


Planning for Small Towns

Distinctive Issues in Small Town Planning


Small Town Planning

- Small town planning presents unique challenges and opportunities
- Important to not see small towns simply as “scaled-down cities”
- Small size and heightened importance of surrounding rural areas bring challenges not faced by larger centers




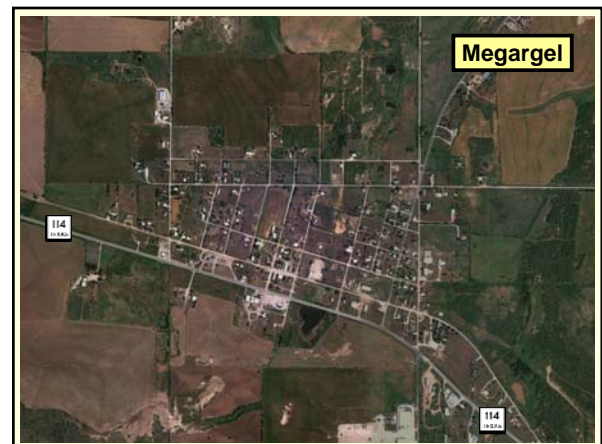
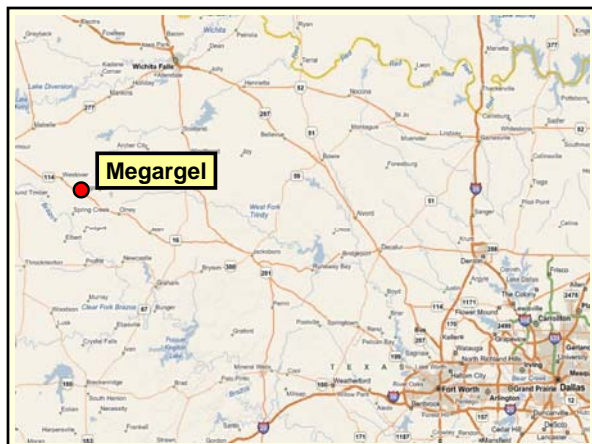
Small Town Planning

- Changes that might appear small to a resident of a large city are actually quite significant in a small town context
 - Example: school closures are important in all communities, but in small towns school facilities are also often the hub of community life (school closure = community closure)



Small Town Planning

- Changes that might appear small to a resident of a large city are actually quite significant in a small town context
 - Case in point: Megargel, Texas (population 203)
 - A town that went through the difficult decision of what to do with its declining local school

Megargel: Small Town Texas



Megargel: Small Town Texas



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Megargel: Small Town Texas



Small Town Planning

- **Megargel, TX**
 - When do you decide that you cannot support a school, even if that means the death of your town?
 - Megargel's voters decided in 2006 to close their school (89% in favor)
 - Megargel faced decisions (and consequences) that many Texas towns and ISDs have had to face over the past few decades, and more will confront in the next few years

FALLING NUMBERS

Drop in Texas' public school districts:

1950	2,748
1960	1,581
1970	1,219
1980	1,099
1990	1,067
2000	1,048
2010	1,024

SOURCES: Texas Education Agency, Dallas Morning News, Fort Worth Star-Telegram

From an analysis done by the Dallas Morning News in 2006

Breakdown of Texas school districts by number of students

THE DISTRICT PICTURE

Nearly 550 of Texas' 1,037 school districts have fewer than 1,000 students. A look at how they break down:

Number of students	Districts in that range (Each full line represents 50 districts)	Count
More than 100,000	██████████	2
50,001-100,000	██████████	12
25,001-50,000	██████████	26
12,501-25,000	██████████	39
5,001-12,500	██████████	81
2,501-5,000	██████████	114
1,001-2,500	██████████	214
501-1,000	██████████	217
251-500	██████████	150
101-250	██████████	144
1-100	██████████	38

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency 2006

SMALL DISTRICTS

Thirty Texas school districts (shaded on the map) have fewer than 90 students, putting them just below the cutoff for additional funding the state provides: small districts. Here are the smallest 10 districts as of the 2004-05 school year, not including charter schools, and the number of students in each:

- Grandview-Hopkins ISD: 33
- Rochester ISD: 40
- Marietta ISD: 54
- Westhoff ISD: 53
- Ramirez ISD: 50
- Mirando City ISD: 50
- Divide ISD: 16
- Doss Consolidated ISD: 31
- San Vicente ISD: 20
- Valentine ISD: 51

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency

Small Town Planning

- **School reform and small town decline isn't only an issue in Texas**
 - For example, Washington state has gone from 2,710 school districts in 1900 to 295 today
 - Of the remaining 295 districts in WA, 62 still have fewer than 200 students
 - Small town politicians and planners in many areas of the US are dealing with very similar issues

See the small town case studies posted in the syllabus and handouts folder on the GEOG 4210 website:
<http://www.murrayrice.com/geog-4210.html>

Percent Change In Population, 2000-2010

Source: US Census

Small Town Planning

- Important to understand the ways in which small town life is unique to develop a successful small town plan

Small Town Planning

- The DQ for this week asked you to consider one small town, Booneville, and the issues it faces
 - **Q:** how would you say Booneville's issues differ from what planners and developers deal with in D-FW?



Small Town Planning

- One way we can adjust our thinking for small town planning is in the area of **zoning**
- Large city zoning focuses on actual land uses
 - Anticipate community impacts by activity type
 - **Example:** Autobody repair is not allowed in large city residential areas (blanket ban)



Small Town Planning

- In small towns, a greater degree of flexibility might be given to development
 - **Focus:** regulate the impacts of development, not specifics of which activity is allowed where
 - No list of activities allowed/not allowed in a given zone (business, residential), only principles that must be met



Small Town Planning

- This means that land uses that would be rejected in a large city can be approved in a small town setting
 - Businesses of many kinds can be established in small town residential areas as long as activity does not impact neighbors
 - By contrast, in large cities many kinds of businesses are restricted or banned outright for home-based businesses

Small Town Planning

- Two broad types of development issues relating to small towns
 - **1. Physical Development Issues**
 - **2. Social Development Issues**

Small Town Planning

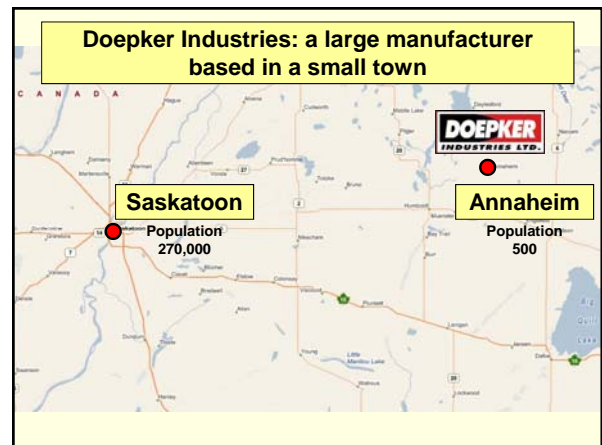
- Two broad types of development issues relating to small towns
 - **1. Physical Development Issues**
 - Some physical issues with small town development relate directly to the small areas, small populations, and low growth rates characteristic of these places
 - Not ordinarily part of planning in large cities

Small Town Planning

- Two broad types of development issues relating to small towns
 - **1. Physical Development Issues**
 - Many very small towns have no community-wide water supply or sewage system
 - Waste management and upkeep of public properties (e.g. parks, playgrounds) is a heavy burden for a small tax base to bear

Small Town Planning

- Two broad types of development issues relating to small towns
 - **1. Physical Development Issues**
 - Access to the national highway system may be poor, due to both remote locations and poor quality roads
 - Big economic development implications: for example, the case of Doepker Industries
 - A manufacturer of heavy equipment, such as semi-trailers and grain haulers



Small Town Planning

- Two broad types of development issues relating to small towns
 - **2. Social Development Issues**
 - Population aging is a particularly severe issue in rural areas across North America
 - Some public services (health, home care) are especially needed and especially expensive to provide in remote and aging rural communities

Small Town Planning

- Two broad types of development issues relating to small towns
 - **2. Social Development Issues**
 - Population cleavage is another, related social trend
 - Movement of a large, new group of people into an area, displacing and disturbing long-time residents

Small Town Planning

- Two broad types of development issues relating to small towns
 - **2. Social Development Issues**
 - Population cleavage is especially important in two situations
 - **1. Small towns on the fringes of large metro areas** (large group = city dwellers seeking a more peaceful life or cheaper housing)

Small Town Planning

- Two broad types of development issues relating to small towns
 - **2. Social Development Issues**
 - Population cleavage is especially important in two situations
 - **2. Small towns in resort areas** (large group = city dwellers seeking recreational properties)


Small Town Planning

- **Q:**
 - How are small communities and long-time residents impacted by an area's popularization as a summer destination?
 - Positive impacts? Negative impacts?


