally unforgiving light. But these comments are not made to illustrate the futility of politics, as in the post-political declarations which seem intent to renounce each possible Ariadne’s thread as the fibres of some ever-tightening noose. Although this thesis has not been written for a broad audience of policymakers or activists, I have tried to fashion an analysis which follows Willis’ claim that “There is no contradiction in asking practitioners to work on two levels simultaneously – to face immediate problems in doing ‘the[ir] best’ [...] whilst appreciating all the time that these very actions may help to reproduce the structures within which the[se] problems arise.”⁵⁸⁵ A more comprehensive, full-blooded Gramscian analysis – if Gramsci can be appropriated so easily – would surely be committed to finding all of the cracks and contradictions within a hegemonic project which might present targets for political action. For a multitude of reasons, this thesis cannot do so. But the concept of hegemony, I maintain, can play a useful role in outlining the magnitude of the challenge facing progressive forces in the struggle to find more ecologically sane and socially equitable modalities of city life. Perhaps there are no certainties in local politics, but the dynamism and antagonistic contradictions of capitalist development assure the persistence of change. As Willis reminds us, we can “[w]histle down the wind or whistle in the dark,” but we will make ill use of these winds of change if we have no sense of the terrain we wish to navigate.⁵⁸⁶

⁵⁸³ Ferguson, “Uses of Neoliberalism.”

⁵⁸⁴ Marx, *Eighteenth Brumaire*, 121 and 19.

⁵⁸⁵ Willis, *Learning to Labor*, 186.

⁵⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 218.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Althusser, Louis. 2009. "From *Capital* to Marx's Philosophy." In *Reading Capital*, edited by Louis Althusser and Étienne Balibar, translated by Ben Brewster, 11-69. New York: Verso.
- Arab, Paula. 2009. "Who Will Build the Plan It Vision Without a Market?" *Calgary Herald*, March 26.
- Thomas Bates. 1975. "Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 31, no. 2: 351-366.
- Beatley, Timothy. 2000. *Green Urbanism: Learning from European Cities*. Washington, DC: Island Press.
- Beatty, Adrienne. 2010. "Money Matters in the Calgary Election." *Calgary Herald*, October 7.
- Boddy, Trevor. 1992. "Underground and Overhead: Building the Analogous City." In *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space*, edited by Michael Sorkin. New York: Hill and Wong.
- Boudreau, Julie-Anne, Roger Keil, and Douglas Young. 2009. *Changing Toronto: Governing Urban Neoliberalism*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Bradford, Neal. 2007. *Whither the Federal Urban Agenda? A New Deal in Transition*. Research Report F.65, Canadian Policy Research Networks, Ottawa, ON.
- Braid, Don. 1995. "GoPlan Hits Sore Spots: Impacts are Tiny but They are Real." *Calgary Herald*, May 30.
- Brenner, Neil. 2004. *New State Spaces: Urban Governance and the Rescaling of Statehood*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Brenner, Neil, Jamie Peck, and Nik Theodore. 2010. "Variegated Neoliberalization: Geographies, Modalities, Pathways." *Global Networks* 10, no. 2: 182-222.
- Bruce, Christopher. 2007. "A Tale of Two Cities: Public Participation Processes in Banff and Calgary." Policy Brief No. 07001, Institute for Advanced Policy Research, University of Calgary, Calgary, AB.
- Brundtland, Gro Harlem. 1987. *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: "Our Common Future."* United Nations.
- Brunet-Jailly, Emmanuel. 2012. "Civic Culture in Calgary: The Oil and Developers' Land." In *Comparative Civic Culture: The Role of Local Culture in Urban Policy-Making*, edited by Laura Reese and Raymond Rosenfeld, 295-326. Burlington, VT: Ashgate.
- Burawoy, Michael. 1998. "The Extended Case Method." *Sociological Theory* 16, no. 1: 4-33.
- . 2003. "For a Sociological Marxism: The Complementary Convergence of Antonio Gramsci and Karl Polanyi." *Politics & Society* 31, no. 2: 193-261.

- Buttigieg, Joseph. 1990. "Gramsci's Method." *boundary 2* 17, no. 2: 60-81.
- . 1995. "Gramsci on Civil Society." *boundary 2* 22, no. 3: 1-32.
- . 2006. "The Prison Notebooks: Antonio Gramsci's Work in Progress." *Rethinking Marxism* 18, no. 1: 37-42.
- Calgary Herald*. 2009a. "60-Year Plan Makes No Sense." March 25.
- . 2009b. "Plan This, Council – Stop Wasting Our Money," *Calgary Herald*, March 14.
- Calthorpe, Peter. 2011. *Urbanism in the Age of Climate Change*. Washington DC: Island Press.
- Campbell, Scott. 1996. "Green Cities, Growing Cities, Just Cities? Urban Planning and the Contradictions of Sustainable Development." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 62, no. 3: 296-312.
- Cattaneo, Claudia. 1988. "Property Tax Raise to Hold at 3.5 Per Cent." *Calgary Herald*, December 20.
- Checker, Melissa. 2014. "Wiped Out by the 'Greenwave': Environmental Gentrification and the Paradoxical Politics of Urban Sustainability." *City & Society* 23, no. 2: 201-229.
- citiesPLUS. 2003. *A Sustainable Urban System: The Long-Term Plan for Greater Vancouver*. Vancouver: Sheltair Group.
- City of Calgary. 1975. *1974 Financial Report*. Calgary: City of Calgary.
- . 1977. *Calgary's Future – Decide Now: A Summary of Alternative Strategies for Calgary*. Calgary: City of Calgary.
- . 1979. *Inner City Plan*. Planning & Building Department. Calgary: City of Calgary.
- . 1982a. *1982 Budget: Operations & Capital Budget Summary, 1982*. Calgary: City of Calgary.
- . 1982b. *Financing Urban Growth*. Calgary: City of Calgary.
- . 1982c. *Inventory of Downtown Office Space*. Corporate Resources and Operations Research Department. Calgary: City of Calgary.
- . 1983. *1982 Financial Report*. Calgary: City of Calgary.
- . 1988. *1987 Financial Report*. Calgary: City of Calgary.
- . 1989a. *1988 Financial Report*. Calgary: City of Calgary.
- . 1989b. *Calgary 2020: Calgarians Choosing their Future Today*. Calgary: City of Calgary.
- . 1989c. *City of Calgary Comprehensive Annexation - Technical Report*. Submission to the Alberta Local Authorities Board. Calgary: City of Calgary.

