Why We Get the Town We Get: A Cautionary Tale
A One-Act Multi-Media Serial Dialogue
July 21, 2019 – Final version (July 18)

Cast in order of speaking:

Narrator

Rookie Developer*

Neighbor*

Senior Developer*

Landowner

Financial Analyst*

Architect-Builder*

Town Planner*

Nearby resident #1

Nearby resident #2

Nearby resident #3

Lumapetan #1

Lumapetan #2

Lumapetan #3

Lumapetan #4

*-Will be on stage when play begins and will remain on stage through entire play. Others will come onto stage and possibly depart as noted.

Setting the stage: Stage will be set as noted in staging plan. As the audience gathers, a slide show (PP) cycles with the title, credits, and a photo of each actor in distinctive garb accompanied by a brief, offbeat bio.

The Affect: Actors with an * will move to a lectern at the beginning of any scene during which they speak, but will otherwise remain in their chairs, apparently disengaged from the action. The only emotions are to be shown when actors are standing and those emotions are to end when the exchange is finished. Physical actions are to be limited to those specifically noted.   Other actors will be move as noted below.

Getting underway: Once all is in readiness, a different PP begins.

<mark>SCENE #1</mark>

<mark>PP: Title page</mark> (Rookie Developer at center lectern, flipping between documents. Neighbor is standing slightly back from left lectern.)

<mark>PP: July 2019</mark>

<mark>PP: Prologue</mark>

Narrator: (Appears on stage and speaks sonorously.) The Town of Lumapeta is in a bad way. For many, housing is hard to find. Traffic congestion is worrisome. The coffers at town hall will soon be empty. Most are worried about the environment. Many are leery of change. All want answers but are unsure of the questions. (Steps offstage.)

<mark>PP: Slides of maps, zoning codes, and spreadsheets.</mark>

<mark>SCENE #2</mark>

<mark>PP: Asking neighborly questions</mark> (Rookie Developer at center lectern. Neighbor hovering near left lectern.)

<mark>PP: Vacant parcel, including train station, vacant land, and nearby homes.</mark>

Rookie Developer: (Looking through papers, deeply engrossed.)

Neighbor: (Steps forward, cautiously knocks on left lectern, and steps back, awaiting a response.)

Rookie Developer: (Startled from her work, looks up): May I help you?

Neighbor: (Moves slowly to left lectern, unsure of his course.) I hope so. I'm Colin. I live near the new train station. I've heard you might be building on land north of the station?

Rookie Developer: Hi Colin, nice to meet you. I'm Jessica. Yeah, I've been looking at a site near the station. Do you have questions?

Neighbor: (Cautiously.) Yeah, I do. My neighbors and my family, well, we like our neighborhood and we don't want it to change.

Rookie Developer: (With enthusiasm.) You should LOVE your neighborhood! I certainly do. I often walk there in the evenings to look again at the architecture. Older neighborhoods can be so elegant and comfortable.

Neighbor: (With puzzlement.) But I hear you're thinking of something different?

Rookie Developer: Yes, the best neighborhoods have a range of housing choices. Your neighborhood is mostly single-family, so I'm planning apartments, with sidewalk underneath. I think it would complement your great neighborhood. And also work well with the new commuter train.

Neighbor: What would it look like?

Rookie Developer: Something like this.

PP: Rookie Developer's initial plan

Neighbor: But … but that's huge. That can't possibly be right for our neighborhood.

Rookie Developer: To me, it's perfect. Affordable housing for young adults and seniors, good access to the train, and retail to serve the tenants and your neighborhood.

Neighbor: I don't know about that. It'd be a big change for us.

Rookie Developer: Well, change is coming is whether or not this project happens. Our region is attracting new residents. And the train, with its convenient connections, will attract many of those to Lumapeta. Do you follow local real estate prices?

Neighbor: You bet. My wife and I are thrilled by our rising home value.

Rookie Developer: As a homeowner myself, I understand your enthusiasm. But there's a downside to increasing home prices. If we want the people who teach our kids, police our streets, and mow our lawns to also live in Lumapeta, we need housing to stay affordable.

Neighbor: Doesn't Lumapeta have affordable housing programs?

Rookie Developer: Yes, but there's only so much they can do, especially with many of their funding sources dwindling. So private development must also play a role. If we add supply, economics tells us that pricing will decline, or at least go up less quickly. I want to add supply.

Neighbor: (With skepticism.) So you think I should support your project?

Rookie Developer: (Chuckling.) Well, I'd phrase it differently. I want both of us to be in favor of good planning that would protect neighborhoods of character and charm by providing alternative and appropriate homes for newcomers. I want us to be allies.

Neighbor: Hmm, that's interesting. But I'll need to think about it.

Rookie Developer: That's fine. I like people who think. The best allies are those who begin with skeptical but open minds.

Neighbor: Hmmm. So how many apartments are you planning?

Rookie Developer: 80.

Neighbor: Whoa, that's a lot. I know Lumapeta needs housing, but 80? Wouldn't that many well-to-do families change our neighborhood?

Rookie Developer: (Laughing.) Well, they wouldn't be well-to-do. And most wouldn't be families. Some of my apartments would be as small as 400 square feet. A few seniors might live here, but my real target is kids beginning their lives, renting their first apartments, and spending their first real paychecks. I expect many not to own cars.

Neighbor: So the ground floor businesses would serve those folks?

Rookie Developer: Yup, I'm planning on a pub, green grocer, coffee shop, and one more space. The kind of places people might visit daily. I hope the businesses would also be destinations for you and your neighbors.

Neighbor: (Nods and looks in at more details.) Hmmm, when do you plan to begin construction?

Rookie Developer: Not for a long while. I have many hurdles in front of me.

Neighbor: Town Hall?

Rookie Developer: There'll be a process with Lumapeta Planning, but the project is mostly consistent with zoning, so I expect to get my approvals. My immediate challenge is money.

Neighbor: Money? But you're a developer. Don't you have lots of money?

Rookie Developer: Not really. Developers must leverage their funds if they want to be successful. And this would be the first project on my own, so I have less cash than most.

Neighbor: You can't borrow from a bank?

Rookie Developer: Nope, banks never lend before approvals. It's too risky for them. Instead, I need someone with private equity who's willing to gamble. It's only later, after I've bought the site and gotten my permits, that I can go to a bank for a construction loan.

Neighbor: Will equity be hard to find?

Rookie Developer: I have a potential source but many equity partners, and banks also, don't yet like this kind of development. (Gestures toward screen.) It's too new-fangled for them. So they may push me to go in a more conventional direction.

Neighbor: Hmmm, well, thanks for the intro, Jessica. Can I come again to ask more questions?

Rookie Developer: I'd be disappointed if you didn't. And feel free to borrow a book from my urban planning library. (Points toward a "table".)

Neighbor: (After scanning books.) "Walkable City"? Is it any good?

Rookie Developer: I love Jeff Speck. Please borrow it and share it with your neighbors. But be sure to return it. I reread it every year.

Neighbor: Thanks. I'll be back.

<div align="center">SCENE #3</div>

PP: Asking for equity dollars (Senior Developer at left lectern. Rookie Developer at center lectern.)

Senior Developer: Jessica, good to see you. We miss you around here. You made us good money.

