IMPLEMENTING SUSTAINABILITY IN SURREY: AMENDING THE EAST CLAYTON NEIGHBOURHOOD CONCEPT PLAN

by

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the implementation of the East Clayton Neighbourhood Concept Plan (NCP) in Surrey, B.C., between adoption of the NCP in 2003 and 2008. Created through a partnership project between the City of Surrey and the University of British Columbia, the NCP includes an implicit commitment to sustainability through seven planning principles. These sustainable planning principles were compromised by amendments to the NCP to enable developers to build more ‘marketable’ projects. This analysis looks at what type of amendments to the NCP were most prevalent, their cumulative impact in the neighbourhood as well as the sustainable planning principles affected. The NCP amendments are an example of the way the inherent conflict between land both as a social good and a private commodity is negotiated.

Keywords: Land development; sustainability, neighbourhood plan; Surrey, B.C.; municipal planning; implementation

Subject Terms: Sustainable development -- British Columbia -- Surrey.; City planning -- Environmental aspects -- British Columbia -- Surrey; Local government -- British Columbia.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2003 the City of Surrey, B.C., adopted a Neighbourhood Concept Plan (NCP) for East Clayton that enshrined seven sustainable planning principles to guide development. These sustainable planning principles were a departure from conventional land use planning in Surrey, which had historically followed a car-oriented suburban form. The NCP was also unique because the design process was a partnership between the City and the James Taylor Chair in Landscape and Livable Environments at the University of British Columbia.

Through personal experience as a planning consultant in Surrey, I saw the East Clayton NCP amended to enable developers to change the intended urban form. This amendment process crystallized the objections and constraints of planners and developers. I thought of their roles as existing on a continuum, with planners representing the public interest on one end and developers representing their own interests on the other. Along with this schematic, I used Richard Foglesong’s (1986) as the primary framework to analyze the amendments in East Clayton. Foglesong (1986) suggests that there in an inherent contradiction in capitalist urbanization stemming from the social character of land and its private ownership and control. Logan and Molotch’s (1987) “growth machine” also served as a secondary framework to address the political dimension of land use decisions by Council.
My research examined all of the NCP amendments from adoption of the plan in 2003 till 2008. I found the majority of amendments were to land use and density. I examined the impacts of these amendments individually and then cumulatively to uncover the dynamics between the intention and implementation of the NCP. Furthering my analysis I examined the impact of the amendments on the sustainable planning principles and found that the amendments permitted to land use and density altered the implementation of Principles One and Two.

Revisiting my analytical framework, I see amendments as a result of the inherent conflict arising from the social character of land and its private ownership and control. In East Clayton NCP, this conflict is realized through the amendments as the objectives of planners and developers are negotiated.

The East Clayton NCP was not implemented as intended. In many ways, developers changed the initial vision of a sustainable community in Surrey to realize profit. The amendment process may be the way that land development navigates a planning system with different fundamental objectives, but if the goal is ultimately sustainable development, a greater understanding of the obstacles to implementation must be appreciated.
For my grandmother Kathleen Doyle and her daughters, my role models.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My greatest appreciation to Dr. Geoff Mann for his guidance and support through this entire journey. Your class remains the most important and favourite in my academic career.

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My deepest gratitude to Ryan Preston-consummate teammate.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Approval .......................................................................................................................... ii
Abstract ......................................................................................................................... iii
Executive Summary ..................................................................................................... iv
Dedication .................................................................................................................... vi
Acknowledgements ..................................................................................................... vii
Table of Contents ........................................................................................................ viii
List of Figures ............................................................................................................... x
List of Tables ................................................................................................................. xi
Glossary ......................................................................................................................... xii
Introduction ................................................................................................................... 1
Context ........................................................................................................................... 3
  Why Surrey? ............................................................................................................... 3
  The Headwaters Project .............................................................................................. 5
  East Clayton NCP ......................................................................................................... 5
  The Development Market ............................................................................................ 7
  Planning Policy and Legislation .................................................................................. 8
  Small Lot Zones .......................................................................................................... 11
Defining a Framework for Analysis ............................................................................. 14
  Planning Objectives and Constraints ...................................................................... 16
  Development Objectives and Constraints ................................................................ 17
  Land as a Public Good and Private Commodity ....................................................... 18
  The Growth Machine ................................................................................................. 20
Primary Research ......................................................................................................... 23
  Methodology ............................................................................................................... 23
Results ............................................................................................................................ 26
  Types of Amendments ............................................................................................... 26
    Land Use .................................................................................................................. 26
    Cumulative Impact ................................................................................................. 30
    Density ...................................................................................................................... 31
    Cumulative Impact ................................................................................................. 33
  Politics and Public Hearings ....................................................................................... 35
Sustainable Planning Principles Affected .................................................................... 38
  Principle One .............................................................................................................. 39
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Housing Starts by Municipality 1996-2007 ............................................. 4
Figure 2: Sales to Active Listings Ratio in the Fraser Valley 2000-2008 .................. 7
Figure 3: Land Use Control Hierarchy ..................................................................... 10
Figure 4: Conceptual Continuum .............................................................................. 16
Figure 5: Land Area included in NCP Amendment Applications ......................... 35
Figure 6: Front and Rear-loaded Lots in East Clayton ........................................... 37
Figure 7: Land Use Maps from 2008 and 2003 ....................................................... 41
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Small Lot Zone Dimensions ................................................................. 13
Table 2: Amenity Differences Between Single Family Lots and Warehouse ...... 29
Table 3: Loss of Business Park ......................................................................... 31
Table 4: NCP Amendments Where Density Was Reduced .............................. 45
## GLOSSARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Official Community Plan (OCP)</strong></td>
<td>Statement of broad policies and objectives to guide city planning decisions. Designates general land use like commercial, industrial or residential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neighbourhood Concept Plan (NCP)</strong></td>
<td>Secondary land use plan to the OCP that provides more detailed land use and density, as well as the requirements for servicing, amenities and financing based on the principle of “developer pays.”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NCP Amendment</strong></td>
<td>To change a provision of the NCP. 'Major' amendments are those to land use, density or road network and require an additional public consultation process and a report to inform a Council decision. 'Minor' amendments are a limited change to a road or underground service that can be made at a staff level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comprehensive Development (CD) Zone</strong></td>
<td>A custom zone, its provisions are created to accommodate an individual development. Often based on a standard zone and altered to suit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Density</strong></td>
<td>The figure obtained when the total number of dwelling units constructed on a lot is divided by the total area of the lot. Usually expressed on a units per acre (u.p.a.) basis. In the East Clayton NCP, a range of densities is specified for one type of designation (e.g., “Medium Density” = 10-15 u.p.a.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Surrey File Number (SFN)</strong></td>
<td>The number given to land development applications in the City of Surrey (i.e. 7903-1234-00). Could include many parcels of assembled land (providing they are contiguous) and several types of land use.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Planning Report  Report written by municipal planning staff to Council informing them of context and issues for development applications that require Council decision for approval.