- . 1990. *1990 Financial & Economic Review*. Calgary: City of Calgary.
- . 1992a. *Calgary GoPlan Public Opinion Survey*. IBI Group, GoPlan Working Paper Series No. 4-12-92, City of Calgary, Calgary.
- . 1992b. *Public Involvement Forum*. GoPlan Background Series No. 2-11-92, City of Calgary, Calgary.
- . 1993a. *Calgary GoPlan: Terms of Reference*. GoPlan Background Series No. 1-11-92, City of Calgary, Calgary.
- . 1993b. *Employment Distribution and Forecasts and Future Travel Demand Study*. BA Consulting Group, GoPlan Discussion Paper Series No. 3-12-93, City of Calgary, Calgary.
- . 1993c. *Sustainability: Should it be the Ethic for Transportation Planning in the '90s?* GoPlan Discussion Paper Series No. 1-06-93, City of Calgary, Calgary.
- . 1993d. *Values Important to Calgarians: Results of Public Workshop, November 1992*. GoPlan Working Paper Series No. 3-01-93, City of Calgary, Calgary.
- . 1994a. *1993 Financial Report*. Calgary: City of Calgary.
- . 1994b. *Calgary's Future Suburban Growth: Moving Towards Sustainable Development*. GoPlan Discussion Paper Series No. 5-04-94, City of Calgary, Calgary.
- . 1995a. *Calgary Transportation Plan*. City of Calgary: Calgary.
- . 1995b. *Sustainable Suburbs Study: Creating More Fiscally, Socially and Environmentally Friendly Communities*. Planning and Building Department. Calgary: City of Calgary.
- . 1995c. *Transportation and Land Use Issues*. GoPlan Background Series No. 31-06-95, City of Calgary, Calgary.
- . 1996. *Short Term Growth Management Strategy: Residential Information Update, 1996-2000*. Calgary: City of Calgary.
- . 1997. *Short Term Growth Management Strategy: Residential Information Update, 1997-2001*. Calgary: City of Calgary.
- . 1998a. *Calgary Plan*. Calgary: City of Calgary.
- . 1998b. *Short Term Growth Management Strategy: Residential Information Update, 1998-2002*. Calgary: City of Calgary.
- . 1999. *Short Term Growth Management Strategy: Residential Information Update, 1999-2003*. Calgary: City of Calgary.
- . 2000. *1999 Annual Report*. Calgary: City of Calgary.

- . 2003. *Short Term Growth Management Strategy: Residential Information Update, 2003-2007*. Calgary: City of Calgary.
- . 2006. *imagineCALGARY Plan for Long Range Urban Sustainability*. Calgary: City of Calgary.
- . 2007a. *Annual Report 2006*. Calgary: City of Calgary.
- . 2007b. *Calgary and Region Social Outlook 2007-2012*. Calgary: City of Calgary.
- . 2007c. *Where Do We Grow from Here?* Calgary: City of Calgary.
- . 2009a. *2008 Annual Report*. Calgary: City of Calgary.
- . 2009b. *Municipal Development Plan*. Calgary: City of Calgary.
- . 2009c. *The Implications of Alternative Growth Patterns on Infrastructure Costs*. IBI Group, Calgary, City of Calgary.
- . 2010. *A Case of Fiscal Imbalance: The Calgary Experience*. Calgary: City of Calgary.
- . 2012. *Calgary 2020: The City of Calgary's 10-Year Plan Towards imagineCALGARY*. Office of Sustainability. Calgary: City of Calgary.
- Clarke, Nick. 2012. "Urban Policy Mobility, Anti-Politics, and Histories of the Transnational Municipal Movement." *Progress in Human Geography* 36, no. 1: 25-43.
- Climenhaga, David. 1993. "Car-Loving Calgarians Conundrum for City." *Calgary Herald*, January 9.
- Collins, Ron, and Dave Pommer. 1997. "Calgary 2020 Puts People First, City Survey Says." *Calgary Herald*, February 4.
- Cook, Ian R., and Kevin Ward. 2012. "Conferences, Informational Infrastructures and Mobile Policies: The Process of Getting Sweden 'BID Ready'." *European Urban and Regional Studies* 19, no.1: 137-152.
- Cooper, Mike. 1976. "Calgary: Housing Market Control Revealed." In *The City Book: The Politics and Planning of Canada's Cities*, edited by James Lorimer and Evelyn Ross, 31-36. Toronto: James Lorimer & Company.
- Coward, Harold. 1981. "Introduction." In *Calgary's Growth: Bane or Boon?* Edited by Harold Coward. Calgary: The University of Calgary Press.
- Cox, Kevin. 1993. "The Local and the Global in the New Urban Politics: A Critical View." *Environment and Planning D* 11, no. 4: 433-448.
- . 2001. "Territoriality, Politics, and 'The Urban'." *Political Geography* 20, no. 6: 745-62.