Rookie Developer: Good to see you too, Sam. Yeah, I know my projects made money. But I'm prouder to have strengthened good neighborhoods.

Senior Developer: Yeah, whatever you want to call it. Are you sure you don't want to come back to work here?

Rookie Developer: Yeah, I'm sure. I miss the people here, but it was time to be on my own, just like you once upon a time.

Senior Developer: Yeah, I know. We must all be young and ambitious once. (Turns more serious.) So, you're here to talk about your Lumapeta project?

Rookie Developer: Yup. I've gotten as far as I can on my own and need a partner.

Senior Developer: Uh-huh. Well, I think we can work with you, if you're willing to be flexible.

Rookie Developer: Okay, … but let's talk about that word "flexible".

Senior Developer: I'll be blunt. You still seem starry-eyed about the good you can do and it shows in your conceptual plan. Transit-oriented mixed-use? That's a tough one.

Rookie Developer: It's the right idea for the site and the town.

Senior Developer: Who cares what's right for Lumapeta? Our only worry is what's right for us. Money talks and nothing else really matters. Developers who don't learn that lesson go bust and end up bagging groceries.

Rookie Developer: (Looking puzzled.) But, you're still willing to talk to me?

Senior Developer: (Laughs.) Yeah, we like you and trust your skills. We think you'll do enough good things that we can pick up the pieces and still make money even if you stumble.

Rookie Developer: I'm not sure that's a good start to a relationship. But keep talking.

PP: Vacant parcel (repeat)

Senior Developer: Okay, let's start here. Why this site?

Rookie Developer: The Lumapeta General Plan encourages transit-oriented development and mixed-use, which is perfect for this site and …

Senior Developer: (Interrupting.) You can stop there. Every town has a General Plan that calls for pink unicorns frolicking in fields of purple grass. But most folks don't buy into it. They say they support walkable mixed-use and then go on living their lives in SUVs and single-family homes.

Rookie Developer: But it's the shared vision of the community?

Senior Developer: Nonsense. There is no such thing as a shared vision. Everyone is so busy leading their lives that their only shared visions are that taxes are too high and that half the City Council are crooks. The only disagreement is which half.

Senior Developer: (After a pause.) If you really want to tackle this site, we can probably work with you. But quit talking about vision and start talking about square feet, dollars, and Planning Commission votes.

Rookie Developer: (Slowly and with hesitation.) Okay, I think the location next to the train station is essential.

Senior Developer: The site might be okay, until the Town starts telling you to change your plans to meet the needs of commuters.

Rookie Developer: (Calmly and solidly.) No, I've already worked with all the Town departments. Plus I've met with several Planning Commissioners. We've identified the issues and agreed on the solutions.

Senior Developer: Kid, it doesn't work that way. Next time you go back to Town Planning, they'll have a new list of "needs". (Air quotes.)

Rookie Developer: No, I don't think so ...

Senior Developer: (Interrupting.) Look, I've been doing this since your parents were making out behind the high school gym. There's a lot I know that you don't. Yeah, the Town will pile more on your back.

Rookie Developer: (Lapses into silence.)

PP: Rookie Developer's initial plan (repeat)

Senior Developer: (After a glance to make sure the Rookie Developer doesn't plan to continue the argument.) Okay, let's look at your building concept. Two stories of small apartments, 80 units total, above 76 parking spaces and 8,000 square feet of sidewalk retail.

Rookie Developer: (Nods.) Yes.

Senior Developer: That's less than one parking space per apartment.

Rookie Developer: (Nods.) Yes, it is. It's consistent with current research on multi-family projects near transit.

Senior Developer: I don't care about "current research". Projects around here aren't built with less than one space per apartment. Everybody wants a car and many want two. I don't care what your "data" says; you can't make a project work with this little parking.

Rookie Developer: (With attempted conviction.) Given the nearness to the train station, bus stops, and downtown, we'll attract seniors beyond their driving years and millennials who haven't yet gotten licenses.

Senior Developer: (Shaking head.) You can't rely on tennie-wearing grannies and tie-dyed hippies. People want cars, they want parking, and they'll always want both. You need at least one and a quarter spaces per apartment.

Rookie Developer: (Begrudgingly.) I'll see what I can do.

Senior Developer: (With firmness.) Yeah, you'd better. Now, let's talk about your three floors. This site demands a fourth story. It's where your profit is. This plan doesn't have enough parking to support another floor of your little apartments, so let's look at an option.

PP: Senior Developer's alternative #1

Senior Developer: The retail has to go. You don't have the experience to pull it off anyway. That gives us 100 parking spaces. If we make the apartments bigger on your two floors and add a floor of luxury apartments, we'd still have 80 apartments and the parking works out fine.

Rookie Developer: But the General Plan calls for ground floor retail. Besides, retail is the best way to get neighborhood support.

Senior Developer: Kid, let me explain something. How are the town finances in Lumapeta?

Rookie Developer: Not good. Red ink is projected in the next few years.

Senior Developer: Exactly. And do you know what they need? Impact fees from new projects. They need us more than we need them. And even if the Planning Commission gets testy about the lack of retail, the Council will give us our entitlements, no matter what the neighborhood says.

Rookie Developer: You may be right about the Council, but I still think a site near the train station needs retail.

Senior Developer: Fine. Here's another option.

PP: Senior Developer's alternative #2

Senior Developer: We upsize all the apartments. You keep your precious retail which leaves us with 76 parking spaces, but then we have three floors of luxury apartments, 54 total, with nearly one-and-a-half parking spaces per apartment unit. That would turn a great profit.

Rookie Developer: You're probably right about the numbers working better. But it's not what the General Plan directs. Near the train station, the goal is smaller, affordable apartments targeted toward young commuters and seniors, none of whom want to pay for a lot of living space.

Senior Developer: Get real. This is America, not some European country. People don't want to rub elbows at a pub downstairs. They want to binge watch Netflix upstairs. Maybe you don't agree today, but you'll learn. I guarantee it.

PP: Rookie Developer's initial plan (repeat)

Senior Developer: Until then, let's look at the finances for your plan. (Looks down at paper.) Your budget, with land, Town approvals, design, and construction, is $16 million. Your proposed average monthly rent is $2,000, which would let you pay your bills, but only barely.

Rookie Developer: There'd also be the income from the retail space.

Senior Developer: (With exasperation.) No, there wouldn't be. Everybody has this vision of a cute little store on every corner, but the reality is that we go to big boxes and the internet for most of our crap. You'll be lucky to find tenants who'll cover your taxes and maintenance costs.

Rookie Developer: But the people who live there will shop there.

Senior Developer: No, they won't. No California project has ever had more than a tiny portion of shopping trips stay in the building. That's how the world works. We don't know how to shop without our cars.

Rookie Developer: (Sullen silence and a shake of her head.)

Senior Developer: (After a pause, waiting for a response that doesn't come.) Okay, moving on. I think you're optimistic on all your costs, starting with the $3 million land cost.

Rookie Developer: (Emphatically.) No, that cost is fine. The Landowner and I have shaken hands on the price.

Senior Developer: (Shakes head.) Uh-uh, handshake deals are worth nothing. With the trains now running and ridership strong, the Landowner will renege on that handshake in a heartbeat. But whatever you do, don't go above $3.2 million.

Rookie Developer: (Slowly nods with pursed lips.)