Coach House  A second dwelling unit that is separate from and accessory to the single family dwelling on the lot and is located either above a garage or at grade attached to a garage at the rear of the single family dwelling.
INTRODUCTION

This is a study of the implementation of a Neighbourhood Concept Plan (NCP) in Surrey, B.C. More specifically, it is a study of how principles of sustainability as defined by the NCP differ when implemented through the land development process. The plan I will analyze is the East Clayton NCP, adopted in March 2003. The East Clayton NCP was an innovative plan for the City of Surrey as it was the first with an explicit, formal commitment to sustainable planning. Developed in partnership with the James Taylor Chair in Landscape and Livable Environments at the University of British Columbia, the plan enshrines seven sustainable planning principles and envisions the neighbourhood as a complete community. It's adoption by Council sanctioned redevelopment in a mostly rural residential area, and given the frenetic housing market at that time, the volume of development applications was significant over a short period of time.

It is possible to alter land use or density from the NCP designation, but the developer has to go through an NCP amendment process. This is set by the City to ensure due diligence with regard to the proposed changes, and requires approval by Council and an opportunity for public comment at a hearing. Given the significance that changes to a plan can have on our urban landscape, analysis of these amendments is critical. Using the seven sustainable planning principles as a framework, I examine the amendments made to the NCP between
adoption in March 2003 and March 2008 that alter the implementation of the seven sustainable planning principles. I do not measure the amendments in terms of their impact on sustainability but ask whether the principles, as defined in the NCP, were implemented as intended.
Why Surrey?

The spur to my interest in this question is my experience at the intersection of land development and urban planning practice. I worked as a planning consultant in Surrey between 2004 and 2007. The majority of this work involved representing developers, managing land development approvals projects. This entailed acting as an advocate in rezoning, subdivision and Official Community Plan (OCP) and NCP amendments. The majority of my work was in Surrey during a period of unprecedented residential growth.

Examining the implementation of land development in Surrey is important for several reasons. First, land development in Surrey is relevant to a larger discussion about the region. Surrey has developed extremely quickly and the city is playing a larger role in regional politics and economics. Figure 1 shows the number of housing starts in Lower Mainland municipalities from the 1996 to 2007. It shows not only the increase in housing starts in the early-mid 90’s but the number of starts in Surrey and Vancouver compared to other municipalities. Clearly, Surrey is not only a significant force in the local housing economy, but comparable to Vancouver.
With Surrey’s importance and the unavoidable comparison with Vancouver, the Surrey’s land development policies have been the object of scrutiny. With a legacy of car-oriented developments, separated land uses and unsustainable road networks, it will be difficult for Surrey to implement more sustainable planning principles. The challenge is common to many North American cities originally built for the car. Despite current planning emphasis on sustainable, compact development, many suburban municipalities have continued on the trajectory of unsustainable single-family housing and car-oriented commercial centres.

The East Clayton plan was, in some ways, a response by a suburban municipality to unsustainable development. In 2003, the City championed the NCP as “the first sustainable community in Surrey” (Headwaters Project, 2003),
but at that point it was only a plan, with no applications in-stream at the planning and development department, and no new construction.

**The Headwaters Project**

The Headwaters is one of the projects sponsored by the James Taylor Chair in Landscapes and Livable Environments at the University of B.C. It brought together multiple partners, including the City of Surrey, to produce a model for alternative development standards and design the East Clayton NCP. The design process involved charettes representing many stakeholders with a wide range of interests: development, environmental agencies, planning, and the residents of East Clayton.

**East Clayton NCP**

The East Clayton NCP was a clear choice for my analysis for two key reasons. First is the public profile the plan received. A collaboration between the City of Surrey and the University of British Columbia’s (UBC) James Taylor Chair in Landscape and Liveable Environments, it was lauded as a “real-life demonstration of sustainable development principles and performance standards in a community neighbourhood environment” (Headwaters Project, 2008). In 2004, while working as a planning consultant in Surrey, I attended a lecture by UBC’s Patrick Condon promoting the plan’s virtues. What struck me at the time was much of the area that the NCP described had yet to be developed. How could one be so sure that the plan would be implemented as intended? This research is the result of personal and professional interest in development in
Surrey. The other key reason for choosing the East Clayton NCP is that this plan included Seven Sustainable Planning Principles for the first time in a City of Surrey plan (City of Surrey, 2003). These principles provide a clear framework for analysis.

**Principle No. 1**  
*Conserve land and energy by designing compact walkable neighbourhoods.* This will encourage pedestrian activities where basic services (e.g., schools, parks, transit, shops, etc.) are within a five- to six-minute walk of their homes.

**Principle No. 2**  
*Provide different dwelling types* (a mix of housing types, including a broad range of densities from single family homes to apartment buildings) in the same neighbourhood and even on the same street.

**Principle No. 3**  
*Communities are designed for people; therefore, all dwellings should present a friendly face to the street in order to promote social interaction.*

**Principle No. 4**  
*Ensure that car storage and services are handled at the rear of dwellings.*

**Principle No. 5**  
*Provide an interconnected street network*, in a grid or modified grid pattern, to ensure a *variety of itineraries* and to disperse traffic congestion; and provide public transit to connect East Clayton with the surrounding region.

**Principle No. 6**  
*Provide narrow streets shaded by rows of trees in order to save costs and to provide a greener, friendlier environment.*

**Principle No. 7**  
*Preserve the natural environment and promote natural drainage systems* (in which storm water is held on the surface and permitted to seep naturally into the ground).
These principles guide the plan, and define what Surrey prioritizes as sustainable. Clearly, this definition is useful in the analysis of the implementation of the principles and the impact of their amendment.

The Development Market

During the period in question (2003-2008), the residential housing market in Surrey rose rapidly, creating conditions where demand far exceeded supply. This “seller’s market” contributed to frenzied sales and a steep increase in prices.

Figure 2: Sales to Active Listings Ratio in the Fraser Valley 2000-2008

This type of demand is important for several reasons. First is the impact on redevelopment in East Clayton. The NCP is the tool with which the City of Surrey endorses redevelopment. Before adoption of the NCP, East Clayton was primarily a rural residential community; policy and legislative frameworks did not
support redevelopment. The NCP essentially gave developers a blueprint for development; coupled with rising housing market, a flood of applications ensued. Any analysis of the marketability of a new sustainable suburban community has to consider this. John Titus, a real estate agent that handled sales for an East Clayton development in was quoted in the Vancouver Sun (2003): saying “...in a market this hot, you can’t tell whether sustainability will sell homes or not”. The second way the housing market affects this analysis is it’s impact on developers and their risk management. Given the multitude of issues involved in a housing project as well as political, market and financial conditions, there is a large degree of risk in land development. “Risk is the very business of property development, and uncertainty the prevailing climate within which development takes place” (Ratcliffe, Stubbs & Shepard, 2002). The market conditions between 2003 and 2008 certainly increased the developer's profit margin, but also demonstrated which housing form sold best. Developers continuously drive to reduce their risk, and one way to do this is to replicate the most profitable products. The uncertainty associated with the new sustainability requirements together with a high demand for single-family housing influenced developers’ housing choices.