Small Town Case Study

- A short case study can help us appreciate some of the challenges and issues faced in planning for a small town
 - **Case Study:** Port Gamble, Washington

Case Study: Port Gamble, WA



Case Study: Port Gamble, WA



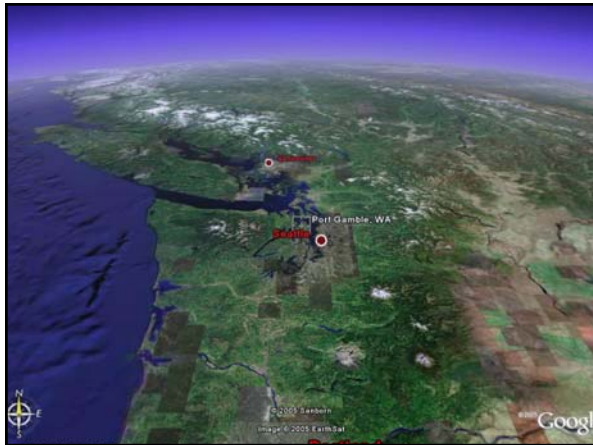
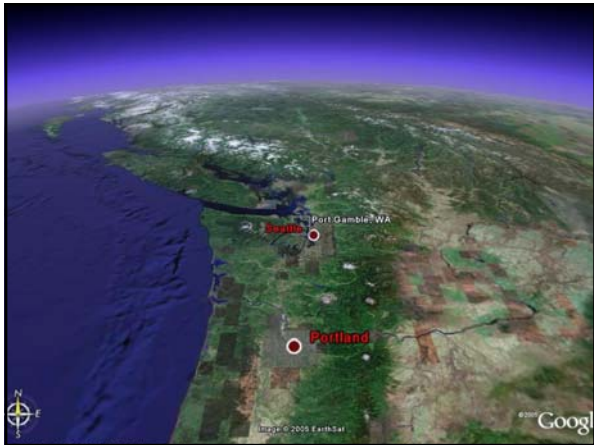
Case Study: Port Gamble, WA

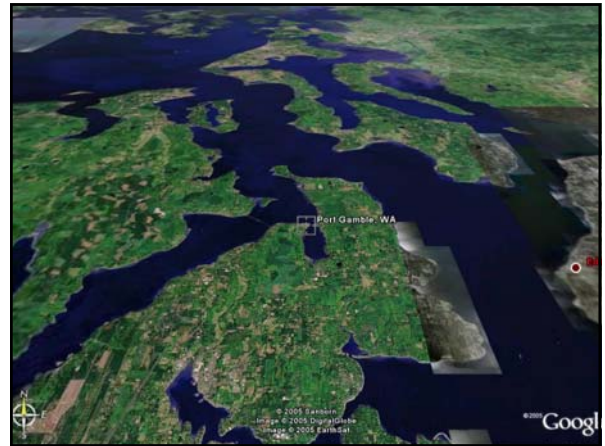
Port Gamble is across Puget Sound from Seattle



Case Study: Port Gamble, WA



Port Gamble is across Puget Sound from Seattle
(1 to 2 hours of travel time, depending on route taken)





Case Study: Port Gamble, WA

- **Case Study:** Port Gamble, Washington
 - Port Gamble is a “company town”
 - Town is owned by Pope Resources, a lumber company that has dominated the town since it was founded in 1853





Pope Resources
A Limited Partnership

About Pope Resources
Pope Resources, a publicly traded limited partnership, and its subsidiaries Olympic Resource Management and Olympic Property Group, own 118,000 acres of timberland and development property in Washington. In addition, it provides forestry consulting and timberland management services to third-party owners and managers of timberland in Washington, Oregon and California. The company and its predecessor companies have owned and managed timberlands and development properties for more than 150 years. Additional information on the company can be found at www.orm.com.