- Cox, Kevin, and Andrew Mair. 1988. "Locality and Community in the Politics of Local Economic Development." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 78, no. 2: 307-325.
- Crehan, Kate. 2002. *Gramsci, Culture and Anthropology*. Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- . 2011. "Gramsci's Concept of Common Sense: A Useful Concept for Anthropologists?" *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 16, no. 2: 273-287.
- Cuthbertson, Richard. 2010. "Higgins, McIver on Same Page." *Calgary Herald*, August 13.
- Davidson, Mark. 2010. "Sustainability as Ideological Praxis: The Acting Out of Planning's Master-Signifier." *City* 14, no. 4: 390-405.
- Davies, Wayne. 1997. "Sustainable Development and Urban Policy: Hijacking the Term in Calgary." *GeoJournal* 43, no.4: 359-369.
- Davis, Mike. 1990. *City of Quartz*. New York: Verso.
- . 2002. *Dead Cities*. New York: The New Press.
- Dean, Jodi. 2009. *Democracy and Other Neoliberal Fantasies*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Derowitz, Colette. 2004. "Bronconnier Sweeps to Second Victory." *Calgary Herald*, October 19.
- . 2008a. "Don't Defer Projects, City Told." *Calgary Herald*, January 28.
- . 2008b. "Mayor to Offer Planning Solution." *Calgary Herald*, January 29.
- Dewald, Jim, and Gordon Sick. 2007. "Urban Sprawl Isn't Evil, but It's Expensive." *Calgary Herald*, September 28.
- Di Cintio, Marcello. 2010. "An 'Ungroup' of Happy Campers." *Calgary Herald*, October 22.
- Duany, Andrés. 1993. "Three Cheers for Gentrification." *The American Enterprise* 12, no. 3: 36-39.
- Duany, Andrés, Jeff Speck, and Mike Lydon. 2010. *The Smart Growth Manual*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Duncan, James, and Nancy Duncan. 2004. *Landscapes of Privilege: The Politics of the Aesthetic in an American Suburb*. New York: Routledge.
- Dunn, Elizabeth. 2007. "Of Pufferfish and Ethnography: Plumbing New Depth in Economic Geography." In *Politics and Practice in Economic Geography*, edited by Adam Tickell, Eric Sheppard, Jamie Peck, and Trevor Barnes, 82-93. London: Sage.
- Michael Ekers. 2013. "Gramsci and the Erotics of Labour: More Notes on 'The Sexual Question'." In *Gramsci: Space, Nature, Politics*, edited by Michael Ekers, Gillian Hart, Stefan Kipfer, and Alex Loftus, 217-237. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

- Ekers, Michael, Gillian Hart, Stefan Kipfer, and Alex Loftus, eds. 2013. *Gramsci: Space, Nature, Politics*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Elder, P.S. 1979. "The new Alberta Planning Act." *Alberta Law Review* 17, no. 3: 434-466 .
- . 1980. "Some interesting aspects of the Alberta Planning Act, 1977." *Alberta Law Review* 18, no. 2: 198-215.
- . 1996. "Alberta's 1995 Planning Legislation." *Journal of Environmental Law and Practice* 6, no. 2: 23-58.
- Farr, Douglass. 2008. *Sustainable Urbanism: Urban Design with Nature*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Ferguson, James. 2009. "The Uses of Neoliberalism." *Antipode* 41, no. 1: 166-184.
- Finocchiaro, Maurice. 1988. *Gramsci and the History of Dialectical Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Flanagan, Greg. 2005. "Not Just About Money: Provincial Budgets and Political Ideology." In *The Return of the Trojan Horse: Alberta and the New World Dis(O)rder*, edited Trevor Harrison, 115-135. Montreal: Black Rose Books.
- Foran, Max. 1975. "Land Speculation and Urban Development: Calgary 1884-1912." In *Frontier Calgary: Town, City, and Region 1875-1914*, edited by Anthony Rasporich and Henry Klassen, 203-220. Calgary: McClelland and Stewart West.
- . ed. 2008. *Icon, Brand, Myth: The Calgary Stampede*. Edmonton: Athabasca University Press.
- . 2009a. *Expansive Discourses: Urban Sprawl in Calgary, 1945-1978*. Edmonton: Athabasca University Press.
- . 2009b. "Project Apollo: The *Genstar Report* and the City of Calgary, 1973-1975." *Urban History Review* 38, no. 1 (2009): 15-25.
- Gerson, Jen. 2013. "Forces Aligning Against Popular Calgary Mayor." *National Post*, March 18.
- Ghitter, Geoff. 2006. "Imagine a City Built to Last." *Calgary Herald*, February 27.
- Ghitter, Geoff, and Alan Smart. 2009. "Mad Cows, Regional Governance, and Urban Sprawl: Path Dependence and Unintended Consequences in the Calgary Region." *Urban Affairs Review* 44, no. 5: 617-644.
- Glassman, Jim. 2013. "Cracking Hegemony: Gramsci and the Dialectics of Rebellion." In *Gramsci: Space, Nature, Politics*, edited by Michael Ekers, Gillian Hart, Stefan Kipfer, and Alex Loftus, 241-257. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Goldenberg, Susan. 1981. *Men of Property: The Canadian Developers who are Buying America*. Toronto: Personal Library.