Planning Policy and Legislation

A hierarchy of planning policy and legislation determines land use in the City of Surrey. At the broadest scale is the Official Community Plan (OCP), which designates general land use, like residential or commercial- and sets wide-ranging policy. To change the OCP provisions, an OCP amendment is required.
Such an amendment is significant because there are many options for development under OCP designation. For example, an “urban residential” designation could include high-rise towers, apartment buildings, townhouses, row houses, and small lot single family development. The requirements for OCP amendment are similar to NCP amendment in that both require a rationale from the developer and a public meeting.

The next level of policy is the NCP. These plans designate the type of land use at a finer grain, specifying a range of densities within a type of land use. NCPs also provide Surrey’s engineering plans for the neighbourhood, detailing road and servicing requirements. Each range of densities (i.e. 10-15 units per acre) is compatible with several zones that could accommodate the range. The provisions of an NCP are changed by an NCP amendment. Finally, at the final scale the provisions of the zoning bylaw outline exact requirements. Zoning can be changed in two ways. First, a designation can be changed by a rezoning, and second, the specific provisions of a particular zone can be changed by a development variance permit, or DVP. Figure 3 shows the hierarchy of municipal land use control, and, in parentheses, the mechanism for change at each level.
Figure 3: Land Use Control Hierarchy

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN
(OCP Amendment)

NEIGHBOURHOOD CONCEPT PLAN
(NCP Amendment)

ZONING BYLAW
(Rezoning, DVP)

Of the applications to change planning policy and legislation in East Clayton, NCP amendments were the most prevalent. (Changes to the OCP and zoning bylaw were not included in my analysis as their importance was either captured by the NCP amendment or too detailed to have any impact (for example, a change to the sign bylaw)). There are two types of NCP amendments: major and minor. The City defines a major NCP amendment in the OCP as one that changes the major road network, land use designation or density. In my research, examining the changes to land use and density was important because these two features address specifically what the municipality designates for development through the specifications of the NCP. They are integral in defining the form and character of a neighbourhood, particularly so for
the East Clayton NCP because they are critical components of its vision of sustainable community.

**Small Lot Zones**

Another essential component in the development of the East Clayton neighbourhood was the new small lot zone policy of the City of Surrey, adopted 17 January 2000. As outlined above, the East Clayton NCP promoted a new vision for land development in Surrey. While the Official Community Plan and other larger-scope planning policies may have supported goals similar to those of the East Clayton NCP, existing implementation tools (like zoning) were not easily utilized. For example, the smallest single-family lot permitted before the introduction of small lot zones was 560 sq.m., compared to a small lot zone of 220 sq.m. The small lot policy recognized the restrictions 560 sq.m minimum had on the variety of allowed development and began the process of introducing and eventually adopting the smaller zones. The small lot zones were critical for the implementation specific design features of the East Clayton NCP, but also had implications for amendments and development of the whole neighbourhood, as well as the rest of Surrey.

The small lot policy introduced four new types of zones. The first two adopted by Council, RF-9 (and RF-9C) and RF-12 (and RF-12C) arguably had the most impact on the East Clayton neighbourhood. The numbers 9 and 12 represent the minimum lot width (in metres) of each zone type; 'C' represents the ability to include a coach house on the lot. While significantly smaller than the existing single-family zone (see Table 1), the new zones also had elements of
sustainable planning principles’ like those outlined in the East Clayton NCP. Two provisions in particular entrench the sustainable planning principles in these zones. The first is reduced front yard setbacks (see Table 1). This enables the third planning principle, having a ‘friendly face to the street’. Reduced front yard setbacks bring the entrance to the house closer to the street, enabling more interaction. If there is a front porch on the lot, front yard setbacks are reduced even further. The second provision is narrower minimum lot width than conventionally permitted. This is a way to increase the density of single-family neighbourhoods while maintaining fee simple ownership. This desired compact nature is addressed by the first planning principle. Additionally, with such narrow frontages, these lots are much more conducive to a grid pattern than to the conventional suburban cul-de-sac. Narrow frontages require much deeper lots in order to ensure minimum lot areas. Additionally, in the RF-9 zone, vehicle access is restricted to the rear of the house. This also encourages a grid street network (lanes behind cul-de-sacs are difficult), specifically addressing the fourth planning principle, ensuring that car storage is handled in the rear of the dwelling.
Table 1: Small Lot Zone Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Width</th>
<th>Depth</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Front Yard Setback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RF</td>
<td>15 m.</td>
<td>28 m.</td>
<td>560 sq. m.</td>
<td>7.5 m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RF 9/9C</td>
<td>7.9*-13.8 m.</td>
<td>22-28 m.</td>
<td>220-285 sq.m.</td>
<td>3.5 m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RF-12</td>
<td>12-15.4 m.</td>
<td>22-26 m.</td>
<td>320-375 sq..</td>
<td>6.0 m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Although the smallest lot width is 9m., there is a provision in the zone for reduced lot width, creating 7.9 m. lot widths.

Source: City of Surrey Zoning Bylaw

While small lot zones are an important tool in implementing the sustainable planning policies of the NCP, they also have a significant impact on land development in Surrey. While the zones were introduced for East Clayton, their use was prolific through the rest of the city. While East Clayton was the only plan that allowed for small lot zones in the NCP, they were used in other neighbourhoods with tremendous frequency. With the introduction of the East Clayton NCP and the small lot policy and zones, the City announced to shift its commitment to sustainability through planning policy and legislation. These two processes embodied Surrey’s commitment to more sustainable development, but they are vulnerable to amendment through the development of individual properties, and not always enforced.
DEFINING A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

Working in Surrey and being interested in sustainable development often found me ruminating on the existing process of land development. Integral to this thinking was the challenge of implementing more sustainable development, the enormity of which must be confronted in a transition from historically car-oriented suburbs. The technical mechanics of implementing policies and engineering standards that incorporate sustainable development are significant in themselves. The unique challenges associated with shifting from car-oriented suburbs have to be coupled with a political momentum critical to initiate change. This challenge is further exacerbated by the difficulty of defining sustainable development, a contested concept in itself.

As discussed above, Surrey is negotiating a future different from its legacy of separated land uses and car-oriented transportation infrastructure. In many ways, the adoption of the East Clayton NCP embodies this negotiation by creating the policy and legislation to support sustainable principles. To deconstruct and analyze the implementation of the NCP, I began to think of the planning and development processes on parallel continua. I created Figure 4: Conceptual Continuum, to organize the ideas and present them schematically.

On one continuum is plan development and implementation process. Municipal planners, and in the case of East Clayton, the Headwaters Project, use a variety of tools to envision land use, transportation, housing and industry for a
community. This process is codified through OCPs and NCPs and enables a
structure for development. On the other end of the continuum are private
developers, using plans and policies as a framework to develop. This is
illustrated in the diagram as theory and practice on each polarity of the
continuum.

