Malene Garcia

Urban Planning and Sustainable Development Portfolio

STATEMENT OF INTEREST

Before I decided on Western in the fall of my senior year of high school, I had never even heard of the school until a couple moths before when I was on a bus headed there during a summer field trip to visit universities around Washington. My answer changed every year when teachers would ask me what college I thought I was going to go to. But in the end, nothing felt more right than Western and I am so happy with my decision.

A similar sequence of events happened with picking urban planning as a major. When I first came to Western, I was extremely undecided in what I wanted to major in, and I was not sure how I was ever going to find out. When I was first applying to college, I thought that I wanted to be an environmental lawyer because it felt like the perfect combination of two clubs I was involved in in high school and very passionate about: Go Green! Club and Speech and Debate. I quickly abandoned that idea when I realized I didn't actually want to be a lawyer. I remember taking geology and anthropology during my first quarter and trying to imagine myself in a career for either, but they didn't seem to fit. I knew I was just going to keep having classes in different subjects until I found one I liked. It felt daunting, especially while being in the Honors Program where it felt like all my peers had already come into college with every detail of their degree planned out.

At one point I remember being interested in architecture, but quickly learned that that wasn't offered at Western. Then, during spring quarter of freshman year I took an environmental studies class on sustainability and it felt like the first time I was truly passionate about what I was learning in class. I knew that Western had an environmental studies degree, but that felt too broad and I wasn't sure where that would take me career wise and if it would be anywhere I would be happy. Eventually I started reading Western's page on urban planning. If I'm being honest, "Urban Planning and Sustainable Development" had previously just been a string of words on the list of majors until I started looking into it more. I had no idea planning existed as a career, let alone a major at Western. I first started to look at it as a substitute for architecture- the planning of a city instead of a building. While I was bummed that Western does not have an architecture degree, urban planning was already starting to feel more significant than architecture. I knew that a career that was going to make me passionate, and therefore happy with my job, was one that felt important and that was making real impact for people outside of a company I end up working for. I realized that designing individual buildings really was not going to feel significant in the grand scheme of things. Reading about the planning major and planning as a profession reminded me that there are many avenues to create impact and change and that this could be a very important one. It felt like a it fit perfectly.

There were two aspects of planning that really drew my interest. The first was the sustainability aspect of the major. While I abandoned the idea of environmental law long ago, I am still very passionate about environmental issues. My whole life before college I lived in the same city, so I had not really paid much attention to development patterns or ever thought about how they impact the environment. After moving to Bellingham, which is wildly different from my hometown in the Tri-Cities, the significance of development patterns became much more obvious. For example, there is so much sprawl in the Tri-Cities and it makes everyone in the city incredibly dependent on cars. Of course, after beginning to take classes within the major during my second year, I learned a lot more of the impacts of city planning. I have been very excited to get further in the classes to really start understanding what urban planning is, what it has been in the past, and how it can be used as a tool for what's coming

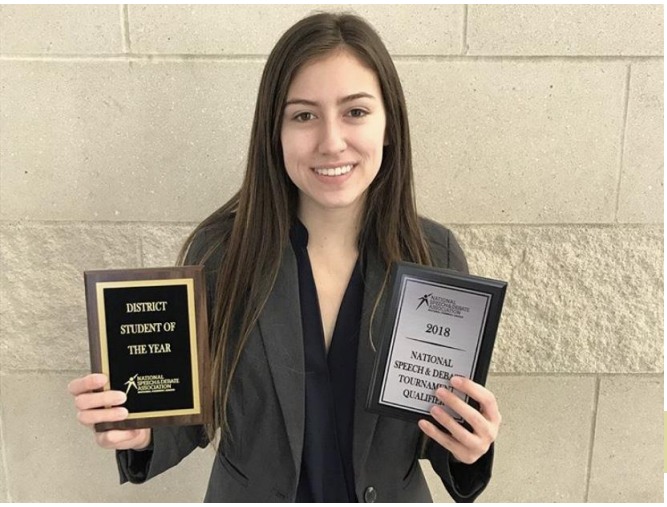
The second part of urban planning that I love is the social aspect. All through middle school and high school I assumed I would end up in some sort of engineering major because I really loved math. But I realized that those jobs did not feel personal enough. I love that planning is about working with communities in ways that will directly impact people and their lives every day. I am also pursuing a minor in environmental justice because I am really interested in how social justice plays out in the city. This past winter quarter in a class for my minor, I learned about the food desert in Bellingham and about an organization called the Birchwood Food Desert Fighters. I went to one work party this year and had planned on getting more involved as the spring weather rolled in, as they would be needing consistent volunteers. But those plans, along with many others, were changed with the corona virus. Hopefully during spring of next year, I can get involved as I had planned. It's one thing to learn about things in a classroom, but it's another to get involved in fighting issues that are happening in your own community and I'm eager to start before I finish my schooling.