- González, Sara. 2011. "Bilbao and Barcelona 'in Motion': How Urban Regeneration 'Models' Travel and Mutate in the Global Flows of Policy Tourism." *Urban Studies* 48, no. 7: 1397-1418.
- Gordon, Michael, and David Hulchanski. 1985. "The Evolution of the Land Use Planning Process in Alberta, 1945-1984." Research Paper No. 156, School of Community and Regional Planning, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC.
- Gramsci, Antonio. 1957. *The Modern Prince and Other Writings*. Edited and translated by Louis Mark. New York: International Publishers.
- . 1971. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. Edited and translated by Quito Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith. New York: International Publishers.
- . 1992. *Prison Notebooks, Volume I*. Edited by Joseph Buttigieg. Translated by Joseph Buttigieg and Antonio Callari. New York: Columbia University Press.
- . 1995. *Further Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. Edited and translated by Derek Boothman. London: Wishart.
- . 1996. *Prison Notebooks, Volume II*. Edited and translated by Joseph Buttigieg. New York: Columbia University Press.
- . 2007. *Prison Notebooks, Volume III*. Edited and translated by Joseph Buttigieg. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Grant, Jill. 2009. "Theory and Practice in Planning the Suburbs: Challenges to Implementing New Urbanism, Smart Growth, and Sustainability Principles." *Planning Theory & Practice* 10, no. 1: 11-33.
- Green, Marcus. 2011. "Rethinking the Subaltern and the Question of Censorship in Gramsci's Prison Notebook." *Postcolonial Studies* 14, no. 4: 387-404.
- Gunder, Michael. 2006. "Sustainability: Planning's Saving Grace or Road to Perdition?" *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 26: 208-221.
- Guttormson, Kim. 2009. "City OKs Controversial Urban Design Blueprint." *Calgary Herald*, September 29.
- Guttormson, Kim and Joel Kom. 2008. "Mayor Faces 'Tax Revolt'." *Calgary Herald*, November 1.
- Hackworth, Jason. 2007. *The Neoliberal City: Governance, Ideology, and Development in American Urbanism*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Hall, Peter. 2002. *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design in the Twentieth Century*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Hall, Stuart. 1986. "Gramsci's Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity." *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 10, no. 5: 5-27.

- . 2011. "The Neo-Liberal Revolution." *Cultural Studies* 25, no. 6: 705-728.
- Hallsmith, Gwendolyn and Bernard Lietaer. 2011. *Creating Wealth: Growing Local Economies with Local Currencies*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.
- Hallsmith, Gwendolyn, Christian Layke, and Melissa Everett. 2005. *Taking Action for Sustainability: The EarthCAT Guide to Community Development*. Global Community Initiatives. http://www.earthcharterinaction.org/invent/images/uploads/EarthCAT_Workbook.pdf
- Hannerz, Ulf. 1980. *Exploring the City: Notes Toward an Urban Anthropology*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Harasym, D.G. and P.J. Smith. 1975. "Planning for Retail Services in New Residential Areas Since 1944." In *Calgary: Metropolitan Structure and Influence*, edited by Benton Barr, 157-191. Victoria, BC: University of Victoria Press.
- Harding, Alan. 1995. "Elite Theory and Growth Machines." In *Theories of Urban Politics*, edited by David Judge, Gerry Stoker, and Harold Wolman, 35-53. London and Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Harris, Richard. 2004. *Creeping Conformity: How Canada Became Suburban*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Harrison, Trevor, ed. 2005. *The Return of the Trojan Horse: Alberta and the New World Dis(O)rder*. Montreal: Black Rose Books.
- Harrison, Trevor and Gordon Laxer, eds. 1995. *The Trojan Horse: Alberta and the Future of Canada*. Montreal: Black Rose Books.
- Harvey, David. 1973. *Social Justice and the City*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- . 1982. *The Limits to Capital*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- . 1985. "The Geopolitics of Capitalism." In *Social Relations and Spatial Structures*, edited by Derek Gregory and John Urry, 128-163. London: Macmillan.
- . 1989. "From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism," *Geografiska Annaler* 71, no. 1: 3-17.
- . 1990. *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- . 1996. *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- . 1997. "The New Urbanism and the Communitarian Trap." *Harvard Design Magazine* 1, no. 3: 68-69.
- Healey, Patsy. 2013. "Circuits of Knowledge and Techniques: The Transnational Flow of Planning Ideas and Practices." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 37, no.5: 1510-1526.

- Hiller, Harry. 2007. "Gateway Cities and Arriviste Cities: Alberta's Recent Urban Growth in a Canadian Context." *Prairie Forum* 32, no.1: 47-66.
- Hope, Marty. 1994. "Stubborn Calgarians Urged to Employ Transit." *Calgary Herald*, January 22.
- . 2001. "Market Forces Do What Policies Cannot." *Calgary Herald*, May 26.
- . 2008. "Neighbours' Objections Frustrate Developers." *Calgary Herald*, February 16.
- . 2009. "Shades of Green." *Calgary Herald*, September 5.
- Howard, Tom. 2009. "Plugging the Brain Drain with Plan It." *Calgary Herald*, September 28.
- Hulchanski, David. 1981. "The Origins of Urban Land Use Planning in Alberta, 1900-194." Research Paper No. 119, Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON.
- Hume, Christopher. 2010. "So Who are the Rednecks Now?" *Toronto Star*, October 20.
- Jacobs, Jane. 1961. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Random House.
- Jameson, Frederic. 2009. *Valences of the Dialectic*. New York: Verso.
- Jeffs, Allyson. 1990. "Residents Claim Edworthy Park Victory." *Calgary Herald*, June 20.
- Jessop, Bob. 1990. *State Theory: Putting the Capitalist State in its Place*. Cambridge: Polity.
- . 1997. "A Neo-Gramscian Approach to the Regulation of Urban Regimes: Accumulation Strategies, Hegemonic Projects, and Governance." In *Reconstructing Urban Regime Theory*, edited by Mickey Lauria, 51-73. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- . 2002. "Liberalism, Neoliberalism, and Urban Governance: A State-Theoretical Perspective." *Antipode* 34, no. 3: 452-472.
- . 2005. "Gramsci as a Spatial Theorist." *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 8, no. 4: 421-437.
- Keil, Roger. 2002. "'Common-Sense' Neoliberalism" Progressive Conservative Urbanism in Toronto, Canada." *Antipode* 34, no. 3: 578-601.
- . 2007. "Sustaining Modernity, Modernizing Nature: The Environmental Crisis and the Survival of Capitalism." In *The Sustainable Development Paradox: Urban Political Economy in the United States and Europe*, edited by Rob Krueger and David Gibbs, 41-65. New York: Guilford.
- . 2009. "The Urban Politics of Roll-With-It" Neoliberalization." *City* 13, n. 2-3: 230-245.
- Kenworthy, Jeff. 2009. "Don't Crucify Public Planning." *Calgary Herald*, April 3.