Case Study: Port Gamble, WA

- **Case Study:** Port Gamble, Washington
 - Over recent decades the town and its lumber operations have slowly declined, ending with the closing of the lumber mill in 1995 (town population, 100)



Case Study: Port Gamble, WA

- **Case Study:** Port Gamble, Washington
 - With a considerable investment in the area (4000 acres of land, and all buildings in the town), Pope wanted to think creatively about maximizing the value of its investment in Port Gamble



Case Study: Port Gamble, WA

- **Case Study:** Port Gamble, Washington
 - Pope approached the county government with a proposal to redevelop the town
 - **New basis for local economy:** festivals, specialty shopping, and tourism (see the town's web site, www.portgamble.com)



www.portgamble.com



Follow the Opening Errors and Hoppings Here


Welcome to Port Gamble

Experience the waterfront jewel of the Kitsap Peninsula situated on the shores of scenic Hood Canal. Explore the 120-acre National Historic Landmark complex with picturesque, turn-of-the-century buildings filled with shops, an historic church, breathtaking views, expansive grounds and New England style homes on maple and elm tree-lined streets.

Founded in 1833, by Major businessmen Andrew Pope and William Talbot, Port Gamble was the longest continuously operating mill town in North America. Authentically restored and operated by Pope Resources, Port Gamble is the only remaining complete arrival mill town in Puget Sound. We invite you to visit our unique shops, explore our trails, exchange news, celebrate an event, or simply take a leisurely stroll and enjoy history.

Case Study: Port Gamble, WA

- **Case Study:** Port Gamble, Washington
 - *Example of new approach:* working to renovate and restore historic buildings (town has special status as a state historic site)
 - A "picture-postcard" town






Museum of the Month
Step into New England at Port Gamble National Historic Landmark

by Cathy McDonald
 Special to The Seattle Times

Museum location: 32400 Rainier Ave. N.E., Port Gamble, Kitsap County.

Setting: On a drive from Seattle to the Olympic Peninsula, this pretty yet rather unassuming village appears like a New England vision on Kitsap Peninsula. A National Historic Landmark, the 19th-century company town was modeled after the founders' hometown in Maine. The lumber manufacturing operations of the Puget Mill Company here, founded by Andrew Jackson Pope and Frederick Talbot, eventually grew into the longest continuously operating sawmill in North America.

Museum displays: A museum is located under the general store, on the lower level facing the bay. Rather than explain the history of the town in a clear linear narrative, its strength lies in its artifacts and its reconstructed scenes from the town's glory days. See Captain Talbot's re-created cabin on the big Oriental, and peer into its dark cargo hold amid the sound effects of creaking rigging and shrieking gulls. Admire the master bedroom of manager Cyrus Walker, with its beautiful Victorian furniture shipped around the Horn from Europe, or imagine lounging in the lobby of the Puget Hotel (1903-1962). In contrast, peek inside a simple cedar-shake house typical of those used by the local Native Americans (some of their descendants live on the Port Gamble Shikamun Reservation just across from Gamble Bay).

Let it Snow!

Get ski and boarding conditions all winter long with webcams, snow alerts and more at www.visitportgamble.com/snowreporting

A feature on Port Gamble's historic features from *The Seattle Times*

Case Study: Port Gamble, WA

- **Case Study:** Port Gamble, Washington
 - Company promotes the town as a site for annual festivals (Octoberfest), weddings, and even movie productions

Case Study: Port Gamble, WA

- **Case Study:** Port Gamble, Washington
 - Company has sought out specialty businesses as tenants for the town's main business area

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Case Study: Port Gamble, WA

- **Case Study:** Port Gamble, Washington
 - Recent development brings up the question: is Port Gamble a "tourist town" or a "real town with tourists"?