After getting my degree, I know that I want to start working in the planning field, but I'm not exactly sure in what way specifically. I still have a year and a half of classes to take and I am sure I'll have it more figured out as I progress in the major. But right now, I'm focusing on trying to make the most of my learning in the classroom.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY:

GO GREEN! CLUB

- During first year in Go Green! I was the only person on the officer board. During my second year I was the President, but also had others on the board helping plan projects.
- In my two years I put together projects including campus and community clean-ups, visits to elementary school classrooms with hands on workshops to teach about waste, recycling, compost, and plant life, started and maintained a recycling program in every classroom in the high school, met with the school board about eliminating Styrofoam trays in our cafeteria, and maintained informative environmental bulletin boards around campus.



SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY:

SPEECH AND DEBATE

- Awards:
  - Academic All- American
  - District Student of the Year
  - National Tournament Qualifier
  - State Finalist for Expository
  - State Finalist for Dual Interpretation
  - All State List (4 years)
  - Ranked 5th in WA overall
- As a team member for four years, and a captain for one year, I competed in 7 different events at tournaments all over WA, ID, MT, and FL. While in Speech and Debate, I learned how to be confident and comfortable with public speaking and how to effectively communicate my ideas while collaborating with my partner to convince judges of my side while bringing down my opponents' arguments.

ESSAYS

EVERDAY CITIES: ENVS 370

Often, the structures that shape our daily lives are not given much thought. Among these, are our cities. Depending on where we grow up, we can have vastly different life experiences that shape us. Many times, we do not even realize the significance of the way our hometowns are structured until we leave them. I grew up in a town in eastern Washington called Pasco. To compare my experiences, I investigated the memories of a family friend named Amanda who grew up in a very small town in New Mexico called Raton. I found that systems that I often overlooked while I was living in Pasco, and their effects, had become so normalized to me. Things like the population growth, transportation patterns, and demographic distributions stemmed from complex histories I had not previously considered. Comparing my town in eastern Washington to Amanda's in New Mexico, I was able to explore these processes and examine how important certain systems, like economy, are to the success of the city.

I have spent most of my live living in Pasco, Washington. Pasco is part of the Tri-Cities, which consists of Pasco, Richland, and Kennewick. Pasco is part of Franklin County, but Kennewick and Richland belong to Benton County. It's hard to think about each city individually because they all function together and are so close. My family owns a five-bedroom home in Pasco, but my parents work in Kennewick and Richland. Many families live in one of the cities, but work in one the others. Each city has something unique to offer which means everyone is constantly travelling between the three on a daily basis. The three cities and the two counties are so connected, that many events and organizations use "Tri-Cities" or "Benton-Franklin" in their names instead of the specific city is it located in. There really isn't a separation between each city, so when I think about home, I think of all three.

The Tri-Cities is a rapidly growing area. When I was born, the population of Pasco was 35,000 (United States Census Bureau, 2000). Now, it is at 75,000 (World Population Review, 2020). Kennewick was at 60,000 and is now up to 83,000 and Richland was at 39,000 and is up to 57,000 this year (World Population Review, 2020). The Tri-Cities first started growing during the recession when the Hanford nuclear site was built, and many people moved to Richland to work there (Experts say region poised for continued growth, 2018). For a long time, the city's economy relied on the success of Hanford. Most people worked at the site or in another sector of the Department of Energy. As the city has grown, its economy has developed a lot, and this is no longer the case. Today, "government, health care, professional and technical services, administrative services and retail trade make up overall employment" in Benton County (Experts say region poised for continued growth, 2018). In Franklin County, only two industries make up over half of all jobs- agriculture and government. In Pasco, a lot of people move into the city, or immigrate from Mexico, for agriculture jobs (Experts say region poised for continued growth, 2018).