- Keough, Noel, and Bob Morrison. 2009. "Backroom Politics Cost Taxpayers \$2 Billion." *Calgary Herald*, October 13.
- King, Al. 2008. "Good Time Charlies." *Calgary Herald*, November 18.
- King, Frank. 1994. "McKenzie Towne: Ground-Breaking Project Sparks Debate." *Calgary Herald*, January 15.
- . 1995a. "Suburbs Study Opens a Dialogue." *Calgary Herald*, July 15.
- . 1995b. "City Endorses Visionary Goals," *Calgary Herald*, July 22.
- Knox, Paul. 2008. *Metroburbia, USA*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Klein, Gary. 2010. "Lessons from Calgary, Toronto." *The Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, October 28.
- Kipfer, Stefan. 2002. "Urbanization, Everyday Life and the Survival of Capitalism: Lefebvre, Gramsci and the Problematic of Hegemony." *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 13, no.2: 117-149.
- Krätke, Michael. 2011. "Antonio Gramsci's Contribution to a Critical Economics." *Historical Materialism* 19, no. 3: 63-105
- Krueger, Rob, and David Gibbs, eds. 2007. *The Sustainable Development Paradox: Urban Political Economy in the United States and Europe*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Lakritz, Naomi. 2008. "Sorry for Living ... But Where's My Bus?" *Calgary Herald*, December 24.
- Leitner, Helga. 1990. "Cities in Pursuit of Economic Growth: The Local State as Entrepreneur." *Political Geography Quarterly* 9, no. 2: 146-170.
- Libman, Daniel. 2005. "Holy Vision of the Future, Batman!" *Calgary Herald*, June 17.
- Logan, John, and Harvey Molotch. 1987. *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place*. Berkley: University of California Press.
- Lorimer, James. 1978. *The Developers*. Toronto: James Lorimer & Company.
- Lui, Grace. 2009a. "What Plan It Are You On?" *Calgary Herald*, May 16.
- . 2009b. "Plan It Public Hearing Time to Be Heard and Informed." *Calgary Herald*, June 20.
- . 2009c. "Plan It Change Does Not Render It Broken." *Calgary Herald*, October 3.
- MacLeod, Gordon. 2011. "Urban Politics Reconsidered: Growth Machine to Post-Democratic City?" *Urban Studies* 48, no. 12: 2629-2660.
- . 2013. "New Urbanism/Smart Growth in the Scottish Highlands: Mobile Policies and Post-politics in Local Development Planning." *Urban Studies* 50, no. 11: 2196-2221.

- Marcuse, Peter. 1998. "Sustainability Is Not Enough." *Environment and Urbanization* 10, no. 2: 104-105.
- . 2005. "'The City' as Perverse Metaphor." *City* 9, no. 2: 247-254.
- Markusoff, Jason. 2008a. "Calgarians Weave Dreams for City," *Calgary Herald*, November 16.
- . 2008b. "Transit Plan Alarms Residents," *Calgary Herald*, November 24.
- . 2009a. "Majority Backs Denser City ... For Others," *Calgary Herald*, April 17.
- . 2009a. "Transit Key to 60-Year Plan." *Calgary Herald*, March 10.
- . 2009c. "US Economist Attacks Calgary's Growth Blueprint." *Calgary Herald* March 25.
- . 2009d. "US Expert Calls for Calgary to Create Toll Highways." *Calgary Herald*, March 26.
- . 2009e. "Young Peoples Vision for a Better City." *Calgary Herald*, April 3.
- . 2009f. "Denser City Will Save \$11.2B, Says Report." *Calgary Herald*, April 4.
- . 2009g. "Growth Plan Showdown Looming." *Calgary Herald*, June 21.
- . 2009h. "Developer's Oppose City's Density Targets." *Calgary Herald*, June 26, 2009.
- . 2009i. "Council Gears up for Heated Debate on Calgary's Future." *Calgary Herald*, September 28.
- . 2010a. "McIver, Higgins Battle for First." *Calgary Herald*, September 19.
- . 2010b. "Poll Finds Mayoral Field Has Tightened." *Calgary Herald*, October 6.
- . 2010c. "McIver Takes Stock After Losing Election." *Calgary Herald*, October 20.
2013. "Home Builder Ups Election Ante." *Calgary Herald*, Apr 23, 2013
- Markusoff, Jason, and Kim Guttormson. 2009. "City Softens Growth Plan," *Calgary Herald*, September 22.
- Martin, Don. 2010. "The New Faces of Canadian Politics." *The Vancouver Sun*, October 21.
- Martin, James. 1999. *Calgary: Secrets of the City*. Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press.
- Martin, Don. 1990. "Plans Spark Outrage." *Calgary Herald*, June 20.
- Marx, Karl. 1975. *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. New York: International Publishers.
- Maslan, Noah Terrell. 2001. "Realizing Sustainability: Implementing a Vision in Burlington, Vermont." Master's thesis, MIT.
- Massey, Doreen. 1994. *Space, Place, and Gender*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.