Senior Developer: Okay, adjusting the rest of the items, I expect a total budget of $20 million, which means the average monthly rent must be $2,500. Luckily for you, the market will support that rent, so the project still works and we're willing to be equity partners.

Rookie Developer: (Without enthusiasm.) Thank you.

Senior Developer: I think you'll need $5 million to purchase the land and to secure entitlements. And we're willing to invest that $5 million.

PP: Money transfer

Rookie Developer: (Nods silently.)

Senior Developer: Oh, one last thought. If you need more equity to get approvals, it won't come from us. Not until you've learned to respect our experience. Yes, you're bright and think you can change the world, but it's the world that'll change you.

SCENE #4

PP: August 2019

PP: Closing the land deal (Rookie Developer at center lectern. Landowner begins off-stage.)

PP: Land sale graphic

Rookie Developer: (Looks to left.) I have the money. I'm ready to close on our deal.

Landowner: (A heretofore unseen character enters from stage left.) Ahh, that's good. But I've been thinking about the price. We agreed on $3 million before the trains began running. Now, I need more. I've checked. Others will pay more than your offer.

Rookie Developer: But we agreed on $3 million. Besides, you never supported the train. And you've paid only a pittance in property taxes over the years. You just sat there as the town grew around you. Why should you benefit from Lumapeta booming?

Landowner: Because I own the land and you want it. $3.5 million.

Rookie Developer: (After consideration.) I'll pay $3.1 million.

Landowner: Not much at compromise, are you? $3.3 million, firm.

Rookie Developer: (After more consideration.) $3.2 million. Final offer.

Landowner: Then we don't have a deal. (Turns to leave stage right, but after a step, stops, thinks, and turns back.) Very well. I'll take your money. (Leaves stage right, never to reappear.)

PP: Money transfer

SCENE #5

PP: The neighborly conversation continues (Rookie Developer at center lectern. Neighbor slightly back from left lectern.)

Neighbor: (Moves forward with book in hand, knocks on lectern, more assertively this time.)

Rookie Developer: (Still standing at left lectern, looks up from paperwork.) Hey Colin, good to see you again. Did you enjoy "Walkable City"?

Neighbor: I did. So did my wife. I'd thought I rarely walked downtown because I was lazy. Now I find out it's because the walk sucks.

Rookie Developer: (With a laugh.) Yeah, that's true for many of us. I can't fix the problem of walking downtown, but perhaps I can provide useful destinations closer by.

Neighbor: That might be nice. How're you doing? Did you find the money? Were you forced to change the project?

Rookie Developer: Yes, I now have an equity partner. He didn't require any project adjustments but expects that I'll be forced to accept his "reality" someday. He's suggesting eliminating the retail and making the apartments larger and more expensive.

Neighbor: That's great that you found the money, but I hope you're able to hold onto the retail and the smaller apartments. I've been thinking that you might be right about it being a good fit for our neighborhood. Have you bought the land?

Rookie Developer: The site's in escrow. I was just reading the title report. (Gestures at document.) What else have you got? I like questions.

Neighbor: Okay, here's one. Shouldn't we think about growth as a bad thing? Don't we already have enough cars clogging our streets?

Rookie Developer: Notice how you automatically equated new residents with more cars?

Neighbor: Well, isn't that true?

Rookie Developer: It doesn't have to be. What if we build in such a way that the new folks can manage their lives on foot, on bikes, and on buses? Are the Lumapeta sidewalks ever jammed?

Neighbor: (Chuckling.) Only during parades.

Rookie Developer: Exactly. We have plenty of available sidewalk capacity. Let's start using it.

==PP: Rookie Developer's initial plan (repeat)==

Neighbor: So, residents in your building won't add any new traffic?

Rookie Developer: Alas, that's not quite true. But they should add less traffic than adding 80 new homes elsewhere. And if we get more development like this, especially if it entices you and your neighbors to walk more, then we begin reducing traffic.

Neighbor: Okay, but if your building alone won't solve the problem, wouldn't it be better to build on the edge of town where there's no traffic now?

Rookie Developer: Well, to begin, that sounds like development in open space which I won't do. I believe firmly in "up, not out".

Neighbor: (Nods vigorously in agreement.)

Rookie Developer: And beyond that, what difference would it make to move new homes to the edge of town? Traffic jams don't happen in neighborhoods. They happen near places where we all go, such as downtowns, schools, shopping centers, and freeway on-ramps.

Neighbor: (With a light going on.) Yeah, that's true.

Rookie Developer: If we put new residents at the edge of town, they must use their cars and traffic gets worse. But if we put them over retail and within walkable or bikeable distance of other useful destinations, then at least a few trips don't need cars.

Neighbor: (With a contemplative look.) Huh, okay, I can see that. But what about parking? Would you provide enough parking for your residents? If there are more cars than parking spaces, the extra cars may end up on my street.

Rookie Developer: It might happen, but the two-block walk to your neighborhood will hopefully discourage tenants with extra cars. Besides, I don't want tenants with more than one car. And no cars would be even better. It's why I plan to charge for parking separately, which we call "unbundled parking", so people without a car needn't pay for parking.

Neighbor: (In surprise.) Charge separately for parking? Will the Town allow that?

Rookie Developer: We're talking about it. See, it's human nature to use available tools. If everyone gets a "free" parking place with their apartment, then they feel obligated to have a car. And once they have that car, it'll get used even if a chore could have been done without it. Parking leads to traffic and no one likes traffic.

Neighbor: So, you're suggesting a correlation between parking and traffic? Huh, I can sort of see that.

Rookie Developer: By the way, what do you do for a living? I hope you don't sell cars.

Neighbor: (Laughing.) No, no connection to cars. I'm a restaurant consultant. I've been an executive chef but am taking it easier right now. I want to be around as my kids grow up. And I want to enjoy Lumapeta.

Rookie Developer: Good for you.

Neighbor: I need to go, but may I borrow another book?

Rookie Developer: Of course.

Neighbor: (Scans bookcase quickly.) I enjoyed Jeff Speck. How is "Suburban Nation"?

Rookie Developer: Great choice. It was a major turning point in how we thought about town planning.

<div align="center">SCENE #6</div>

PP: September 2019

PP: Heading back to Town Hall (Rookie Developer at center lectern. Town Planner at left lectern.)

Rookie Developer: (Faces the Town Planner.) The land sale has closed. I'm ready to proceed with approvals along the lines we discussed.

Town Planner: That's great. I'll ask all the departments if they've identified any further needs.

Rookie Developer: (With a nervous look.) Whoa. Hold on there. I've already met with every department and agreed to meet their needs.

Town Planner: (Starting slowly, with hesitation.) Yesss, but with the trains now running, things are changing. Here in Planning, we've noted two adjustments we need. We need a plaza for commuters transferring to the train. The planning documents call for a plaza of 10,000 square feet.

Rookie Developer: Hold on! That's a third of my site, but my proposed project nearly covers the parcel. I don't have room for a plaza, much less one of 10,000 square feet.

Town Planner: Well, maybe you need a different plan.

Rookie Developer: But that'd be starting from scratch, after I've bought the land.

Town Planner: The General Plan calls for a plaza near the station.

PP: General Plan graphic

Rookie Developer: Yes, it does, but not on my site.