The first time I ever lived out of the Tri-Cities was when I moved to Bellingham for school. Living in a different city made me aware of certain development patterns that I had never paid much attention to before. For starters, Pasco is very dependent on cars. There is a public transit system, but no one uses it because the buses do not have many stops and they do not go by the stops very often. In fact, I never even noticed the buses until I started coming back home for breaks because they seem to be everywhere in Bellingham but few and far between in the Tri-Cities. Something that comes with the dependence on cars are all the parking lots. It wasn't until I was having to drive around to find parking in Bellingham that I realized just how abundant parking is back home. I could drive anywhere and know that there would be more than enough parking- and that it would all be free. Every single house has a

driveway, and every single business has a parking lot..I had never parallel parked a single time in my life until I brought my car to Bellingham. I realized that there was a culture around it too. Everyone I know has a car. I could not name a single person at my high school that didn't. Most families had multiple cars, and some have multiple cars per person. My own family had six cars for only three people who could drive them. But it makes sense because there aren't any other ways to get around. Taking the bus takes way too long, you cannot walk anywhere, and the only bike lanes in the city are only for recreation- they don't actually lead anywhere. Another thing I noticed as I came back for breaks was that it seemed like every time I came back, there was a new neighborhood, a new school, or a new strip mall being built. The increase in population was something I was always aware of, but it was much more apparent when I would come back for Thanksgiving and not recognize buildings on streets that I used to drive down every day. One final thing about Pasco that I had always known, but got so used to, was the diversity. Pasco is around 55% Hispanic, Kennewick is 27% Hispanic, and Richland is 11% Hispanic, and for all three most of the rest of the population is white (Data USA, 2020). Pasco is definitely the more diverse of the three, but even within the city the diversity varies a little bit because east Pasco hardly has any white people because it is an older, cheaper, dirtier, less nice, and less safe part of town. This was something I never thought twice about until I moved to Bellingham and was shocked at how white it was.