- . 2011. "A Counterhegemonic Sense of Place." In *Mobile Urbanism: Cities and Policymaking in a Global Age*, edited by Eugene McCann and Kevin Ward, 1-14. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Masson, Jack, and Edward LeSage. 1994. *Alberta's Local Governments: Politics and Democracy*. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press.
- Mayer, Margit. 2007. "Contesting the Neoliberalization of Urban Governance." In *Contesting Neoliberalism: Urban Frontiers*, edited by Helga Leitner, Jamie Peck, and Eric Sheppard, 90-115. New York: Guilford Press.
- McArthur, Jack. 1987. "Turbulent Boom and Bust Cycles Characterize the Canadian Economy." *Toronto Star*, June 11.
- McCann, Eugene. 2011a. "Points of Reference: Knowledge of Elsewhere in the Politics of Drug Policy." In *Mobile Urbanism: Cities and Policymaking in a Global Age*, edited by Eugene McCann and Kevin Ward, 97-121. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- . 2011b. "Urban Policy Mobilities and Global Circuits of Knowledge: Towards a Research Agenda." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 101, no. 1: 107-130.
- . 2013. "Policy Boosterism, Policy Mobilities, and the Extrospective City." *Urban Geography* 34, no. 1: 5-29.
- McCann, Eugene, and Kevin Ward. 2010. "Relationality/Territoriality: Toward a Conceptualization of Cities in the World," *Geoforum* 41, no. 2: 175-184.
- , eds. 2011. *Mobile Urbanism: Cities and Policymaking in a Global Age*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- . 2013. McCann and Kevin Ward, "A Multi-Disciplinary Approach to Policy Transfer Research: Geographies, Assemblages, Mobilities and Mutations." *Policy Studies* 34, no. 1: 2-18.
- McCormick, Kathy. 2007. "Transit-Oriented Projects Stall." *Calgary Herald*, April 14.
- . 2008. "City Planning Delays Raise Affordability Fears." *Calgary Herald*, February 2.
- . 2009a. "Plan It Chill." *Calgary Herald*, Mar 14.
- . 2009b. "Industry Says Plan It Document is Too Vague." *Calgary Herald*, March 21.
- . 2009c. "US Expert Slams City for 'Behavioural Planning.'" *Calgary Herald*, March 28.
- . 2009d. "Vision versus Reality," *Calgary Herald*, May 16.
- . 2009e. "New Burb Fits Plan It to a T," *Calgary Herald*, June 13, 2009.

- . 2009f. "Ambitious Planning Blueprint Approved," *Calgary Herald*, Oct. 3, 2009
- McDowell, Linda. 2007. "Thinking the Economy, Theorizing Bodies." In *Politics and Practice in Economic Geography*, edited by Adam Tickell, Eric Sheppard, Jamie Peck, and Trevor Barnes, 60-70. London: Sage.
- McFarlane, Janet. 2003. "Firms Increasingly Trumpet Good Deeds." *Globe & Mail*, December 8.
- McIver, Ric. 2009. "Working on Policy is Called Democracy." *Calgary Herald*, October 26.
- Miller, Byron. 2007. "Modes of Governance, Modes of Resistance: Contesting Neoliberalism in Calgary." In *Contesting Neoliberalism: Urban Frontiers*, edited by Helga Leitner, Jamie Peck, and Eric Sheppard, 223-249. New York: Guilford Press.
- . 2009. "Planning for a Resilient City." *Calgary Herald*, June 18.
- Miller, Byron, and Noel Keough 2008. "City Must Plan for a Sustainable Future." *Calgary Herald*, October 14.
- Miller, Byron, and Alan Smart. 2012. "Ascending the Main Stage? Calgary in the Multilevel Governance Drama." In *Sites of Governance: Multilevel Governance and Policymaking in Canada's Big Cities*, edited by Robert Young and Martin Horak, 26-52. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Milne, Alec. 2009. "Socialist Spectre." *Calgary Herald*, June 29.
- Molotch, Harvey. 1976. "The City as a Growth Machine: Toward a Political Economy of Place." *The American Journal of Sociology* 82, no. 2: 309-332
- . 1993. "The Political Economy of Growth Machines." *Journal of Urban Affairs* 15, no. 1: 30.
- Moore, Susan. 2013. "What's Wrong with Best Practice? Questioning the Typification of New Urbanism," *Urban Studies* 50, no. 11: 2371-2387.
- Morrison, Bob. 2009. "Building a Better City." *Calgary Herald*, May 11.
- Nelson, Chris. 2013. "Suburb Builders Feeling Squeezed," *Calgary Herald*, March 9.
- Nenshi, Naheed. 2009a. "Sixty Year Plan Better than Alternative." *Calgary Herald*, May 7.
- . 2009b. "Bridges to Political Engagement and Cynicism." *Calgary Herald*, June 18, 2009.
- . 2009c. "People Do Care about Their City, After All." *Calgary Herald*, July 2.
- . 2009d. "Give Calgarians Naheed Nenshi, What They Want – Plan It." *Calgary herald*, September 24.
- . 2009e. "Gutted Plan Mortgages the City's Future." *Calgary Herald*, October 8.
- . 2009f. "One Year to Go Before Possible Radical City Election." *Calgary Herald*, October 22.