Another continuum describes the interests and motivations of both
planners and developers. Planners by definition have a responsibility to serve
the public interest (PIBC, 2008); regulating and providing for growth. While not
exclusively the case, developers are actors in the private market, producing a
product and selling it for profit. This interest lies at the other end of the
continuum from that of planners. Anecdotally, I saw the relationship between
planners and developers as sometimes antagonistic, as both try to advance their
interests. If the goal then is to see communities built within our current political
and economic systems, planners and developers and the interests they promote
are integral to each other’s success. It is this dynamic, between planning and
developing, that interests me most. Individual development applications where a
developer brings a proposal to the municipality for approval is the site at which
both players engage, and, I think, at which the switching from one polarity to the
other on the continuum happens. My research takes place in this conceptual
space. Given the importance of the outcomes of this dynamic— the places we
live, work and play— understanding and improving the basis of this relationship
could yield more sustainable development.
Planning Objectives and Constraints

Planning theory is a diverse and constantly evolving field, and understanding the disciplines ideas and motives is a crucial step toward understanding my conceptual framework. Campbell and Fainstein (2003), argue that serving the public interest is the theme of the defining debates of planning theory. "The central task of planners is serving the public interest in cities, suburbs and the countryside. Questions of when, why, and how planners should intervene—and the constraints they face in the process—all lead back to defining and serving the public interest, even while it's not static or fixed" (Campbell & Fainstein, 2003, p. 13). An examination of the motivations of planners, or the planning theory behind the East Clayton NCP, is beyond the scope of this work; however, this definition of planning does give a cursory glance at the motivations of planners on the left side of the conceptual continuum (Figure 4). This strengthens the parameters of the "space" where my research and analysis takes place.

While it may shift slightly away from the conceptual to the practical, some understanding of the constraints on planners in the land development process is
useful in approaching this research. Planners may work with a variety of stakeholders during plan formation and have some autonomy in their efforts to reconcile diverse interests, but they are more constrained by governmental bureaucracy and prevailing economic conditions in implementation. “Thus, despite the planning ideal of a holistic, proactive vision, planners are frequently restricted to playing frustratingly reactive, regulatory roles” (Campbell & Fainstein, 2003, pg. 8). In East Clayton, for example, some development applications were not supported by municipal planning staff but nevertheless approved by Council. While planners are charged with the task of reconciling the goals of many, and serving the public interest, they are disenfranchised by political and economic constraints.

Development Objectives and Constraints

At the other end of my conceptual continuum are the objectives and constraints of land development. The objectives of development are simple: to create a product and sell it for a profit. It may satisfy individual actors in the development process to influence the built form, or create a particular design aesthetic, but for the purposes of this paper, the primary objective of developers is maximizing profit. To do this, they have to negotiate a host of constraints in implementing the intended form and creating a product. The constraints include the planning controls by the municipal approving authority like the zoning bylaw or NCP, the demand for housing, construction trades and material costs, and consultant fees. This paper focuses on planning controls, but the discussion cannot avoid the aforementioned constraints involved in a development project.
Despite the challenges of creating a product for sale, the profit incentives are compelling enough to risk it. “Developers have a natural interest to comply with planning controls insofar as they can enhance property values to the point in which the marginal values equal marginal costs” (Lai et al., 2007, p.537). Consequently, the difficulties of amending an NCP are undertaken because the opportunity for profit is significant.

**Land as a Public Good and Private Commodity**

At the very core of the conflict I am trying to conceptualize is what Richard E. Foglesong terms the “central contradiction of capitalist urbanization [or land development]: the contradiction between the social character of land and its private ownership and control” (Foglesong, 1986, p. 104). He expounds on this idea with two further contradictions that influence urban planning and development. The “property contradiction” describes the need for urban planning to facilitate the reproduction of labour while being simultaneously threatened and restrained by capitalism. That is, capital has an interest in socializing the control of land so that housing can be built and roads and transit systems can be used to reproduce labour and facilitate production. Simultaneously, Foglesong (1986) points out that the institution of private property stands as an impediment to attempts to socialize the control of land. Foglesong uses Lamarche’s (1977) term “property capital” to identify a group of capitalists to whom the social control of land is a particular threat, like real estate developers or contractors. In East Clayton, it is precisely this group that opposes efforts to control development through the NCP. While this conflict is inherent in urban planning, Foglesong’s
(1986) "property contradiction" assumes that capitalism is capable of coping with this contradiction, within limits, but that it is a continuing source of tension and a breeding ground of political conflict" (p. 104). Similarly, my conceptualization of the continuum of planning and land development (Figure 4) illustrates a tension. Where this tension is most engaged is during the land development application process, where developers apply to the City for planning approval. In my continuum this tension is where planning transitions to development. It is this transition that defines the conceptual space of my research.

Foglesong's second contradiction affecting urban planning is the "capitalist-democracy contradiction". This paradox describes, on one hand, capitalism's need for socialized or government controlled land in order to develop property, and on the other, the danger of truly socializing land where "the more populous body of non-owners" (Foglesong, 1986, p. 105) would be empowered. This describes the struggle in East Clayton exactly. In order to redevelop a neighbourhood, an NCP has to be adopted to control the type of growth. This encourages developers to make applications to the City for planning approval. While the NCP enables development, developers do not want the requirements of the NCP to be too restrictive. In many ways, this exemplifies the forced relationship I saw between municipal planners and developers in Surrey. Foglesong see this sometimes antagonistic relationship as an inevitable product of the inherent contradictions in urban planning.
The Growth Machine

For me, Foglesong's research addresses the discipline of urban planning and its interaction with capital. It also reinforces the connection between land development and greater economic trends, or that individual land use decisions have an impact on the production of labour and capital. This does not account for the political realities of land use decisions in a local government. While the objectives of municipal planners and developers may be in opposition, there is a literature that identifies politicians or local elites and developers as complicitous. While much early literature is in response to pluralist conceptualizations (Banfield, 1961; Dahl, 1961) of local politics and decision making (Manley, 1983; Stone, 1980), the critique stressed the subordination of the state and politics to capital accumulation and the market. David Harvey (1985) builds on this analysis and suggests that the state has a dependence on private investment for public revenues. This is critical for the East Clayton example as it recognizes the importance of land development investment and revenue and the way that external economic conditions can shape and influence local politics.

Another important theory to consider in a framework for East Clayton is the concept of the "growth machine" (Logan and Molotch, 1987). While there is a large literature on the growth machine theory, the idea is that development is universally good as it increases cultural opportunities for residents, expands the tax base, and creates jobs (Troutman, 2004). While Logan and Molotch (1987) can counter the argument that growth is always a good thing, they write that it is
perpetuated by local elite groups maintains systemic inequality. "For those who count, the city is a growth machine, one that can increase aggregate rents and trap related wealth for those in the right position to benefit" (Logan and Molotch, 1987, p. 50). Their theory further discusses the ways that local elites are able to use government activity and land to make money. The adoption of the East Clayton NCP made the City, politicians, developers and land owners a lot of money. The City increased its tax base through the new development as well as fees and charges through the approval process. Many politicians saw campaign contributions increase as a result of working actively to promote East Clayton as a place to develop. Developers and land owners directly benefited by selling and developing land in the neighbourhood.