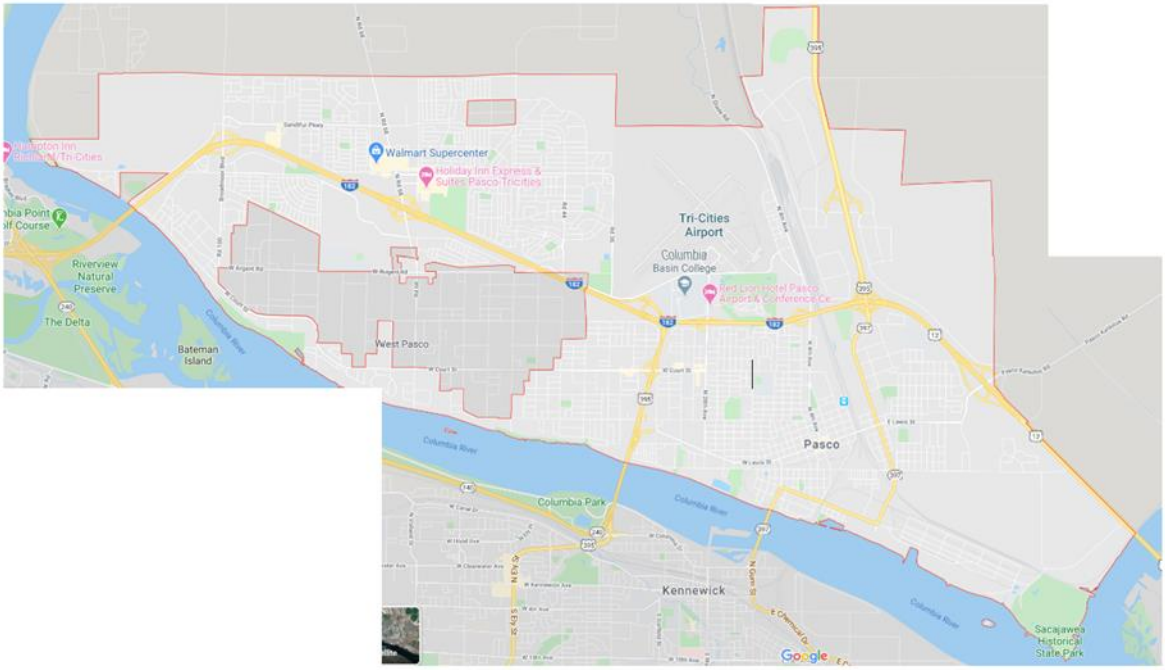


Figure 1: Pasco

After my interview with a family friend, Amanda, I was able to get the perspective of someone who grew up in a much different town. Amanda grew up in a three-bedroom house in a small town called Raton. Raton is part of Colfax County in New Mexico. She grew up here but moved away for college and only comes back to visit sometimes. When she was in elementary school, the population was about 8,000, but now it is 6,000 (United States Census Bureau, 2020). When I questioned Amanda about whether the area she lived in was a new part of town or not, she explained that the entire city was old. In fact, her house was built in the 1800's. When she lived there, the major industries were horse racing and coal mining. The horse racing track, La Mesa Park, closed down when she was 10 after running for 46

years. The York Canyon Mine was the biggest employer in the area and most families she knew worked as coal miners or worked in the industry in some way, but in 2003 it shut down. This left Raton in an economic hardship that still persists today. Many people moved away, other businesses have since closed down, and drug use and crime are on the rise. Amanda says that, “It is very sad when I return to visit, because I see all of the places that I used to go to, but they are frozen in time because they haven't been kept up. There have been initiatives to rebuild the economy, and there was a large push to revitalize the downtown. Raton was also very close to re-opening La Mesa Park, but the investors backed out at the last minute. This was a huge blow to the morale of the town, because everyone was depending on this to help improve and grow Raton back into greatness. Instead, the loss of this opportunity catapulted the town backward into poverty and economic hardship. There has not been another major industry come to Raton since, and sadly I don't know if there ever will be with the current state of the town” (Aunspaugh, 2020).

But there were also many positives in Amanda’s childhood in Raton. She explained that when she was 10, she would walk or ride her back everywhere. She would go to gas stations, stores, restaurants, parks, friend’s houses, and all over. She really enjoyed having this freedom. Since the town was so small, everyone knew each other, and all the adults kept an eye on all the kids to make sure they were safe and staying out of trouble. There was not any public transportation- but it really wasn’t needed. Her and her friends could walk from one end of town to the other, and never felt unsafe doing so. In fact, Raton is ranked as New Mexico’s #5 safest city (Singleton, 2020).

Figure 2: Raton

EVERDAY CITIES

The cities that Amanda and I grew up shaped our daily lives in very different ways. One key difference was the actual infrastructure. Because Raton was small in how much actual land it covered, it was incredibly more walkable that the Tri- Cities is. Pasco has a lot of single-family home zoning, which means that in many areas of town the land can only be used to build houses (City Beautiful, 2017). But Amanda's experience was a perfect example of Jane Jacobs' eyes on the street concept. This concept believes that cities are more safe when they are walkable and have mixed uses because eyes are constantly on the street (Hammond & Carchman, 2016) The closest thing I can walk to from my house is another neighborhood, and my mom never let me walk farther than a block away if I was by myself. Another key difference is the economy. The tri-cities is full of industries that support its economy very well, and even brings more people in. But for Raton, the case is the opposite.

