

11.301J/4.252J

Urban Design and Development

Fall, 2003

Assignment 2

URBAN PLANS

The purpose of this exercise is to explore the nature of *plans* and their impact on the form and

function of cities. We are interested in the motivations for creating plans, the processes by which

they are prepared, the models of urban design which underlay them, and the long term effects of

plans -- or lack thereof -- on the city. Having considered these issues, we would like to answer the

question: What makes a good Plan?

Directions

1. Choose a plan for an area in a city that interests you. The plan may be for the area of Boston

that you studied in Assignment 1 or for a *district* in any other city. The plan you focus on may be relatively recent or may have been created several decades ago. It should have been

developed long enough ago so that the results can be observed, however. Choose a plan that

proposes changes in physical form as well as changes in activities or policies to be applied in

the area. Finally, choose a plan for *which you can speak with one or more of the actors who*

created it, or about which enough has been written so that it is possible to draw conclusions.

2. Describe the nature of the plan and the reasons why it was prepared. What problems or issues was the plan intended to address? *Who were the constituents for the plan?*

3. Discuss the process used to develop the plan. Under whose authority was the plan prepared

and carried out? *Were the constituents involved and to what degree was their involvement reflected in the plan?*

4. What model(s) of design and development underlay the plan? This may be one of the models will discuss in class or another precedent that you feel had a strong influence on the

plan. *Was the model appropriate to the problem?*

5. Was the plan effective? In making this assessment, look for long term changes in the district

that were motivated by the plan. These may be changes in form, activities or social composition, but they may also be more subtle changes in attitudes or perceptions about a place which have long term impacts. *How well did the plan anticipate and affect the future?*

6. Finally, answer the question: *"Is this a good plan?"* Discuss your *criteria* for making this

judgment.

Be prepared to identify the plan you will be assessing by **Tuesday, Nov 11**. Your paper should not

exceed 12-15 pages, including text and any graphics you may wish to include. This assignment is

due in class on Tuesday, **December 9, 2003**.