The ideas of the growth machine and those of the neo-Marxists and structuralists convey a certain economic determinism on the processes of land development that allows for little flexibility for political processes or actors to disrupt the accumulation of capital (Mollenkopf, 1994). In East Clayton this is evident in the approval of projects by Council contrary to the NCP, and against the recommendation of staff. I acknowledge the growth machine and neo-Marxist literature as relevant in terms of the political dimension in the conflict between the state and capital and an introduction to decision-making in local governments. However, my research is about the difference between the East Clayton NCP in intention and implementation and given the scope of this paper, these analyses will play a minor role compared to Foglesong.
A conceptual framework helps to organize the parameters of where my research takes place. This framework has evolved from a continuum that illustrates the temporal aspects of land development, but also to show the polarities in the theoretical underpinnings between planning and development. Foglesong’s work helps to orient the East Clayton example in a more developed theoretical framework, but does not adequately address the relationship between political power and larger economic forces in land development. The literature on the growth machine, developed from a largely Marxist analysis, is compelling when used to view the actions of Council in East Clayton. However, given the focus on the NCP itself, and its implementation, Foglesong provides a more useful framework as it addresses urban planning more specifically. I have undoubtedly simplified the complexities of the approaches and processes discussed here, so as to identify a space in which NCPs and their significance in a larger discussion of urban planning can be adequately understood.
PRIMARY RESEARCH

My research involved analyzing applications to amend the East Clayton NCP between adoption in March 2003 and March 2008. During this period it could be expected that some development had occurred or enough that there would be some amendments to the plan.

Methodology

In order to identify which amendments affected the way the seven sustainability principles were realized, and to focus on a specific sub-set for analysis, I collected all of the planning reports for all of the applications to amend the East Clayton Plan. I primarily used the City of Surrey's Council Information Site, or “FilePro” website, which contains all the public information that goes to Council for a decision, including accompanying background information and the subsequent decision. This can include planning reports, meeting agendas, committee reports, meeting decisions and minutes. The City of Surrey mandates that NCP amendments go to Council classified as “minor” and “major.” A minor amendment proposes changes to local roads, or walkway locations. A major amendment proposes changes to major road networks, land use or density of the NCP (City of Surrey, 2006). The decisions concerning minor amendments are made by planning staff and not brought forward to Council. Council (with staff recommendations) decides on major amendments as part of a rezoning process. As the minor amendments are often dealt with at the staff level, and therefore not
posted on the FilePro site, they are impossible to track, so I focus on major amendments here.

With these temporal, geographic and major NCP amendment parameters in mind, I collected all of the planning reports for all major amendments made to the East Clayton NCP. Planning reports were a starting point for my research because they outline the decisions required from Council, the context and history of the project, the development data (land use, area of development, density etc.), staff recommendations and the developer’s rationale for the amendment. I examined the corresponding Council decisions and minutes to determine if Council adopted staff recommendations and any comments made during the public hearing relevant to the amendment.

In the City of Surrey, an NCP amendment has to go through three readings of the bylaw and a public hearing (as mandated by the Local Government Act). To examine the data, I built a spreadsheet that included the following fields for each NCP amendment application.

- Surrey Project Number
- Number of Lots/Units
- NCP Amendment: land use before and after
- Staff Recommendation
- Council Approval

Preliminary analysis showed that almost all of the amendments varied the plan’s land use or density requirements. To focus my analysis, then, I look at only the applications that applied to vary land use or density.
In terms of analysis I measured:

1. The type of land uses and range of densities, pre- and post-amendment.
2. The cumulative impact of amendments on land uses and densities of the East Clayton neighbourhood.

These measures inform the analysis of the implementation of the seven sustainable planning principles.
RESULTS

After gathering all of the information, I reviewed the type of amendments and saw that of the types of major amendment applications—land-use, road network, density—made between 2003 and 2008, the majority regarded land use and density. Consequently, my research measures what kind of land use and density amendment applications were made in East Clayton, as well as the cumulative impact of these amendments in the neighbourhood.

Types of Amendments

Of 23 major NCP amendments in East Clayton, 22 altered the intended land use or density. Of these, four amended land use designation and 17 amended density. All such amendments have a prescribed participation process beyond the bylaw's public hearing. The developer or applicant has to provide a planning rationale for the changes. These are both outlined in the planning report that staff presents to council for the first reading of the bylaw for the amendment.

Land Use

Amending intended land use in an NCP is a considerable undertaking, as it changes the very essence of what the City planning department intended for the area: building housing where a shopping centre was designated, for example. The Headwaters Project website gives considerable weight to the intensive plan
creation process for East Clayton and to the assurance that it will have all the components of a sustainable community. “East Clayton will be a place where: houses are affordable, transit is accessible, commercial services are readily available, and natural systems are preserved and enhanced.” (Headwaters Project, 2008)

Such an overt commitment to sustainable planning principles might lead one to assume that adherence to the land use designations is an important part of implementing the plan. By focusing on amendments, this analysis illustrates how implementation differs from intention. To demonstrate the complexities of an application to amend the land use designation in East Clayton, I outline one application in detail before looking at the cumulative impact of land use amendments in the neighbourhood.

Perhaps the most significant land use amendment in terms of total land area is the development applied for by BFW Developments Ltd., located at approximately Fraser Highway and 188th Street. The application (Surrey File Number 7905-0137-00) included 4.5 hectares (11 acres) of assembled parcels. The application was to amend the intended land use designation for portions of the site from “Business Park” and “Open Space/Park on Private Property” to “Special Residential” (“Special Residential” is a small lot zone that includes the provision for certain types of home-based business like hair-dresser or accountant). The application also included a rezoning to subdivide the assembled parcels into 76 single family small lots and five large lots. The area of
land re-designated from business park to special residential is approximately one acre (0.4 hectare).

The business park designation is an important one for the East Clayton neighbourhood. In fulfilling the intentions of the neighbourhood to be a complete community, and have one job available for every dwelling unit (Headwaters Project, 2008), losing any land designated for commercial or industrial uses is a concern. There is only one area in the neighbourhood designated “Business Park”. Presumably, because of the value attributed to a range of employment opportunities within the community, BFW Developments Ltd. was required to provide a planning rationale for the changes. (This was provided in a planning report that outlines positive and negative aspects of the application from staff to Council.) In this application, three negative aspects of the application were noted in the planning report (Surrey 2006).

1. While not overly significant, the proposed amendments, if approved, will further reduce the amount of Industrial designated lands in the City.
2. The continuing loss of industrial lands to residential uses erodes the City’s ability to promote itself as a place for sustainable employment and livelihood.
3. The loss of industrial lands will reinforce the City’s heavy reliance on residential taxes as a primary source of income.

Interestingly, while the second point addresses employment in a sustainable city, there is no mention of the sustainability principles of the East Clayton plan.
The planning report written by staff also included a list of positive aspects of the project. There were several larger-scale questions about land use, but more mention of the fine-grain intricacies of urban development in a city. The applicant maintained that opportunities for employment are not entirely lost because of the amendment because of resident's ability to have a business in their homes. Overall, though, the applicant's rationale for the amendment seemed to address the intricacies of land development, rather than planning principles. For example, as a condition of rezoning, the planning report suggested that the proposal would facilitate the road construction of 189 Street which may assist in the development of a business park. Perhaps the most compelling argument from the developer was the substantial increase ($311,099) in fees and charges from residential development as opposed to industrial or commercial. Table 2 is an excerpt from the planning report written for this application. Under the intended designation, BFW would have paid $62,336 to the City for development cost charges (DCC). Under the proposed designation, the developer paid $373,435 in DCCs, a significant increase.