Figure 3: Pasco

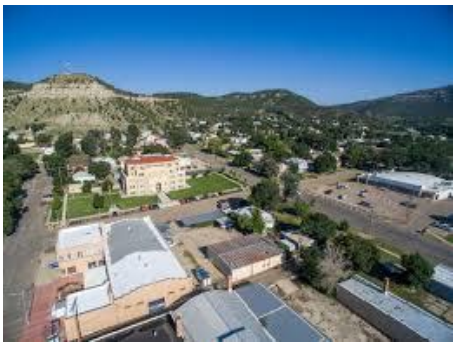


Figure 4: Raton

Figure 5: Pasco

Figure 6: Raton

The most interesting difference is surprising. When Amanda told me that there wasn't an old part of town and a new one but instead it was all the same, I realized that the same is not true for Pasco. Pasco is split between east Pasco and west Pasco. West Pasco is a lot newer and developed, and just all around a nicer place to live. West Pasco is where almost all the businesses are and where the nice schools are too. I had always just kind of accepted this because it was all I ever saw. It was not until recently that I started to understand the structures at play here, and it turns out that this divide is not a coincidence. When Hanford started, they hired laborers to build their facilities. The company recruited 15,000 African Americans from the South in 1943. The jobs, buses, and housing were segregated. When these workers tried to find housing, Pasco was the only one of the three cities that let them. Housing in Richland was only for permanent workers, and Kennewick had racially restrictive covenants to exclude African Americans (Villasbrenda, 2015). These "describe restrictive limitations, recorded as covenants, that are placed on property and its use, and which usually are made a condition of holding title or lease intended to preserve the physical nature and character of the development" (Laninga, 2020). In Kennewick and Richland, the restrictions were based on race. But in Pasco, these same racially restrictive covenants existed in west Pasco so that African Americans could only live on the eastern side of the city. At the time, this was a terrible place to live and had hardly any services. Water, garbage, food, and medical services were not provided. After WWII and the Cold War, when Hanford employment started declining, the black workers left to cities like Seattle and Portland. Soon the agriculture industry started growing and Mexican immigrants started moving into the city. East Pasco is currently 95% Hispanic and has very little businesses. A certain stigma left behind by the past makes white people afraid to go into east Pasco (Villasbrenda, 2015). Even though these covenants no longer exist, their effects are still greatly felt.

My research into the histories of Pasco, and my comparisons to the city of Raton, brought realizations I had not expected to find. I have always known how car dependent the Tri-Cities is, but it was not until I got a new perspective that I realized how extreme it is. I knew that things like redlining exist in the US's history, but it was surprising to realize that it shaped the city I grew up in. When thinking about cities, I tend to overlook the economy's importance in its success, but after hearing Amanda's stories about Raton, I realize the impact. It was also impactful to hear about concepts from Jane Jacobs in the works in places that people I know grew up in. It means a lot more to see the concepts taking effect in a way that feels much more personal. Our cities truly shape our daily lives, but the histories that shape the cities are far more complex.

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Figure 1: https://www.google.com/maps/place/Pasco,+WA+99301/@46.2442975,-119.2158305,12z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x54987953225bd285:0x72449f1539863f0!8m2!3d46.2305049!4d-119.0922316

Figure 2: https://www.google.com/maps/place/Raton,+NM+87740/@36.8829518,-104.5085293,12z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x8710f043b7f65153:0xa09ff54108aa82d0!8m2!3d36.9033581!4d-104.4391532

Figure 3: https://www.realtor.com/realestateandhomes-detail/10209-W-Argent-Rd_Pasco_WA_99301_M23093-99242

Figure 4: https://www.tripadvisor.com/Tourism-g47169-Raton_New_Mexico-Vacations.html

Figure 5: http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/2691

Figure 6: https://www.nbcrightnow.com/archives/construction-on-road-corridor-improvements-in-pasco-set-to-begin/article_516f644f-c949-54bf-9d6e-a7669f66a95b.html

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ISLAND COUNTY AS AN SES: ENVS 303

When humans and nature interact with each other, they create systems with specific characteristics. A type of system that humans and nature can interact within is called a socio-ecological system (Liu et al, 2007). One such place that social relations created great impacts on nature is in Island County, Washington. In his book titled Land Use, Environment, and Social Change, Richard White tells the history of Whidbey and Camino Island. On the islands, two different groups had interactions with the nature present. These were the Coast Salish people and the European settlers (White, 1991, p. 5). Each group had a set of values that determined how they saw the land and how they interacted with it. In Land Use, Environment, and Social Change there is a socio-ecological system present between the Coast Salish people and the settlers and the way they have interactions with the land that result in resilience, feedback loops, and legacy effects.