Case Study: Port Gamble, WA

- **Case Study:** Port Gamble, Washington
 - **Q:** What do you think some of the key challenges might be for Port Gamble?
 - The town's owner (Pope Resources)
 - The town's businesses (specialty/tourist)
 - The town's residents
 - If you worked for Pope Resources or for the county planning department, what would you be interested in promoting here? Avoiding?
 - **Small groups for 4 minutes**



Small Town Planning

- The challenges facing planning in small towns can be illustrated by examining the unique elements of life present in small towns

Small Town Planning

- "Four dimensions of small town development"
- **1. Scale of Development**
 - **Scale:** in terms of both population and area
 - Growth and decline involves small absolute numbers, even if the percentages are large
 - 50% growth in a town of 300 = 150 people

Small Town Planning

- "Four dimensions of small town development"
- **2. Range of Development**
 - Range here = variety
 - Local population: much uniformity (family types, social and income classes)
 - Local business community: a few local services (grocery store, gas station) and a few community-sustaining businesses (commonly agriculture or a small manufacturer)

Small Town Planning

- “Four dimensions of small town development”
- **3. Intensity of Development**
 - For our purposes, think of intensity in a geographic context
 - Small towns are characterized by scattered development
 - No large, integrated industrial districts

Small Town Planning

- “Four dimensions of small town development”
- **4. Pace of Development**
 - The pace of small town development is uneven (many slow times, a few good times)
 - Each project must be treated with greater care than would be given a similar project in a larger center, because even a small project is important

Small Town Case Study

- Let’s use another case study now to illustrate how these dimensions impact what is possible in small town development
 - Keep the “four dimensions” in mind (scale, range, intensity, pace) as we look at this case study
 - Case Study Focus: the city of Trinidad, located in south central Colorado

Case Study: Trinidad, Colorado



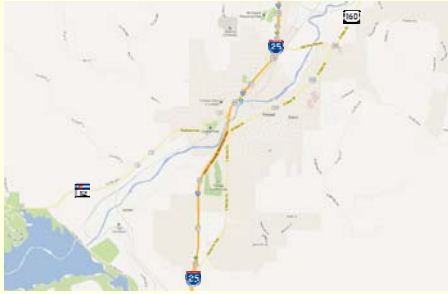
Case Study: Trinidad, Colorado



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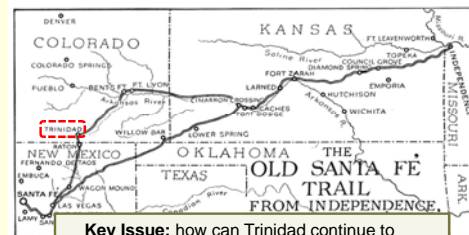
Case Study: Trinidad, Colorado

- Trinidad has many planning challenges that are common to many small communities across North America
 - Trinidad is a small city (2010 population: 9,096 people)
 - The local population trend is basically flat (2000-2010 population growth rate: 0.09%)

Case Study: Trinidad, Colorado

- Trinidad's stability has been enhanced by the presence of a small college (Trinidad State Junior College) that has been an ongoing source of employment since 1925
 - However, Trinidad has had some high-growth years as a booming mining town located at a key pass on the north branch of the Santa Fe Trail back in the 1800s

Case Study: Trinidad, Colorado



Key Issue: how can Trinidad continue to offer good job opportunities and a high quality of life for its residents in the 21st Century?

Case Study: Trinidad, Colorado

- Trinidad has a number of factors working in its favor, including an abundance of natural beauty, historic significance (as just mentioned), and interesting architecture

Case Study: Trinidad, Colorado



Case Study: Trinidad, Colorado



Case Study: Trinidad, Colorado



Case Study: Trinidad, Colorado



Case Study: Trinidad, Colorado



Case Study: Trinidad, Colorado



Case Study: Trinidad, Colorado

- Being located on Interstate 25 halfway between Denver and Santa Fe means that the town is torn in two directions
 - Potential for tourism-driven growth coming from its highway location and nearby mountain scenery
 - But residents also have a strong desire to keep Trinidad's small town character

Case Study: Trinidad, Colorado

- In recent years, the city has tried to develop its image with amenities that would be attractive to visitors, while being sensitive to the region's historical roots
- A few initiatives worth noting:
 - 1. Development of a Riverwalk feature
 - 2. Promotion of regular cultural events
 - 3. Efforts to preserve and promote local architecture and history

Trinidad: Riverwalk

- The Purgatoire River flows through Trinidad
- The city has developed a corridor along the river to function as a "people place"
 - Riverwalk (trails along river)
 - Cimino Park (children's play area next to Riverwalk)