### Table 2: Amenity Differences Between Single Family Lots and Warehouse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use Based on Site Area (1.43 acres) Being Re-designated</th>
<th>Potential NCP Amenity Contributions, Based on 2006 Rates</th>
<th>DCC Payments, Based on 2005 Rates</th>
<th>Total Monies Paid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23 Single Family Lots</td>
<td>$27,998</td>
<td>$345,437</td>
<td>$373,435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warehouse/Retail Use</td>
<td>$1,767</td>
<td>$60,569</td>
<td>$62,336</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Based on $1,217/RF-9S lot and $1,233/acre of Non-Residential use
2 Based on $15,019/RF-9S lot and $42,356/acre of Industrial use
This focus on the mechanics of financing and development parallels the assumptions underpinning my conceptual continuum. The planning report focuses on broad land use policies, and the rationale for developer's amendment on the financing. Additionally, it seems that the applicant's rationale appears to be based on conditional 'what if' statements (Surrey, 2006).

190 Street is expected to be extended to the south (with the southerly alignment to be protected by a statutory right-of-way), ultimately connecting to 66 Avenue. This will provide a more efficient connection between the residential developments to the north and the planned transit facility at 192 Street and Fraser Highway. With the road in place in the future, the Open Space/Park in Private Property designation on the subject site and the adjacent lands may no longer be required, affording more lands for business park development.

While the provision for a home-based business exists, it remains to be seen if this designation will yield the type of live-work dynamic intended in the plan.

Cumulative Impact

Perhaps one of the most significant aspects of the approved amendment to land use in the NCP is the precedent set for surrounding developments. If one application is approved, the interface with adjacent developments and the impact on overall planning can be significant. In the case of the BFW development at 188 Street and Fraser Highway, the approved application had a critical impact on adjacent properties. It elicited three additional applications to amend the Business Park designation to the Special Residential designations. All of these
properties were immediately adjacent to the BFW application, and all were subsequently approved (See Table 3).

Consequently, there was a cumulative loss of light industrial and business park land in East Clayton. Table 3 shows the cumulative land area lost due to these amendments.

Table 3: Loss of Business Park

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>File Nos.</th>
<th>Portions of Site Designated Business Park</th>
<th>Amount of Lands being re-designated to Special Residential</th>
<th>Net Business Park Designated Lands</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7905-0137-00</td>
<td>4.5 ha. (11 acres)</td>
<td>0.38 ha. (0.94 acre)</td>
<td>4.12 ha. (10 acres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7906-0099-00</td>
<td>1.4 ha. (3.5 acres)</td>
<td>0.20 ha. (0.49 acre)</td>
<td>1.2 ha. (3.0 acres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7906-0255-00</td>
<td>1.53 ha. (3.8 acres)</td>
<td>0.10 ha. (0.25 acre)</td>
<td>1.43 ha. (3.5 acres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7905-0384-00</td>
<td>1.16 ha. (2.9 acres)</td>
<td>0.39 ha. (1.0 acre)</td>
<td>0.76 ha. (1.9 acres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8.59 ha. (21.2 acres)</td>
<td>1.07 ha. (2.6 acres)</td>
<td>7.51 ha. (18.6 acres)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: City of Surrey Planning and Development Department (7905-0384-00)

The cumulative total of land re-designated is 2.6 acres (1.07 hectares), which accounts for approximately 12% of the total area available for business park or light industrial uses. As of December 2008, none of the business park uses have been developed or built in East Clayton.

Density

The other type of major NCP amendment I examine is the application to change the density of a piece of property. An NCP does not specifically designate a zone in the plan. It usually specifies a range of acceptable densities, and several zones fall into that range. For example, a density of 22-45 units per acre (u.p.a.) might allow for several different types of apartment buildings or
townhouse developments. While an amendment affecting density normally does not differ from the plan as dramatically as one to change land use, it can significantly alter the intended urban form. For example, both an apartment building and a single-family house would be considered the same land use, but have very different density. To examine the complexities involved with NCP amendments to the intended density in East Clayton, let us examine one application in detail before looking at the cumulative impact of density amendments in the neighbourhood.

Surrey File Number 7903-0182-00 was one of the first development applications made to Council in the East Clayton neighbourhood after the NCP was adopted in March of 2003. It was also one of the first to apply to amend all levels of the City’s planning legislation and policy processes. The application was for 2.75 acres (1.1 hectares) of land at approximately 189 Street and 71 Avenue. The NCP that Council adopted in March designated most of the subject site as “High Density,” or 22-45 units per acre; a zone that could accommodate apartment buildings over 5 storeys. The applicant proposed to decrease the density to “Medium,” or 10-15 units per acre. This designation would change the NCP’s intent significantly, as it accommodates single family lots ranging from 3000-5000 sq.ft. (283 to 476 sq.m.). While the land tenure in this particular development was strata titled (like a condominium development, common spaced is owned by the strata and there are no fee simple lots), the development is based on setbacks and house sizes similar to the small lot zones. As per City requirements, the planning report outlines the reasoning for the change. The
rationale included the success of a similar type project in the neighbourhood (demonstrating a need for such housing), and the fact that other applications in the immediate vicinity had successfully amended the NCP to a small lot type density.

It is interesting to note the project was proposed as a Comprehensive Development (CD) zone, rather than one of the existing standard zones. A CD zone enables the developer to create the specifications of a zone to suit the development. In this case many of the setbacks and requirements of the small lot zone were used, but some of the provisions for more sustainable planning features built into the small lot zones were not included. For example, car access was in the front, there were no lanes, and front yard setbacks were increased—similar to more conventional suburban development. I see this as a manipulation of the intent of the NCP. The developer has used the features that yield greater density while removing those that incorporate the sustainability principles. Also of note is the rationale for the plan amendment to include a commitment by the developer to pay the amenity shortfall to the City coffers. The successful amendment from apartment densities to small lot single family reduced the amount of money anticipated by the city from developers, creating an amenity shortfall, which the developer offered to pay as part of the rationale for the change.

Cumulative Impact

While each land development application to amend intended density can be individually rationalized, it is important to examine cumulative impact. From
March 2003 to March 2008, approximately 34.8 hectares (88.5 acres) of land were included in applications to amend the NCP. Figure 5 illustrates the geographic extent of the NCP amendments with the amendments depicted as turquoise area within the NCP area (red polygon). These amendments, while potentially yielding the intended density for the parcel, reduce the amount of housing choice and the diversity of housing stock.
Politics and Public Hearings

Any analysis of NCP amendments must include mention of the political process. While planning staff make recommendations of support or denial, Council makes the ultimate approval decision. Councillors are to consider technical, financial, social and physical aspects of the proposal. As part of this decision-making process, a hearing is held where members of the public can contribute their opinions on the proposal. Frequently, this is where opposition to the proposal by the neighbourhood is voiced, but during this hearing, developers
are also able to act as proponents for their applications. These meetings are recorded and useful to provide context supplemental to Council decisions. These minutes are particularly useful for this research, as justifications for the NCP amendments are revealed. One such application was Clayton Village developed by BFW Developments Ltd. (BFW). One of the first and largest developers in East Clayton, BFW was an important partner in implementing the primary phases. They also amended several applications. While these amendments often were to change land use and density, they also applied to remove lanes and have car access and garages from the street (contrary to Sustainability Principle Four). The rationale for this change was included in the planning report to Council, but during the public hearing for Clayton Village, a project manager for BFW, spoke about the market demand for front access lots (City of Surrey, 2003). This application illustrates the politics in the process particularly well because of the unusual approval progression. This development was one of the first to be made in East Clayton, and BFW's desire to remove the lanes, and have car access and garages in the front was well documented. Their sales indicated a desire by the public for the front-loaded lots. "...there have been 74 sales in the first phase; 70% of those sales have been front loaded homes, and the remaining 30% are rear loaded." (City of Surrey, 2003). The original staff recommendation for the proposal was denial, and Council voted accordingly. Without further explanation, however, in the minutes or Council reports, the decision was rescinded and approved at a subsequent meeting. A
portion of the built development is shown below (Figure 6) illustrating how the neighbourhood was built out, with many of the houses with front access.