- Neptis Foundation. 2010. *Growing Cities: Comparing Urban Growth Patterns and Regional Growth Policies in Calgary, Toronto, and Vancouver*. Toronto: Neptis Foundation.
- Neuman, Michael. 2005. "The Compact City Fallacy," *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 25, no. 1: 11-25.
- Newman, Peter, Timothy Beatley, and Heather Boyer. 2009. *Resilient Cities: Responding to Peak Oil and Climate Change*. Washington, DC: Island Press.
- Newman, Peter, and Jeffrey Kenworthy. 1999. *Sustainability and Cities: Overcoming Automobile Dependence*. Washington, DC: Island Press.
- Nkemdirim, Chima. 2009. "Great Expectations." *Calgary Herald*, November 2.
- Norval, Scott. 2008. "'Armageddon' in the Oil Patch." *Globe & Mail*, October 9.
- Peck, Jamie. 2005. "Struggling with the Creative Class." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 29, no. 4: 740-770.
- . 2011a. "Geographies of Policy: From Transfer-Diffusion to Mobility-Mutation." *Progress in Human Geography* 35, no. 6: 773-797.
- . 2011b. "Global Policy Models, Globalizing Poverty Management: International Convergence or Fast-Policy Integration?" *Geography Compass* 5, no. 4: 165-181.
- . 2011c. "Neoliberal Suburbanism – Frontier Space," *Urban Geography* 32, no. 6: 884-919.
- . 2012. Jamie Peck, "Recreative City: Amsterdam, Vehicular Ideas and the Adaptive Spaces of Creativity Policy." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 26, no. 3: 462-485.
- Peck, Jamie, Elliot Siemiatycki, and Elvin Wyly. 2014. "Vancouver's Suburban Involution." *City* 18, no.4-5: 386-415.
- Peck, Jamie, and Nik Theodore. 2010a. "Mobilizing Policy: Models, Methods, Mutations." *Geoforum* 41, no. 2: 169-174.
- . 2010b. "Recombinant Workfare, Across the Americas: Transnationalizing Fast Welfare Policy." *Geoforum* 41, no. 2: 195-208.
- . 2012. "Follow the Policy: A Distended Case Approach." *Environment and Planning A* 44, no.1: 21-30.
- Peck, Jamie and Adam Tickell. 1994. "Searching for a New Institutional Fix: The After-Fordist Crisis and the Global-Local Disorder." In *Post-Fordism: A Reader*, edited by Ash Amin, 280-315. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- . 1995. "Business Goes Local: Dissecting the Business Agenda' in Manchester." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 19, no. 1: 55-78.

- . 2002. "Neoliberalizing Space." *Antipode* 34, no. 3: 380-404.
- Peterson, Paul. 1981. *City Limits*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Pommer, Dave. 1997. "Move toward Denser Suburbs Worries Aldermen, Developers." *Calgary Herald*, March 24.
- . 1998. "Council Sends City Plan Back to Drawing Board." *Calgary Herald*, April 22.
- Prince, Russell. 2012. "Policy Transfer, Consultants and the Geographies of Governance." *Progress in Human Geography* 36, no.2: 188-203.
- Pringle, Bill. 2013. "Is a Suburban Development Freeze Coming?" *Calgary Herald*, March 13.
- Province of Alberta. 2010. *Municipal Government Act*. Edmonton: Province of Alberta.
- Purcell, Mark. 2009. "Resisting Neoliberalization: Communicative Planning or Counter-Hegemonic Movements?" *Planning Theory* 8, no. 2: 140-165.
- Raco, Mike. 2005. "Sustainable Development, Rolled-Out Neoliberalism and Sustainable Communities." *Antipode* 37, no. 2: 324-327.
- Raco, Mike, and Wen-I Lin. 2012. "Urban Sustainability, Conflict Management, and the Geographies of Postpoliticism: A Case Study of Taipei." *Environment and Planning C* 30, no. 2: 191-208.
- Reasons, Chuck. 1984. "Real Estate: The Land Grab." In *Stampede City: Power and Politics in the West*, edited by Chuck Reasons, 65-70. Toronto: Between the Lines.
- Reid, Burton. 1995. "Calgary: GoPlan – Looking into the Future." *New City Magazine*.
- Remington, Robert. 2009. "City Planning Pits Good Versus Evil." *Calgary Herald*, June 24.
- Ross, Andrew. 2011. *Bird on Fire: Lessons from the World's Least Sustainable City*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sandalack, Beverly, and Jim Dewald. 2007. "Density 'Magic Bullet' Needs Decoding." *Calgary Herald*, October 7.
- Sandalack, Beverly, and Andrei Nicolai. 2006. *The Calgary Project: Urban Form/Urban Life*. Calgary: University of Calgary Press.
- Schoenberger, Erica. 2007. "Politics and Practice: Becoming an Ethnographer." In *Politics and Practice in Economic Geography*, edited by Adam Tickell, Eric Sheppard, Jamie Peck, and Trevor Barnes, 27-37. London: Sage.
- Seymoar, Nola-Kate. 2004. *Planning for Long-Term Urban Sustainability: A Guide to Frameworks and Tools*. Vancouver: +30 Network.

