Chapter XV
Creation of an Australian Knowledge Town:
A Case Study of Sippy Downs

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ABSTRACT

This chapter presents an Australian case study of the planning and implementation of a new university town (Circa, 1994). It aims to evaluate the effectiveness of normative urban/regional planning practice applied locally to create a regional knowledge hub. The evaluation process surveys key stakeholders' perceptions about the town's development using traditional methods (e.g., SWOT) and alternative methods from the Futures Studies field (causal layered analysis). The case study shows that a regional governance framework with collaborative partnerships focused on place management and infrastructure delivery is needed to realise Sippy Downs' vision as a knowledge hub. It also demonstrates that a holistic policy framework for the town's development also is needed to leverage the drivers of successful knowledge-based urban development.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes an Australian case study of planning/urban design practice, as enacted at the local level by key stakeholders. The context is the design and creation of a new master-planned community with a focus on knowledge-based urban development. The purpose of the case study was to assess the degree to which normative urban/regional planning as applied on the Sunshine Coast is effectively responding to the desire for and creation of a new town and its business activity centre, based on the global knowledge economy. The current discussion combines three aims. The first of these is to share experiences of knowledge-based urban development (KBUD) applied within a regional context for a local town centre, rather than for an emerging world city

competing in the knowledge economy (Figure 1). Second, this chapter seeks to identify new methods garnered from the Futures Studies field to evaluate the potential of urban planning to deliver knowledge-based urban development. The final aim of this research is to discuss the role of knowledge in shaping the spatial form of urban development, specifically its relationship to *New Urbanism's* design principles and community engagement processes.

The research objectives of the case study are as follows. First, it seeks to identify the driving forces, systemic factors, aspirations, and frameworks of successful KBUD for the Sippy Downs town centre, as experienced from the perspectives of the key stakeholders. These forces and concerns may be shared or be in conflict, thus, exposing the level of effectiveness of the planning practices and partnerships. Second, the case study examines the capacity of urban planning to facilitate

the transformation of a green field site into a knowledge town. Third, this study asks whether there is a relationship between the urban design and spatial form principles of *New Urbanism* and the development of knowledge hubs.

The research objectives were addressed using a critical discursive analysis, applying the causal layered analysis (CLA) method from the Futures Studies field to critique the current development of Sippy Downs town centre. CLA involves deconstructing the relationships between the *litany*, *systems*, *worldviews,* and *myth/metaphors* of the key stakeholders of the knowledge-based proposed town centre. Data for the CLA was collected through interviews with the key stakeholders. A set of strategic questions was used to elicit their problem/solution definition statements, driving forces, systemic factors, and deeper aspirations for the development of the future town centre/technology precinct. The conclusions of the CLA generated

Figure 1. (a) Global context location map; (b) South East Queensland Region context map overlaid onto Local Government Areas (Queensland Government Office of Urban Management, 2005, pp. 64, 73) (© 2005, Queensland Government Office of Urban Management. Used with permission.)
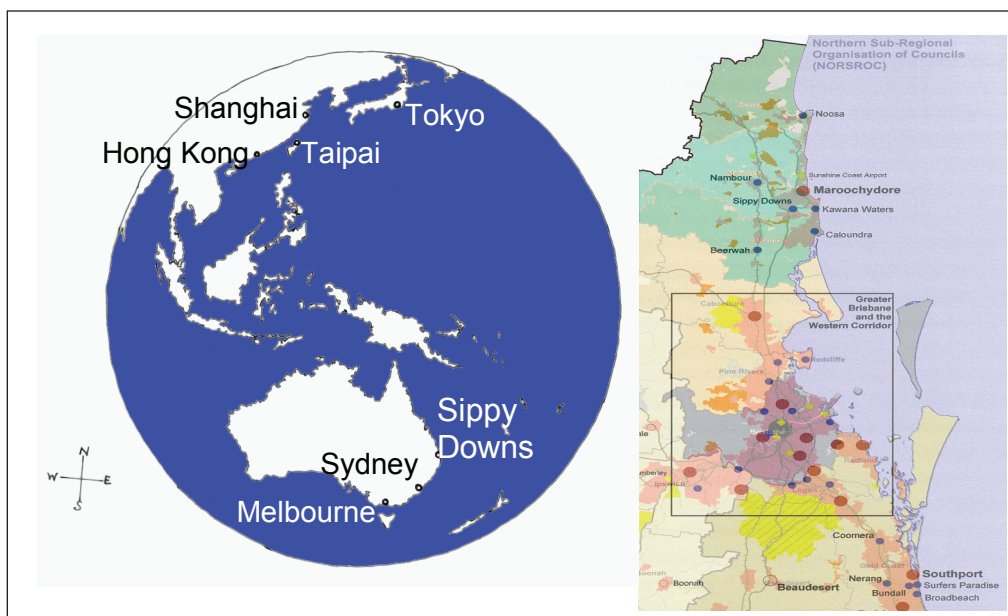
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