Town Planner: But we need the plaza now and you're the only developer working on a project near the station. Besides, we need you to reconsider your project anyway. After reviewing the parking demand with the trains running, we need sixty parking spaces for commuters.

Rookie Developer: You expect me to pay for sixty parking places for commuters?! I can't afford that. Parking costs at least $30,000 per space. That's $1.8 million. That'd kill my project.

Town Planner: Then I have good news. The Town has located a grant that will pay $1.2 million for the parking. And then you can charge for parking to make up for your other parking costs.

Rookie Developer: Okay, that'd make the parking a little more acceptable, but it'd still be a challenge. Let's go back to the plaza. 10,000 square feet is too much for the site. How about 5,000 square feet?

Town Planner: That'd be too small, but maybe we can consider 7,000 square feet, with a warrant application.

Rookie Developer: (Sighs in exasperation, then scribbles on a piece of paper.) Okay, I don't know if the construction costs will work out, but I have a plan that might work.

PP: Rookie Developer's revised plan

Rookie Developer: Two stories of parking, a slight reduction in sidewalk retail, and three stories of residential above, still 80 units, but slightly larger.

Town Planner: That'd be five stories.

Rookie Developer: (Warily.) Yes … ?

Town Planner: (Cautiously.) The zoning code only allow for four stories. (Brightening.) But we'd be willing to consider a variance. As long as you can make a case that the difficulty wasn't self-created.

Rookie Developer: (In exasperation.) Of course, it wasn't self-created. You created it. In this meeting. Five minutes ago.

Town Planner: That's not what self-created means.

Rookie Developer: (With a sigh.) Let me talk to my team. I'll see if we can make the numbers work. (Turns to leave.)

Town Planner: (Calls her back.) You know we're only asking for the plaza and the commuter parking to serve the public, right?

Rookie Developer: I thought housing next to the station and walkable retail was good for the public. How would the public be served if I can't meet your new requirements and must instead sell the land?

Town Planner: (Silently shrugs, then thinks of one last question.)   You're still going to include affordable housing, right?

Rookie Developer: (Slowly and with tight lips.) Yes, we are.

<div align="center">**SCENE #7**</div>

PP: October 2019

PP: Giving direction to the team (Rookie Developer at center lectern. Architect-Builder and Financial Analyst at right lectern.)

PP: Rookie Developer's revised plan (repeat)

Rookie Developer: We've closed on the land and the Town has directed us to add commuter parking and a public plaza. (Passes plan to other two.) We need to rework the conceptual plan and proceed with the applications.

Architect-Builder: (Begin checking plans, then stops and begins to study more carefully.) These are significant.   We'll need to update the architecture, utility planning, traffic study, and geotechnical report.

Rookie Developer: How much for the scope changes?

Architect-Builder: Oh, about $100,000.

Rookie Developer: (Deep sigh.) Get started.

Architect-Builder: (Begins working.)

Financial Analyst: (Conspiratorially.) Are you going to update Sam?

Rookie Developer: (After a glance at the Senior Developer who is still looking down.) No. There'll be time enough to hear that gloating.

Financial Analyst: Yeah, I wouldn't want to be in your shoes.

<div align="center">SCENE #8</div>

PP: Yet another neighborly chat (Rookie Developer at center lectern, working.   Neighbor near right lectern.)

PP: Rookie Developer's revised plan (repeat)

Neighbor: (Moves to right lectern, knocks.) Can we chat again?

Rookie Developer: (Looking up from paperwork.) Hi, Colin, of course we can. (Noting the book in his hand.) What'd you think of "Suburban Nation"?

Neighbor: I liked it, a lot. It changed much of what I thought I knew about town planning. I'm starting to understand your thinking and perhaps even agreeing with you.

Rookie Developer: That's great. Any more questions?

Neighbor: Yeah, here's one. Do you worry about the Town having enough water for new residents?

Rookie Developer: Of course. Three years of drought, followed by a year of record rainfall and then another year of drought? That pattern should worry everyone. But people still want to move here. Demand is outstripping supply, which causes prices to rise. Is your home still going up in value?

Neighbor: Yup, every time I check, it's up another thousand or two.

Rookie Developer: I'm not surprised. If we don't add supply, prices will keep going up and the town will become unaffordable to all but the rich. I think most of us want a demographically diverse town. So, we need more homes. And those homes should come with water-efficient appliances and without thirsty yards. (Points at building sketch.)

Neighbor: (Shakes her head in surrender.) Okay, you have me. I want you to succeed. How do I help?

Rookie Developer: We'll keep talking. I'll tell you about the challenges I'm facing and sometimes I'll ask for your help.

Neighbor: I'll do that. But can I ask a personal question? Many people say they hate developers. Does that bother you?

Rookie Developer: Yeah, a little bit, but I can be philosophical. What I believe is that people are unhappy with big parts of their world, the traffic, the parking, the potholes, the taxes. So, they look for someone to blame. Developers are the obvious choice.

Neighbor: But didn't developers build much of our suburban world?

Rookie Developer: Built? Yes. But designed? No. It was our grandparents who wanted to live outside the city, federal policies that supported that wish, and grand, but flawed, planning concepts.

Neighbor: But shouldn't developers have told us we were going wrong?

Rookie Developer: I'd like to think so. But, like many of us, developers become comfortable doing what they've always done and don't want to think critically.

Senior Developer: (Perks up his head and looks around quizzically, as if suspecting someone is talking about him.)

Rookie Developer: I'm proud to be among the developers who are trying to lead us back to a better model.

Neighbor: So you think developers are good people?

Rookie Developer: Not at all. Developers are … people. And like all people, some try to do their job in the right way, to serve other people, to make the world better. And others care more about their egos or their wallets. The same can be said of plumbers. Or of presidents.

Neighbor: And you think you're one of the better developers?

Rookie Developer: I want to be. You can tell me in a couple of years how I did.

Neighbor: Hmm, okay, one last question. Are there others in town who share your thinking?

Rookie Developer: Sure, Lumapeta Urban Chat has been around awhile and has a group called Know Before You Grow that puts on public forums on land planning. You should check them out.

Neighbor: So, they have all the answers?

Rookie Developer: Nope, none of us have all the answers, but we're trying to ask the right questions and to make fewer mistakes.

Neighbor: Huh, okay. Can I borrow another book?

Rookie developer: Sure, try James Howard Kunstler. He can be excessively shrill, but he'll motivate you.

(Pause for application development and spending of cash.)

PP: Cash transfers

<div align="center">SCENE #11</div>

PP: January 2020

PP: The first neighborhood meeting (Rookie developer at center lectern. Architect-Builder at right lectern. Neighbor at left lectern. Nearby Residents will speak from audience.)

Rookie Developer: Can we talk about neighborhood input? Can we set up something this month? Maybe near the site? I can provide cookies and show the working drawings.

Architect-Builder: Yeah, I can put something together.

Rookie Developer: Thanks. I'll introduce you to Colin (gestures toward Colin) who has become my connection to the neighborhood. I think we'll need their support.

PP: "Neighborhood Meeting January 2020", three cartoon faces plus Neighbor

PP: Rookie Developer's revised plan (repeat)

Rookie Developer: And in summary, that is what I'm proposing, five stories, eighty small apartments for young adults or seniors, parking for residents and train commuters, and retail to serve the neighborhood. Your thoughts?