One socio-ecological system characteristic present in Island County is resilience. Indigenous groups, specifically the Salish people, had been living in the land long before settlers arrived. By ways of observation and tradition, they had established practices that allowed them to get what they needed from the land without causing any harm to the land that would result in any systems no longer being sustained (White, 1991, p. 25). The way this cultural group interacted with the land sheds a light on the values they held. A practice that involves caring for the needs of both the people living on the land as well as the land itself aligns with the values present in the ethics of care framework. Ethics of care refers to practices in communities that are founded in knowledge from caretaking of the self and others (Whyte & Cuomo, 2016). The Salish people's practices were rooted in knowledge that had been passed down through generations and had emphasis in also paying attention to the needs of the forest which means this framework was being used by them (White, 1991, p. 25). The way that the people cultivated the land led to a greater resilience for the land. Resilience occurs when systems in nature are able continue to keep similar processes working even after there has been a disturbance from humans (Liu et al, 2007). The Salish peoples used fires to shape the woodland economy. The fires "released mineral nutrients accumulated in the litter, humus, wood, and foliage of old forest, it simultaneously prepared seedbeds and triggered the release of some seed supply" (White, 1991, p. 25). Having periodic fires in the forests that took out old trees, kept a great proportion of young trees in many regions which allowed for the reduction of susceptibility to insects and disease for the forests (White, 1991, 2007). It was the active land management of people that led to the forest's continued success over time.

Another socio-ecological system characteristic found in the history of Island County comes from the European settlers and their interactions with the forests, is a positive feedback loop. A positive feedback loop is a self-enhancing cycle where a human action on nature results on more of that same human action in a seemingly never-ending loop (Liu et al, 2007). When Europeans came to the islands, they saw the forest as a resource for lumber. The practices of the Europeans show what values they held. An anthropocentric lens is being used by the settlers. Anthropocentrism is "an ethical standpoint that views humans as the central factor of right and wrong actions in and toward nature" (Robbin, Hintz, & Moore, 2017, p. 69). Seeing the trees as having value purely because they serve as a resource to humans is an example of this framework being used. Settlers used this timber to build homes and fences (White, 1991, p. 80). Forests were also cut down for farms (White, 1991, p. 79). As the settlers had more lumber, they

could build more homes. As they got more farmland, they could feed more people. This meant that as logging increased, the population increased with it. But as the population increased, the demand on the logging increased as well (White, 1991, p. 87). This is a cycle where the human action of logging has a result that requires more logging which will in turn increase population and create a loop.

A second socio-ecological system characteristic present from the colonizers of the island is a legacy effect. A legacy effect is when the impact of a socio-ecological system is continued to be felt even after much time has passed since the initial action from humans that resulted in a change to the natural systems in the land (Liu et al, 2007). A result of the increased demand on the lumber industry was the adoption of more advanced technologies. These technologies could cut down more trees in less time. The Donkey Steam Engine was a key player in this rapid clear cutting of trees. The conditions that the men left the forests in led to an enormously increased risk of fires (White, 1991, p. 106). The fires continued far after the loggers ceased operations in the forests. These fires created a series of changes in the ecology of the land. They left vast open spaces of land which allowed for growth of berries and fireweed. This allowed for an increase in deer, mice, squirrels, chipmunks, and rabbits. The new animals had an impact on the existing vegetation. They created damage to the land by browsing on Douglas Fir seedlings and eating new growth on young trees (White, 1991, p. 107). Even though logging stopped in areas of the forest that were clear cut, the ecological changes that they created stayed in these areas and continued to affect the natural systems in place.
Island County experienced many changes to its ecological structures as humans interacted with the land. The Coast Salish peoples helped keep the land resilient through fires, and the European settlers created long lasting changes in species abundance through logging practices (White, 1991). Richard White's book tells the history of a socio-ecological system involving the two social groups and their values with the land of the islands that results in resilience, a positive feedback loop, and a legacy effect.

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THANK

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