Trinidad: Riverwalk



Trinidad: Riverwalk



Trinidad: Riverwalk



Trinidad: Riverwalk



Trinidad: Riverwalk



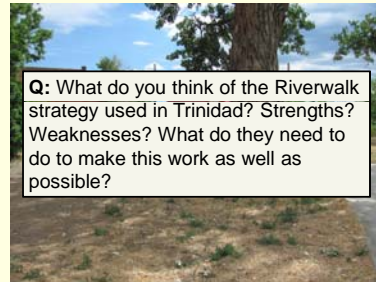
Trinidad: Riverwalk



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Trinidad: Riverwalk

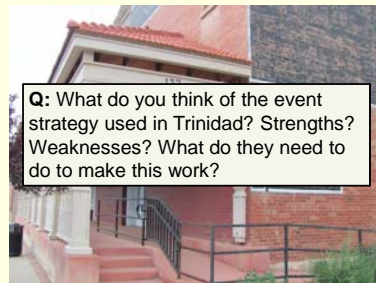


Q: What do you think of the Riverwalk strategy used in Trinidad? Strengths? Weaknesses? What do they need to do to make this work as well as possible?

Trinidad: Cultural Events

- The community in Trinidad has developed a series of events to keep people coming back to Trinidad throughout the summer
 - **Santa Fe Trail Days** (June): celebrates Trinidad's past as a prominent stop on the trail
 - **Mt. Carmel Live Festival** (July): live entertainment, food, craft vendors
 - **Trinidaddio Blues Fest** (August): concerts featuring regional bands
 - **TrindieFest** (September): independent film festival
 - **Trinidad Farmers Market** (all summer): by the river

Trinidad: Cultural Events



Q: What do you think of the event strategy used in Trinidad? Strengths? Weaknesses? What do they need to do to make this work?

Trinidad: Historical Preservation

- Trinidad has a rich legacy of unique heritage buildings and connections with the past



Trinidad: Historical Preservation

- Trinidad has a rich legacy of unique heritage buildings and connections with the past
 - The city focuses on these historic connections as crucial components of its external promotion and communication efforts

Trinidad: Historical Preservation

A **Coal Mining Monument** in Trinidad's downtown area. Mining was a crucial component of Trinidad's growth through the 1930s.



Trinidad: Historical Preservation

Trinidad operates **free trolley rides** to show the city's landmark building and districts, and tell the region's story.



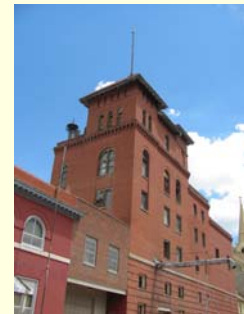
Trinidad: Historical Preservation

- Despite the value of history to Trinidad, physical realities are taking a toll
 - Many of Trinidad's landmark structures date from the 1800s, and are in dire need of investment and repair

Trinidad: Historical Preservation

The **Schneider Brewery Building** (1888) is one of Trinidad's most prominent landmarks. It is in need of reinforcement and general repair to avoid collapse.

A Denver-area property developer purchased the building with intentions of **converting to condominiums** before the 2008 economic collapse. The building has sat untouched since then.



Trinidad: Historical Preservation

- Beyond age, the other factor that is threatening Trinidad's historic structures is seismic activity
 - Trinidad happens to be in the most active earthquake zone in Colorado
 - Recent earthquake (2011): magnitude 5.3

Trinidad: Historical Preservation

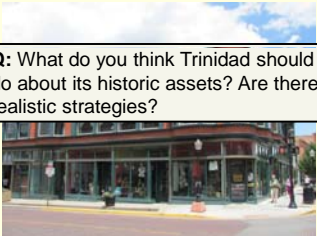
- **Example:** Trinidad's opera house has been vacated because of earthquake damage



Trinidad: Historical Preservation

- Trinidad has many historic buildings in need of investment and repair

Q: What do you think Trinidad should do about its historic assets? Are there realistic strategies?



Trinidad: Historical Preservation

- **Q:** How do you see the "four dimensions of small town development" (scale, range, intensity, pace) having an impact on Trinidad?
 - Are there particular opportunities that you see as most important for Trinidad to take advantage of?
 - Are there particular issues that limit Trinidad's prospects?