Nearby Resident #1: (Getting to feet and will remain standing.) Why does Lumapeta need more people? We already have too much traffic.

Neighbor: Lumapeta is a great place, but with many job openings here and in nearby towns, growth is coming regardless of what we do. However, more people needn't equate to more cars. This is the kind of project that can accommodate growth with less increased traffic.

Nearby Resident #2: (Getting to feet and will remain standing.) If we want less traffic, how about a bike shop? It would help folks use the train without a car.

Nearby Resident #1: Yeah, a bike shop is a good idea.

Rookie Developer: I'd be eager to have a bike shop if I can find someone who wants to own one.

Nearby Resident #2: I work in a bike shop and might be interested.

Rookie Developer: Great. Give me a card. We'll chat.

Nearby Resident #3: (Getting to feet and will remain standing) Nothing would make me support this project. Development hurts us and only creates big profits for developers.

Neighbor: I understand why many feel that way. But I've been talking to this developer and I've been doing a lot of reading about how towns work. I think we should support this project. It offers housing for those who are being pushed out of our town. It's located where the residents can easily take transit. And we can walk to the shops. I can't speak for the rest of you, but I'd like to walk to that pub for an IPA right now.

Nearby Resident #3: So what? You've been co-opted by the developer.

Nearby Resident #1: Hold on. Colin has always been a good neighbor. Christmas would be less festive without his annual open house. If he says this idea makes sense, I trust him.

Nearby Resident #2: Yeah. And the developer has been very open and reasonable with us tonight. Maybe I'm not yet a convert, but that's the direction I'm heading.

Nearby Resident #3: (Glowers, but when the room goes quiet, takes seat.)

Nearby Residents #s 1 and 2: (Shake hands and also take seats.)

Rookie Developer: (Turning back to Architect-Builder.) That seemed a good start. We got a sense of the neighborhood. Let's show "Bike Shop" on the smallest retail space.

Architect-Builder: (Nods assent.)

<mark>SCENE #13</mark>

<mark>PP: March 2020</mark>

<mark>PP: Ready to submit to the Town</mark> (Rookie Developer at center lectern. Architect-Builder at right lectern.)

Architect-Builder: (Slams the binder shut, sighs.) We're done. The package is ready to go.

Rookie Developer: Full compliance with the General Plan and zoning code?

Architect-Builder: Close.   As you know, we'll need a warrant for the plaza and a variance for the fifth floor.

Rookie Developer: Uh-huh. The traffic study is updated?

Architect-Builder: Yes. We'll need a traffic signal.

Rookie Developer: How much?

Architect-Builder: Maybe a half million.

Rookie Developer: (After a wince.) And how about the architecture?

Architect-Builder: Well, the budget is tight.

Rookie Developer: Yes, I know. But we need to provide reasonable rents, so the budget is firm.

Architect-Builder: Uh-huh. To stay within budget, we changed some details. The brick facing is now stucco. Many of the balconies are gone. And the bathrooms now have linoleum in place of tile.

Rookie Developer: (Grunts, then turns back and puts binder on left lectern.)

PP: Another money transfer

<div align="center">SCENE #14</div>

PP: April 2020

PP: Getting bad news at Town Hall (Rookie Developer at center lectern. Town Planner at left lectern.)

Town Planner: The departments have all reviewed your application. These are our comments that must be addressed before we deem your application complete. (Passes over Letter #1 and the binder.)

Rookie Developer: (Hefts letter and looks askance. Begins flipping through the pages.) There are over 100 comments here!

Town Planner: (Non-committally.) Uh-huh.

PP: Sketch of revised Rookie Developer's plan (repeat)

Rookie Developer: (Incredulously.) More than 100? (Focuses on a later page.)   A noise study on the pub? Why? We're already in a busy part of town and we've specified extra sound-proofing. Shouldn't a pub bustling with conversation and music be a good thing? It means that tenants are being social without using their cars.

Town Planner: I know, but the environmental analyst decided that CEQA requires a noise study.

Rookie Developer: (After more flipping.) Add another five parking places for residents? You've seen my plan; I have every single parking place I can.

Town Planner: But we're afraid that some of your residents will park extra cars on nearby streets.

Rookie Developer: Those parking places are two blocks away. Besides, I don't want tenants with two cars. I want single-car families who will use the train, the bus, and their bikes.

Town Planner: We need to be cautious.

Rookie Developer: (Growls and flips on.) Set the daily parking fee for commuters at $5?! No, no, no. You told me I could recapture my portion of the commuter parking costs.

Town Planner: Yes, we did, but we want to encourage more ridership.

Rookie Developer: So do I. It's why I'm proposing housing next to the train station. This is structured parking. It'll require a daily parking fee of at least $10 to cover my share of the costs.

Town Planner: So the parking will be subsidized.

Rookie Developer: By whom? The only revenue stream is apartment rentals. Are you suggesting that families who live a one-car lifestyle next to transit must subsidize parking for families who live a two- or three-car lifestyle elsewhere? Really?

Town Planner: (Shrugs with a what-can-you-do smile.)

Rookie Developer: (After waiting for a response before deciding that one wasn't forthcoming, begins to turn toward Architect-Builder.)

Town Planner: Oh wait, before you go, we need to talk about your cost recovery account. We need you to catch up on our costs.

Rookie Developer: (After a sigh.) How much?

Town Planner: $100,000 will cover all costs to date and give us a reserve as we continue working on your behalf.

Rookie Developer: (A sharp retort rises and then falls, unvoiced. Takes a bundle of money, passes it to the Town Planner.)

PP: Another cash transfer

Rookie Developer: (Begins turning toward Architect-Builder.)

Town Planner: Oh, one more thing. Before you go, we should talk about the market share analysis.

Rookie Developer: (Warily.) The what?

Town Planner: The market share analysis. Didn't we mention that earlier? We need to determine how much business you'll take away from existing businesses. (Brightly.) We can't harm our local small business owners.

Rookie Developer: (After an effort to calm himself, then talking slowly and deliberately.) You know the businesses I've proposed. A grocer, a coffee shop, a pub, a bike shop. For all of those, yes, I want to take business away from similar businesses. I want my residents and neighbors to shop without their cars. Isn't that also your goal? Based on what I hear about traffic, it's what the citizens want.

Town Planner: Well yes, but we're required to have an economist assess market share.

Rookie Developer: And how will you use the results?

Town Planner: We don't know.

Rookie Developer: (Taken aback.) Huh?

Town Planner: By ordinance, we must present the data to the City Council before the first public hearing, but the ordinance doesn't tell the Council what to do with the data, so they usually just listen.

Rookie Developer: And this will cost . . . how much?

City Planner: About $50,000.

Rookie Developer: (Blinks and swallows.) So I need to spend $50,000 for a study that looks at the negative aspects of doing exactly what your General Plan wants me to do, even though the Council doesn't know what to do with the results?

Town Planner: You're making it sound stupid.

Rookie Developer: (Raises eyebrows and palms but doesn't comment.)

Town Planner: (Turning thoughtful and confidential.) Look, I know our process can sometimes feel silly and pointless to you. We often feel the same. But our hands are often tied, either by CEQA or by ill-conceived Town requirements. Off the record, far off the record, we like your project. But if we cut corners, someone might use the courts to reverse any approvals we give you. That letter (pointing to the letter still in the Rookie Developer's hand) is for your own good.

