
Managing Urban Growth While Sustaining the Environment: A Set of Urban Planning Tools for Santa Ana, Costa Rica

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- Review of Project
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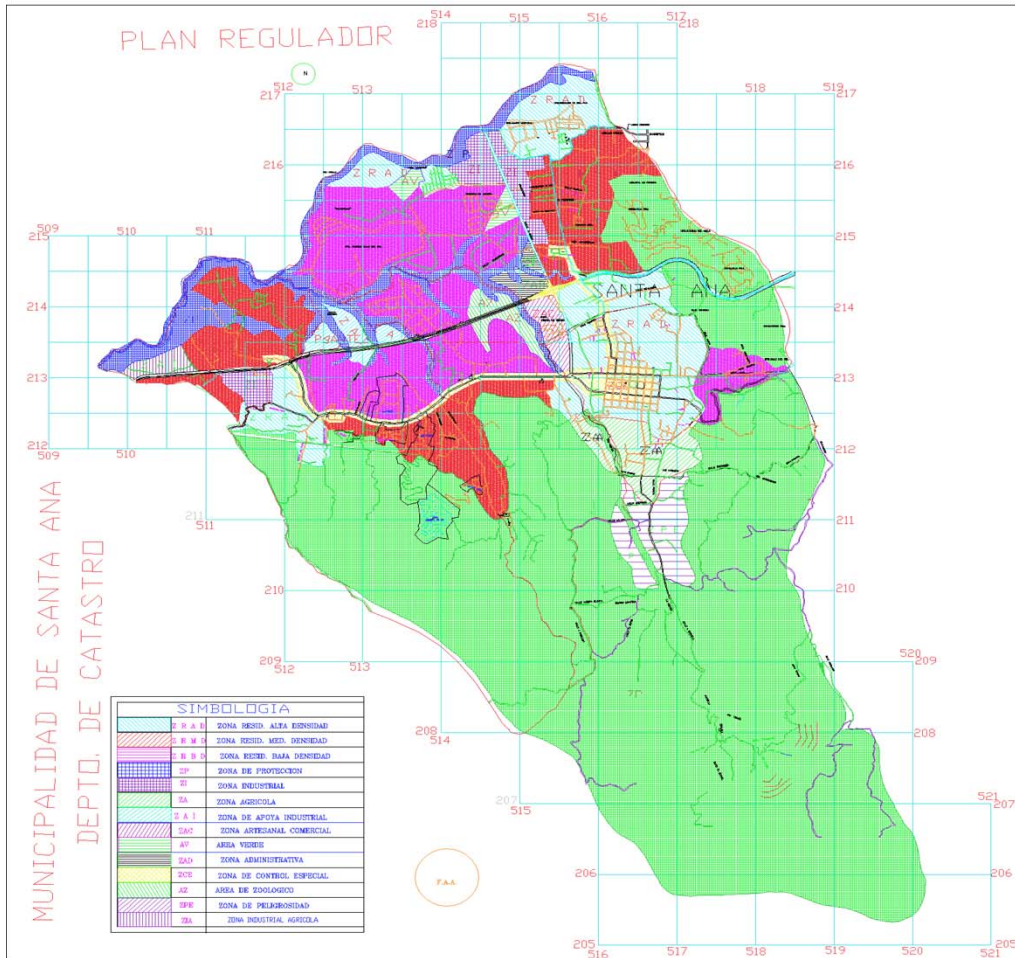
Santa Ana