**Figure 6: Front and Rear-loaded Lots in East Clayton**

Source: City of Surrey COSMOS 2008.
SUSTAINABLE PLANNING PRINCIPLES AFFECTED

The creation and implementation of a neighbourhood concept plan is complex, and many factors influence the way a neighbourhood is built out. To assume the plan's complete intent will be realized is naive and ignores the complexities of both planning and land development. Nevertheless, an NCP fits into a planning policy and legislative framework that directs growth and "sets the rules" for land development. In East Clayton, core components of the intended land use and density were altered by successful amendments to the plan. What makes the East Clayton plan different from other plans in Surrey is its explicit commitment to sustainability. As such, it is important to examine how the sustainable components of the plan were altered.

This section focuses on two principles affected in implementation. The first is Principle One, creating compact walkable communities and providing jobs and services in close proximity to housing. The cumulative effect of the aforementioned NCP amendments resulted in Principle One being irreparably altered by allowing changes to land use, primarily from commercial or business park designations to residential. The second is Principle Two; it confirms the City's vision for diverse housing forms through a range of dwelling types and densities. The integrity of this principle was deteriorated through amendments to both land use and density. This analysis does not examine how 'sustainable' the amendments are, only that the City of Surrey has called their plan sustainable,
outlined this commitment in planning principles, and then allowed amendments to the plan resulting in cascading or cumulative changes affecting the very principles of sustainability.

**Principle One**

Principle One promotes compact, walkable neighbourhoods. Inherent to this principle is the provision of jobs and services within the community. The NCP land use map approved in 2003 included a large area (14.31 hectares or 35.36 acres) for business park development. Amending the designation from ‘Business Park’ to ‘Special Residential’ resulted in a loss of commercial space and opportunities for job creation in the neighbourhood. As the planning report to accompany one such amendment states: “While not overly significant, the proposed amendments, if approved, will further reduce the amount of Industrial designated lands in the City. The continuing loss of industrial lands to residential uses also erodes the City’s ability to promote itself as a place for sustainable employment and livelihood” (City of Surrey, 2006). The rationale for such amendments would include the use of the “Special Residential” designation and the RF-9S zone. “The RF-9S Zone allows live-work where certain low impact commercial uses (retail, professional offices, eating establishments, craft making, etc.) can be pursued by the homeowner and as such, both employment and livelihood potentials are not totally lost.” (City of Surrey, 2006) RF-9S is a regular small lot zone, which includes the ability to have a home-based business. Replacing a business park with provisions to allow a possible home based business does not come close to providing opportunities for work within one’s
neighbourhood. While the amendments made to land use (from commercial or business park to residential) may not have been large in terms of area amended, the first successful application resulted in similar successful applications on adjacent parcels. Again, while the scale of the application may not have significantly impacted the sustainability principles, the approved applications contravened the East Clayton plan.

**Principle Two**

According to Principle Two, the East Clayton NCP is to provide different dwelling types (a mix of housing types, including a broad range of densities from single family homes to apartment buildings) in the same neighbourhood and even on the same street. Most of the amendments that changed density were from high or medium-high to the medium designation, one that accommodates small single family lots. This had a drastic effect on the provision of diverse housing types. This is exacerbated by the "cascade effect", as with many of the amendments, where once one amendment is approved; a precedent is set and used as a rationale for adjacent properties. While some of the lost density is made up by secondary dwelling units (e.g., a coach house), the amendments significantly reduced the range of housing forms eventually constructed. Figure 7 shows one section from the East Clayton Land Use Map in 2008 (left side of figure) and 2003 (right side of figure). The colours used to represent different density have changed from 2003 to 2008. However, the colours used to represent density are secondary. Figure 7 illustrates that in 2003 there were a number of densities and land uses shown on the land use map. In 2008, this
variety is greatly reduced. It is a superficial analysis, but one that articulates the reduced variety represented in 2008 and the success of amended density.

Figure 7: Land Use Maps from 2008 and 2003

Source: City of Surrey Planning and Development Department

Individual applications cited different rationales for these changes. One such rationale was an "an averaging of density". As property boundaries do not necessarily conform to density designations, several of the applications included two or more land use designations. Amending the designation on a property that has both high and low densities sometimes can achieve average intended densities. The following is an example from an application where this 'averaging of density' was used as a rationale to allow subdivision of the subject site into 71 small single-family lots (City of Surrey, 2004)
Initially, staff raised concern that the proposal may result in a lower density than envisioned for this site. The applicants have demonstrated that the overall net density of approximately 15.3 units per acre is in compliance with the density anticipated for this site. The East Clayton NCP identifies three different residential densities for the subject site (Medium-High, Medium and Low) resulting in an overall net density of 14.6 units per acre. The applicant's proposed net density of 15.3 units per acre is, therefore, acceptable.

While the average density of an amended project might be the same as originally envisioned, the above illustrates an example where sustainable planning Principle Two is compromised.
CONTRADICTION IN EAST CLAYTON

Below, increasing my scope of analysis, I use Foglesong’s property and capitalist democracy contradictions as a lens through which to examine these amendments, and to look at my original hypothesis concerning the “intersection of planners and developers.” My initial work positioned planners and developers at opposite ends of a continuum, both advancing their objectives to meet where plans become development projects. As a planning consultant, I saw this intersection as frequently antagonistic. Foglesong (1986) provides an explanation for this conflict stemming from the central contradiction of capitalist urbanization as that between the social character of land and its private ownership and control. This tension, inherent in urban planning and particularly when looking at the interactions of developers and the planning department, is principally useful for an analysis of amendments made to the East Clayton NCP. I think the amendments to the East Clayton NCP are conflicts arising from the property contradiction. The NCP imposes social control over the land by mandating sustainable planning principles, but is restrained by the private land owner or developer. The NCP’s sustainable principles were altered through the amendments. However, the development of land is also restrained by the sustainable principles of the NCP. Despite claims by the Headwaters Project (Boei, 2003), mandated sustainability features do not necessarily yield a higher return for land developers. John Turner of BFW Developments has been publicly
outspoken about the cost of development in East Clayton, citing both the cost of development and the loss of value as negatives.