Rookie Developer: (With a grim smile.) Thanks for that, I think. (Before the Town Planner can respond, turns away.)

<div align="center">**SCENE #15**</div>

PP: Delivering the bad news to the team (Rookie Developer at center lectern. Architect-Builder and Financial Analyst at right lectern.)

Rookie Developer: (Passes Letter #1 and binder to Financial Analyst who glances at the letter and then passes both to Architect-Builder.)

Architect-Builder: (Flips through pages, gradually growing exasperated.) How can we find five more parking spaces?

Rookie Developer: Five parking places are about 1,600 square feet, right?

Architect-Builder: Yeah, close.

Rookie Developer: So now we're down to 4,400 square feet of retail.

Architect-Builder: (Looks ready to protest but notes Rookie Developer's demeanor and instead speaks quietly). When do you want to resubmit?

Rookie Developer: Four weeks.

Architect-Builder: (Nods and sets to work.)

Financial Analyst: Is now the time to talk to your equity partner?

Rookie Developer: Not quite yet.

Financial Analyst: It should be a heck of a conversation.

PP: Another cash transfer.

SCENE #17

PP: June 2020

PP: Getting closer at Town Hall (Rookie Developer at center lectern. Town Planner at left lectern.)

Town Planner: (Brightly.) Your responses to our first letter were great. We're almost there. (Passes over Letter #2 and binder.)

Rookie Developer: (Flips through letter. Then flips again, reading more deeply, finally choosing her words carefully.) There are 14 items here, 11 of them brand new. A wider fire lane behind the building? Supplemental bike parking in case the station bike parking fills up? These weren't in your first letter.

Town Planner: New stuff comes up. Some are health and safety issues we can't ignore. Or concerns that might be vulnerable to a CEQA lawsuit.

Rookie Developer: (With resignation.) Okay, if we give you good responses to these items, will we be deemed complete?

Town Planner: (Again brightly.) Yes! (Less brightly.) Probably.

Rookie Developer: (After a deep sigh, places Letter #2 and binder on right lectern.)

<div align="center">SCENE #18</div>

PP: July 2020

PP: And still closer (Rookie Developer at center lectern. Town Planner at left lecturn. Rookie Developer moves binder back to left lectern.)

Town Planner: (Flips through binder, ponders, and then pulls out Letter #3.) We're down to one item! (Passes Letter #3.)

Rookie Developer: We're not done?! (Scans the letter.) More parking for residents? Another five spaces?!

Town Planner: Even with those spaces, that's still only a few more spaces than apartments. We've never approved a project with this little parking and we're uncomfortable with it.

Rookie Developer: Those on the leading edge . . . (Turns to move letter and binder to right lectern.)

Town Planner: (Clears throat.) About cost recovery?

Rookie Developer: (Sighs. Puts binder and letter on right lectern.)

PP: Another cash transfer.

<div align="center">SCENE #19</div>

PP: Making final adjustments (Rookie Developer at center lectern. Architect-Builder and Financial Analyst at right lectern. Architect-Builder flips through letter.)

Rookie Developer: Five more parking spaces. I guess we further reduce the retail.

Architect-Builder: Uh-huh. We've been showing four rentable spaces thus far. I don't think we have enough space for four any longer. Can I reduce it to three?

Rookie Developer: Yeah. (After pondering.) Take away the coffee shop, leaving us with the pub, the grocer, and the bike shop. Hopefully the grocer can find room for a coffee pot.

Architect-Builder: I'll make the change. (Begins work.)

Financial Analyst: Equity partner?

Rookie Developer: First Town Hall, then a meeting with Samantha.

Financial Analyst: Good luck. With both.

<div align="center">**SCENE #20**</div>

PP: Checking on the Town process (Rookie Developer at center lectern. Town Planner at right lectern.)

Rookie Developer: The changes are underway. After I give you a plan with five more parking spaces for residents and after you complete the environmental documentation, we're ready to go to the Planning Commission, right?

Town Planner: (Brightly) Yes! Well, almost. The market share analysis will be presented to the Council in two weeks, so that's done. And we're ready to do the environmental analysis. But before you meet with the Planning Commission, you need to hold a neighborhood meeting.

Rookie Developer: I met with the neighbors months ago and have stayed in touch. Most of them are supportive.

Town Planner: That's great. But we have our own requirement for neighborhood involvement. We need you to reach out again to learn if new ideas have arisen.

Rookie Developer: (Puzzled) But what new ideas can be accommodated at this time? You've already redesigned much of my project through your process. We can't change much else. How can you ask me to specify the location and type of each light fixture (pointing at the application binder) and then be open to new ideas?

Town Planner: Perhaps, but it's our rule. (Shrugs and smiles.)

<div align="center">SCENE #21</div>

PP: Checking in with the equity partner (Rookie Developer at the center lectern. Senior Developer at the left lectern.)

Rookie Developer: And that's where the project stands.

Senior Developer: (Looking up from papers.) Yeah, it's about as I'd expected. The Landowner reneged and you ended up paying another $200,000. The Town added new requirements forcing you to redesign the project. And now you've begun cutting corners to make the dollars work. Am I right?

Rookie Developer: (Begrudgingly and tight-lipped, mostly avoiding eye contact.) Yeah, mostly so. But we're building support within the neighborhood.

Senior Developer: Good for you. Neighborhood support and $6 will get you a cappuccino. (Pointing back at the papers.) I suspect you'll have to make more adjustments before you're done. Let me again suggest larger apartments.

PP: Senior Developer alternative plan #3

Senior Developer: We can go from your 80 small apartments on three floors to 48 luxury apartments on four floors for six floors total. The pro forma would look better.

Rookie Developer: But the luxury units aren't what the General Plan or the neighbors want. The Town needs housing, as much as possible and as affordable as possible, next to the train station.

Senior Developer: Yeah, the Town does need that. But it's not what their rules facilitate. And we can't fix that. (Pause.) Are you willing to make the change?

Rookie Developer: Nope. I'm going to keep doing what I think is right for Lumapeta.

Senior Developer: Okay, your choice. We'll stand ready to pick up the pieces.

SCENE #22

PP: Asking for help from the neighborhood (Rookie Developer at center lectern. Neighbor at left lectern.)

Neighbor: So how's it going, Jessica?

Rookie Developer: Not well, Colin. The finances are getting tight and my equity partner still wants luxury apartments.

Neighbor: But that's not what the Town needs! Are you going to give in?

Rookie Developer: Not yet, but I may have to.

Neighbor: What can I do to help?

Rookie Developer: Muster supportive voices at a neighborhood meeting the Town insists I hold.

Neighbor: I can do that.

Rookie Developer: These are the three issues we really need to push, keeping the apartments small and affordable, providing fewer parking spaces per apartment than has been the typical practice, and approving the variance for the fifth story.

Neighbor: I'm fairly sure that we'll support all three. I know I will.

Rookie Developer: Great. I need Planning to see that your neighborhood wants this project.

<div align="center">SCENE #23</div>

PP: Neighborhood Meeting #2 (Rookie Developer at right lectern. Neighbor at center lectern. Town Planner at left lectern. Lumapetan #1 and Nearby Residents #s 1-3 in audience.)

PP: Neighborhood Meeting, August 2020, ten cartoon faces plus Neighbor.