- Smart, Alan. 2001. "Restructuring in a North American City: Labour Markets and Political Economy in Calgary." In *Plural Globalities in Multiple Localities: New World Borders*, edited by Martha Rees and Josephine Smart, 167-193. Lanham: University Press of America.
- Smart, Alan, and Tanasescu, Alina. 2014. "On Wanting to be a Global City: Global Rankings and Urban Governance in Calgary." In *City-Regions in Prospect? Exploring the Meeting Points Between Place and Practice*, edited by Kevin E. Jones, Alex Lord, and Rob Shields. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Stamp, Robert. 2004. *Suburban Modern: Postwar Dreams in Calgary*. Calgary: TouchWood Editions.
- Steinhart, David. 1995. "City Adopts Plan for Transit, Roads." *Calgary Herald*, May 30.
- Swyngedouw, Erik. 2007. "Impossible 'Sustainability' and the Postpolitical Condition." In *The Sustainable Development Paradox: Urban Political Economy in the United States and Europe*, edited by Rob Krueger and David Gibbs, 13-40. New York: Guilford Press.
- . 2009. "The Antinomies of the Postpolitical City: In Search of a Democratic Politics of Environmental Production." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 33, no. 3: 610-611.
- Taft, Kevin. 1997. *Shredding the Public Interest*. Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press and Parkland Institute.
- Temenos, Cristina, and Eugene McCann. 2012. "The Local Politics of Policy Mobility: Learning, Persuasion, and the Production of a Municipal Sustainability Fix." *Environment and Planning A* 44, no. 6: 1389-1406.
- . 2013. "Geographies of Policy Mobilities." *Geography Compass* 7, no. 5: 344-357.
- Thomas, Peter. 2009. *The Gramscian Moment: Philosophy, Hegemony and Marxism*. Leiden: Brill.
- Toronto Star*. 1987. "Carena-Bancorp to Buy 48% Stake in Carma Ltd." July 31.
- Tretter, Eliot. 2013a. "Contesting Sustainability: 'SMART Growth' and the Redevelopment of Austin's Eastside." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 31, no. 1: 297-310.
- . 2013b. "Sustainability and Neoliberal Urban Development." *Urban Studies* 50, no. 11: 2222-2237.
- Turner, Chris. 2007. "The Secret Greening of Calgary." *Globe & Mail*. September, 15.
- . 2010. "Calgary's New School." *Globe & Mail*, October 23.
- Wacquant, Loïc. 2002. "Scrutinizing the Street: Poverty, Morality, and the Pitfalls of Urban Ethnography." *American Journal of Sociology* 107, no. 6: 1468-1532.

- . 2009. *Prisons of Poverty*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Wainwright, Joel. 2013. "Gramsci's Conceptions of the World." In *Gramsci: Space, Nature, Politics*, edited by Michael Ekers, Gillian Hart, Stefan Kipfer, and Alex Loftus, 161-196. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Ward, Kevin. 2007. "Business Improvement Districts: Policy Origins, Mobile Policies and Urban Liveability." *Geography Compass* 2, no. 3: 657-672.
- Wente, Margaret. "Why Hogtown Envis Cowtown." *Globe & Mail*, October 21.
- Wheeler, Stephen. "Planning for Metropolitan Sustainability." *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 20, no. 2: 133-145.
- While, Aidan, Andrew Jonas, and David Gibbs. 2004. "The Environment and the Entrepreneurial City: Searching for the Urban 'Sustainability Fix' in Manchester and Leeds." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 28, no. 3: 549-569.
- White, Alexander. 2010. "Where is Montreal's Answer to Naheed Nenshi?" *The Montreal Gazette*, October 28.
- White, Richard. 2009. "Plan It Likely to Hike Prices." *Calgary Herald*, March 28.
- Williams, Raymond. 1976. *Keywords*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 1977. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 2005. *Culture and Materialism*. New York: Verso.
- Willis, Paul. 1977. *Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Wolfe, Jeanne. 2002. "Reinventing Planning: Canada." *Progress in Planning* 57: 207-235.
- Wong, Sandee. 2005. "Tool Forecasts City's Future." *Calgary Herald*, October 6.
- Wood, Patricia. 2003. "A Road Runs Through It: Aboriginal Citizenship at the Edge of Urban Development." *Citizenship Studies* 7, no. 4: 463-473.
- Young, Lisa, and Sam Austin. 2008. "Political Finance in City Elections: Toronto and Calgary Compared." *The Canadian Political Science Review* 2, no. 3: 88-102.
- Zieber, G.H. 1975. "Calgary as an Oil Administrative and Oil Operations Centre." In *Calgary: Metropolitan Structure and Influence*, edited by Benton Barr, 77-121. Victoria, BC: University of Victoria Press.

APPENDIX A: LIST OF INTERVIEWS

1. Former City of Calgary elected official, Sept. 25, 2012 (informant's home)
2. Community activist, Oct. 11, 2012 (café)
3. City of Calgary planner, Oct. 11, 2012 (café)
4. Former City of Calgary planning manager, Oct. 16, 2012 (café)
5. City of Calgary planner, Oct. 17, 2012 (meeting room in informant's office)
6. Former City of Calgary planning manager, Oct. 17, 2012 (informant's home)
7. Former Developer, Oct. 19, 2012 (informant's private office)
8. Former City of Calgary Planner, Dec. 12, 2012 (café)
9. Architect, Dec. 12, 2012 (meeting room in informant's office)
10. Former City of Calgary planning manager, Dec. 13, 2012 (café)
11. Former City of Calgary elected official, Dec. 14, 2012 (café)
12. City of Calgary planner, Dec. 17, 2012 (café)
13. City of Calgary planner, Dec. 19, 2012 (cafeteria at informant's workplace)
14. Developer, Dec. 21, 2012 (informant's private office)
15. Former City of Calgary planning manager, Dec. 22, 2012 (informant's home)
16. City of Calgary planner, Jan. 2, 2013 (informant's private office)
17. Community activist, Jan. 4, 2013 (informant's home)
18. Community activist, Jan. 5, 2013 (shopping mall food court)
19. Community activist, Jan. 6, 2013 (café)
20. Former City of Calgary planning manager, Mar. 25, 2013 (informant's home)
21. Former City of Calgary planner, Apr. 18, 2013 (meeting room at informant's office)