I know the buying public doesn't necessarily like lanes. A lane lot costs you about $10,000 to $15,000 more to produce than a normal front-loaded lot. The frontloaded lots definitely sell much better, and the builders can get a much higher value for them. If they had their choice, these builders would not build any rear-lane lots at all. But through the approval process we're forced to have at least 60 per cent lane lots." (Boei, 2003)

However, Turner concedes that the East Clayton expense could be beneficial in the long term. "We've got to take a bunch of little steps (toward sustainability) and in five or ten years we may look back on this project and say it was very beneficial as a first step" (Affordability and Choice Today Program, 2003 ). While Turner acknowledges this potential benefit, the immediate impact on cost is the main concern in the amendment conflicts.

Profit was often the sole reason for amending the NCP, and is cited in many of the planning reports as a rationale. This is an excerpt from a staff planning report written to Council explaining the proposal based on market conditions and potential profits: “The applicant's position for the NCP amendment is based primarily on current market conditions whereby single family lots have more of an appeal to young families rather than strata developments”(City of Surrey, 2004). Another example, presumably speaking of the demonstrated need as market demand, “The applicant's rationale for amending the NCP is that there is a demonstrated need in the market for such a housing choice." (City of Surrey, 2004)
The use of economic hardship as an argument in the approval process is a particularly interesting window into the mechanics of development and why sustainable principles may be compromised.

**Table 4: NCP Amendments Where Density Was Reduced**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>File Number</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7903-0040-00</td>
<td>med high (15-22 upa)</td>
<td>med (10-15 upa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7903-0182-00</td>
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<td>7906-0205-00</td>
<td>med high (15-22 upa)</td>
<td>med (10-15 upa)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In several cases, developers could have built dozens more units on the site than they did, in theory losing significant potential revenue. Table 4 shows the projects where developers amended the NCP to a density lower than the NCP specified. This revenue loss from reduced density is exacerbated by an additional financial contribution levied on the developer to make up for the City’s lost amenity revenue.¹

¹ In every budget cycle, the City calculates their revenue from new developments for infrastructure, parks, and community facilities. This budget uses projected density as an indicator of this revenue. Amending to a lower density reduces this projected revenue.
This proposed density results in a reduction of the number of units and projected population in the East Clayton NCP area, and ultimately the amenity contributions projected. The decrease in the projected unit yield will not change the servicing standards for this application. The applicant is prepared to address the shortfall in amenity contribution, as a result of the reduced unit yield, by indicating a willingness to pay contributions based on the Medium-High Density designation for the entire site. (City of Surrey, 2004)

The justification for this lost revenue is reduced risk in replicating housing types. Small lot single family houses were clearly the most popular form in the neighbourhood, and producing the same type of development (with the same builders, servicing, designers and materials) would produce some certainty of cost and reduced risk. This, for a developer who is advancing their own financial interests, is a strong motivator for pursuing NCP amendments and ultimately compromising the sustainable planning principles. This is particularly interesting as density is often seen as an incentive for developers to comply with municipal restrictions.

While not the primary focus of my analysis, I would be remiss not to mention the political dimension of the amendment process and the resulting changes in East Clayton, particularly as Council approved amendments to the plan so quickly after adoption. Without a full analysis of the political leadership and context during the time of study, Logan and Molotch’s (1987) “growth machine” is a useful concept for a macro analysis. In the case of East Clayton, almost all of the applications to amend the NCP were approved, often despite the recommendations of planning staff (however, this may not reflect proposed
amendments rejected at a staff level before going to Council for a decision.). A simple analysis using the “growth machine” theory would see Council’s approval of applications, despite their departure from the NCP, as proof that local governments always see growth as a good thing. Without a thorough analysis of political decision making in Surrey during the time of study it is difficult to see the growth machine as the sole reason why amendments were approved, but I certainly feel that there was premeditated support for developers in Surrey. This can be seen in the number of housing starts seen compared to other Lower Mainland municipalities (Figure 1).

The conceptual continuum I created illustrates the process of an NCP amendment through the approval process at Surrey, and the objectives and constraints of planners and developers. Foglesong’s (1986) contradictions provide a framework for analyzing the dynamics of the two polarities through the conflicts seen in the social character of land and it’s private ownership and control. On a cursory level the “growth machine” theory (Logan and Molotch, 1987) and its Marxist origins considers political influences on the role of the state and the accumulation of capital by promoting and providing for continued development and growth.

While there are issues that cannot be captured in this analysis, Foglesong’s conceptualization of the tensions in capitalist urbanization largely accommodate for the difference between intention and implementation in East Clayton. This tension is compelling not only because of the political maneuvering and large amounts of money at stake, but because of the enormous impact on
the built environment. Amendments could be viewed as the mechanism for relieving some of the tension in the property contradiction to enable the capitalist system through developers to build cities. Given the embedded structures of local government and the industries around them, it may very well be that amendments to an NCP are a mechanism by which capitalism and the social control of land negotiates their inherent conflicts to get on with the building of cities.
CONCLUSION

East Clayton was not built the way it was intended in the NCP. The NCP specified seven sustainable planning principles that were to guide development in the neighbourhood. These sustainable principles were new to Surrey's plans and were a result of an involved creation process. This process included design charrettes and consultations and was led by the Headwaters Project, a multi-stakeholder group guided by the James Taylor Chair in Landscapes and Livable Environments from the University of B.C. Once the NCP was adopted by Council, development applications flooded the Surrey Planning and Development Department. The adoption of the NCP coincided with a housing market that was rapidly rising, putting additional pressure on developers and planners for quick approvals.

Despite the commitment to a new type of sustainable planning framework, amendments were permitted to the NCP. These amendments were primarily to the intended land use and density, and consequently affected the sustainable planning principles. The greatest impact was to the diversity of housing choice in the neighbourhood, as well as the provision of jobs and services.

The work of Foglesong (1986) was critical in my analysis of the amendments. His postulates about the inherent contradictions of urban planning crystallized my own observations about the objectives and constraints of planning and development. While Foglesong is so compelling because this, his
contradictions do not address the political dimension of East Clayton. As despite recommendations by staff, Council ultimately makes amendment decisions. Here the work of Logan and Molotch (1987) is particularly useful. In short, their "growth machine" theory supposes that local elites always see growth as good. One way to illustrate Surrey Council's position on growth is to look at the number of housing starts during the time of study (Figure 1).

East Clayton was the planning framework for implementing sustainability in Surrey. While the plan was not implemented entirely as intended, the shift towards more sustainable development has begun. Given the inherent risk and existing infrastructure of land development approvals, an expensive example has to be used as the template for take up. Amendments to this and future NCPs may very well be the way that public and private interests compromise to build cities.
Appendix A: East Clayton Land Use Plan 2003

Source: City of Surrey Planning and Development Department
Appendix B: East Clayton Land Use Plan 2008

Source: City of Surrey Planning and Development Department
## Appendix C: NCP Amendment Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>File Number</th>
<th>Lots/Units</th>
<th>NCP Amendment</th>
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REFERENCE LIST


City of Surrey. (2003a). *East Clayton neighbourhood concept plan*.


City of Surrey. (2006c). *Official community plan*.