PP: Sketch of revised Rookie Developer's plan (repeat)

Rookie Developer: And that's the project, small apartments designed for those on budgets on the top three floors, parking for residents and commuters on the bottom two floors, and a pub, grocer, and bike shop to meet neighborhood needs.

Lumapetan #1: (Getting to feet, will remain standing.) Why haven't we heard of this project before? Why weren't we involved?

Nearby Resident #1: (Also getting to feet, will remain standing.) That's not accurate. The developer has been very open to us. I don't know why you weren't here, but most of us have grown to like the proposal.

Lumapetan #1: Well that's nonsense. You've clearly been brainwashed by the developer. It's far too big for the neighborhood. The variance should never be approved.

Nearby Resident #2: (Getting to feet, will remain standing.) Actually, I wish there was another floor. We have a big need for housing.

Neighbor: Yes, we need housing, particularly smaller and more affordable housing, and we need retail that is walkable from our neighborhood. The proposal starts us toward both solutions. This project may not provide everything we need, but it's a step in the right direction.

Nearby Resident #3: (Getting to feet, will remain standing.) I was initially a skeptic, but have grown more comfortable with the idea. But I'm still not happy with how many parking places are provided for commuters. This building will serve our neighborhood. Why should it be sullied by all these other people who choose to live elsewhere and don't want to ride a bus or a bike?

Nearby Resident #1: That's a good point. There's too much parking. With less parking, people would be more likely to walk or bike.

Nearby Resident #2: I don't like the parking either, but still think we should have more parking, so every car is guaranteed a place.

Nearby Resident #1: But more parking brings more cars.

Neighbor: Yes, it's a careful balance between having enough parking so the excess doesn't spill out and having too much which would encourage more traffic. The developer has tried hard, with the trusted assistance of the Town (with a slight smile toward both), to find the right balance. I trust her solution.

Nearby Resident #3: Okay, that might make sense, but can't we make the pub bigger? I think we're going to need a drink.

Rookie Developer: (Smiling.) I know you're kidding, but yes, I wish the pub could be bigger. But I'm out of space. The lot is only so big. Between the plaza, the parking numbers set by the Town, and the building height, I'm out of space. Sorry, but thanks for coming.

(Lumapetan #1 and Nearby Residents #s 1-3 resume seats.)

<div align="center">SCENE #24</div>

PP: Debriefing (Rookie Developer at center lectern. Town Planner at left lectern.)

Town Planner: (Perkily.) That was a great meeting. I heard lots of ideas on the parking count, the retail size, and more.

Rookie Developer: (Warily.) Well, you understand that most of them were incompatible with your previous direction or my budget, right?   But I think we can agree that the neighborhood mostly supports the project?

Town Planner: Yeah, I guess so.

SCENE #25

PP: Losing a friend (Rookie Developer at center lectern. Neighbor at left lectern.)

Rookie Developer: Colin, your help was great. Thank you for being an apt student and for providing needed assistance. With a repeat at the Planning Commission, we may be home free.

Neighbor: I was glad to do it, but I have bad news.

Rookie Developer: (Looks attentive and worried.) Oh?

Neighbor: I've been offered a fantastic opportunity. I'll be away from Lumapeta for nine months.

Rookie Developer: Nine months! Where will you be?

Neighbor: You remember that I've been an executive chef? I've been offered an executive chef position at an exclusive club in Florida.

Rookie Developer: Florida? Where in Florida?

Neighbor: Palm Beach.

Rookie Developer: (In shock.) Not . . . !

Neighbor: Yup, Mar-a-Lago. But it's not what you think. The club manager believes that the end is coming. That, plus an aging membership, convinced him to plan a reboot. My task will be developing the post-impeachment menu.

Rookie Developer: No more chocolate cake?

Neighbor: (Smiles.) Nope, the new cuisine will upend the current menu and political leanings.

Rookie Developer: And what will that be?

Neighbor: Mexican-Iranian-Korean fusion. I'm already working on a mean lamb and kimchi taco.

PP: Photo of a taco

Rookie Developer: Wow. And congratulations. But, if I can be selfish for a moment, is anyone willing to take over your role in the neighborhood?

Neighbor: Unfortunately, no. I've asked everyone and they all declined. (Nearby Resident #3 leaves the stage.) They like your project, hope you get approved, and may attend the Planning Commission hearing, but aren't willing to coordinate unified neighborhood public comment. Sorry. (Nearby Resident #2 leaves the stage.)

Rookie Developer: Well, that's a disappointment. But I'm still happy for you. Best wishes and thanks again for your help. We'll try to muddle through without you.

Neighbor: Thanks. I've enjoyed my experience with you. (Nearby Resident #1 leaves the stage.)

SCENE #26

PP: November 2020

PP: Finally, at the Planning Commission (Rookie Developer at right lectern. Town Planner at center lectern. Planning Commissioner at left lectern. Lumapetans #s 1-4 in audience.)

PP: Sketch of revised Rookie Developer's plan (repeat)

Town Planner: (Talking toward Planning Commissioner.) And so, with the project application deemed complete, with the environmental analysis done, with the market share analysis presented to the Council, and with a neighborhood meeting conducted, the project is ready for Commission review.

Planning Commissioner: Is there a reason we weren't told about this project earlier? This is a major addition to the station area. Why weren't we kept advised as the project was moving ahead?

Town Planner: (Uncomfortably.) Well, we never know which projects will progress and we hate to take up your valuable time. But we're confident then we've represented your wishes in our work with the Applicant.

Planning Commissioner: That may be, but we have questions. Tell us about the parking. There are nearly two full stories of parking. It looks more like a parking garage than transit-oriented development. Why did you let the Applicant propose this?

Town Planner: Well, there were neighborhood and Planning concerns about parking, so we asked the Applicant to add spaces.

Planning Commissioner: I appreciate the concerns, but this number of parking spaces provided near the station will affect how the town evolves in the 21st century. Shouldn't we be doing more to encourage biking and walking? I wish we could have weighed in before this evening.

Town Planner: (Nods but doesn't respond.)

Planning Commissioner: Let's talk about the retail. I know it's hard to fill curbside retail spaces, but these spaces seem puny. I like the pub, grocer, and bike shop as ideas, but did you work with the Applicant to get more retail space?

Town Planner: The Applicant chose to reduce the retail to provide additional parking. Perhaps the Applicant can respond to your concern.

Rookie Developer: Given the amount of parking REQUIRED by the Town and the amount of the site that was taken for the plaza, our only options were to add a sixth floor to accommodate more parking or to reduce the retail. And we believed another floor of parking would have been more objectionable to the Commission.

Planning Commissioner: I agree we wouldn't have liked another floor of parking, but still wish we'd been part of the conversation earlier. Now, what about this fifth story? The four-floor cap came from an extended public process. Why are you supporting the fifth story?

Town Planner: The configuration was the result of coordination between the Applicant and Planning.

Planning Commissioner: Well, I'm hesitant to grant the variance without good reasons, better than we're being given here. As far as I can tell, the only reasons for the fifth floor are extra parking and the Applicant's need for more rental income. I'm dubious about the first and don't care about the second, but let's hear from the public.

PP: Planning Commission Public Comment, November 2020 with twenty cartoon faces

Lumapetan #1: (Rising from seat.) We've just learned about this project. Why has it been kept from us? Is it because the Council is in the pocket of developers? Besides. it looks like every new building everywhere. Why can't developers reflect Lumapeta's heritage? (Again sitting.)

Lumapetan #2: (Rising from seat.) This project is much too large. Lumapeta is still a small town. This project changes who we are. We shouldn't give that power to developers. (Again sitting.)

Lumapetan #3: (Rising from seat.) I don't like the size of the building, but we need more housing. The Applicant should be able to squeeze more units into the building without making it bigger. (Again sitting.)

Lumapetan #4: (Rising from seat.) Look at all the traffic that would be created. There is no reason for this project except to give fees to the Town to make up for their mismanagement. (Again sitting.)

Planning Commissioner: Thank you for your comments. But I'm puzzled. We were told that there has been extensive coordination with the adjoining neighborhood and that they supported the project, but not a single speaker identified themselves as being from the neighborhood. Are there any neighbors here? (Gazes toward the three empty seats.) Anyone? (Still silence.) Given the lack of support for a variance allowing a fifth floor, a concern about the amount of parking and lack of retail, and the absence of any neighborhood support, I don't think any of us will make a motion to approve this project. Can I suggest that the Applicant and Planning get together to fix this project before they bring it forward

again? (Long pause.) Having heard no objections, this meeting is adjourned.

Rookie Developer: (Glares at Town Planner in silence.)

SCENE #27

PP: Trying to pick up the pieces (Rookie Developer at center lectern. Senior Developer at left lectern.)

PP: Rookie Developer's revised plan (repeat)

Senior Developer: I've heard it didn't go well. What happened to your neighborhood support?

Rookie Developer: The key player took an out-of-town job and the effort fell apart without him.

Senior Developer: (Sniffs.) So, what's your plan?

Rookie Developer: I'll meet later this week with the Town Planner to begin discussing project changes.

Senior Developer: How about appealing to the Council? I suspect they'll overturn the Planning Commission denial to get the impact fees.

Rookie Developer: Well, the Planning Commission didn't deny the project. They only sent it back for more work.

Senior Developer: You didn't ask for a vote??!!

Rookie Developer: No, I thought it'd be better to look for minor adjustments and to try to get the neighborhood reinvolved.

Senior Developer: You thought wrong. And how do you intend to fund the continuing work?

Rookie Developer: Well, I was hoping for more equity funding.

Senior Developer: Not happening. We won't provide any more dollars.

Rookie Developer: But then what?

Senior Developer: Your approach of complying with the General Plan, acceding to Planning's demands, and currying neighborhood support is dead. We'll buy out your investment, give you a salary going forward to act as the figurehead, and run the project our way. Starting right now.

Rookie Developer: (Long pause. Long ruminative pause.) No. (Another pause.) I'll take your money to buy me out, but you can keep your salary. I won't be part of a plan that doesn't conform to the vision of the General Plan and that doesn't care what the neighbors think. I'm out, Sam.

Senior Developer: I'm sorry you feel that way, but it may be for the best. We'll get the paperwork underway.

Rookie Developer: (Takes a long, lingering gaze at the building plan on the screen.)

SCENE #28

PP: Playing hardball at Planning (Senior Developer at center lectern. Town Planner at left lectern.)

PP: Senior Developer's alternative #3

Senior Developer: (Looking at Town Planner.) Here's the deal. We'll give you the 7,000 square foot plaza you want. You'll also get the 60 commuter parking places, for which we'll charge $10 per day. The only retail we'll provide is 1,500 square feet for a coffee shop. No pub, no bike shop. Above the parking will be four stories of luxury apartments,

with a typical monthly rent of about $3,500, for six stories total. We'll have an average of more than 1-1/2 parking spaces per apartment. And we won't have inclusionary housing. Instead, we'll pay the in-lieu fee.

Town Planner: But we want more modest apartment size and rents, far more neighborhood retail, and inclusionary housing.

Senior Developer: I know you do. But you won't get it from us.

Town Planner: The Planning Commission will never approve this.

Senior Developer: You're right. They probably won't. But I think the City Council will approve the project on appeal, especially with the neighborhood having gone silent. And if I'm wrong, I'll sell the land. The market value has gone way up. Then you can start over with another developer.

Town Planner: But …

Senior Developer: No buts. We're done. You'll have our revised application in two weeks, along with all the supplemental information you'll need to update your environmental and market share documents. I want another Planning Commission hearing in three months. We'll have apartments ready to rent by early 2023.

(The remaining participants all leave, one by one, until the stage is empty except for the screen of the project.)

PP: Empty parcel

PP: Construction of building

PP: Deterioration of building

PP: Scheduled for demo

SCENE #29

PP: 2060

PP: Looking back (Future Observers #s 1 and 2 come onto stage. Future Observer #1 at right lectern. Future Observer #2 at left lectern.)

PP: Deteriorated building

Future Observer #1: (Looking at screen and shaking her head.) What a shame. It was the first building constructed near the station after the trains began running, but it was all wrong. Look at how many parking spaces! By 2025, half of the car trips around here were made in autonomous vehicles that didn't need downtown parking. And a lot of folks were walking and biking. How could the Town not have seen those changes coming in 2020 when they approved it?

Future Observer #2: And that tiny corner shop? It didn't work by itself and hasn't been rented in twenty years. I understand it began as a coffee shop, but by the end, the only guy who wanted it was a pawnbroker. And he couldn't make enough to pay the rent.

Future Observer #1: I know. Compare it to the businesses in the other buildings, the micro-brewpubs and specialty grocers. And that bike shop next door is a gold mine.

Future Observer #2: Have you been inside the building? It had these giant apartments, far bigger than anyone wants today. Didn't anyone understand urban life in 2020? One later owner tried carving up the apartments into smaller apartments, but they only felt butchered.

Future Observer #1: Yeah, it was a failure no matter how you look at it. But you know the funny part of the story? The initial developer of this building, Jessica something, I forget her last name, was booted before the building was approved. The plan was completely changed after she was gone. But she took what she'd learned and built many other buildings around here, buildings that are doing great and are always fully rented. And you know that restaurant Colin's near the other end of the station? The one that's almost impossible to get into, but serves those incredible lamb kimchi tacos?

PP: Picture of taco (repeat)

Future Observer #1: Well, Colin was an early supporter of Jessica's, so Jessica made sure Colin got a key spot in Jessica's next building. Colin built a restaurant that's still going strong with his grandkids running it.

Future Observer #2: Really? You're sure of this?

Future Observer #1: Yeah, Jessica and Colin are both still alive. They're in their 80s, but were at a recent Museum presentation on how Lumapeta has changed in the 21st century. I talked to both. Nice people. Good friends and passionate about this town.

Future Observer #2: What a great story. It's good to know that something positive came out of this mess.

PP: Deteriorated building (repeat)

Future Observer #1: Yeah, I know. The demolition crew arrives next week. It was nearly forty years of wasted space for Lumapeta, but at least someone will finally get it right. Want get a taco?

<mark>PP: Closing Slide</mark>

Narrator: And thus ends our tale of hubris and lack of foresight. The lessons that can be drawn are numerous, perhaps too numerous to count, but primary among those is that your opinion matters. Understand how towns work. Ask good questions. Learn how development comes together. And always, always be willing to lend your voice in support of what you've learned to believe is right.