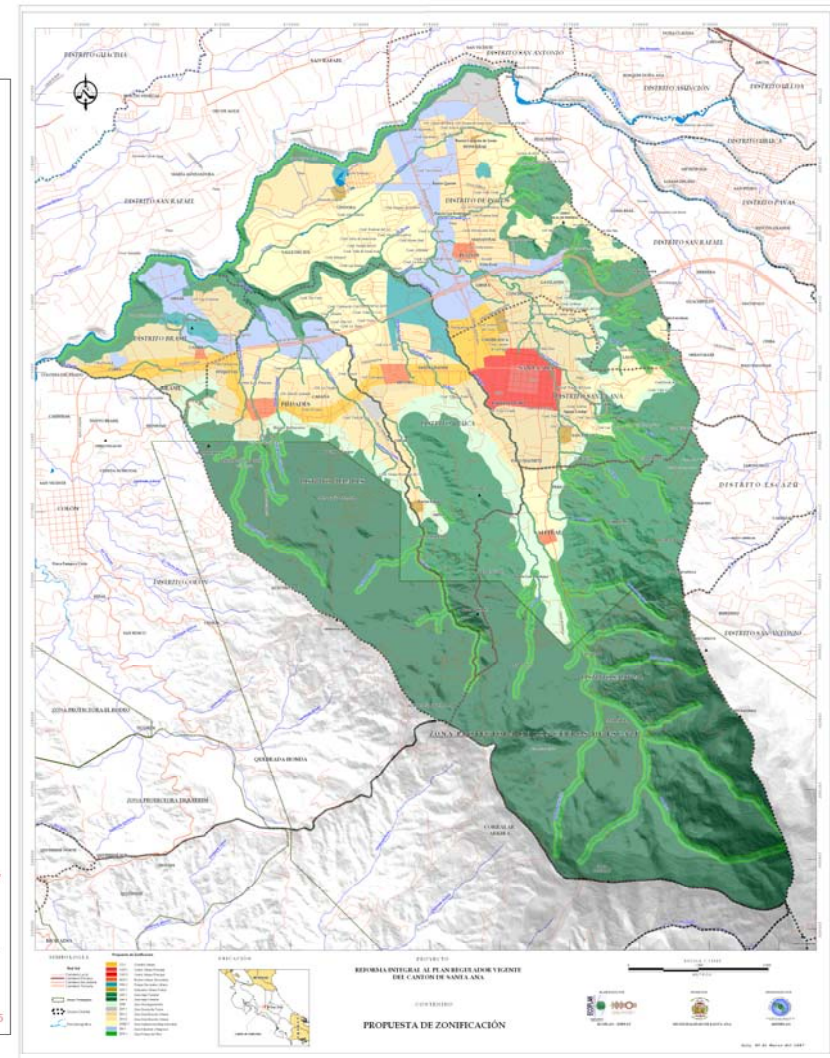
Santa Ana

District	Area (km2)	%	Pop.	%	Density (per km2)
Santa Ana	5.17	8.4	8,517	24.7	1,447
Salitral	20.37	33.2	3,369	9.8	165
Pozos	13.42	21.8	9,025	26.2	673
Uruca	6.96	11.3	5,635	16.3	810
Piedades	12.22	19.9	6,199	18.0	507
Brasil	3.28	5.3	1,762	5.1	537
TOTAL	61.42	100.0	34,507	100.0	562

1991 Comprehensive Plan



2007 Comp Plan (proposed)



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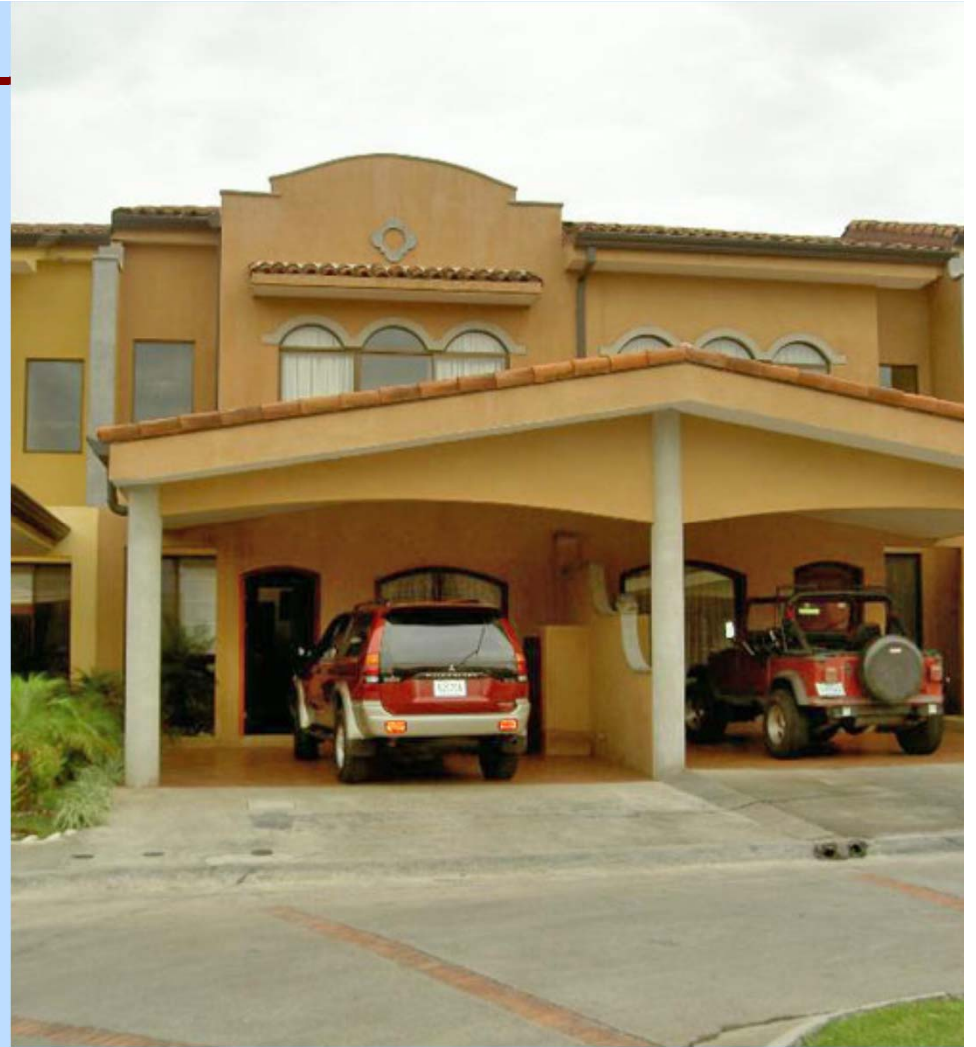
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Methodology

- Intra-group discussions
- Choosing a municipality
 - Receptive, sustainability-oriented goals
- Meeting with the municipal government
- Analyzing the legal framework in Costa Rica
- Matching U.S. urban planning tools to Santa Ana's needs



Results

For our final project we have created a document including:

1. Introduction
2. Summary about powers and limits of Costa Rican municipalities to regulate land use and levy taxes
3. List of management tools divided into two categories - incentives and regulations
4. Discussion of how tools can be applied to Santa Ana



List of Management Tools

- Regulations

- Moratoria
- Comprehensive Planning
- Urban Growth Boundaries
- Concurrency
- Environmental Impact Assessments
- Zoning overlays
- Cluster Zoning
- Buffer Zones
- Complete Street Ordinances
- Storm Water Regulations
- Exactions/Impact Fees

- Incentives

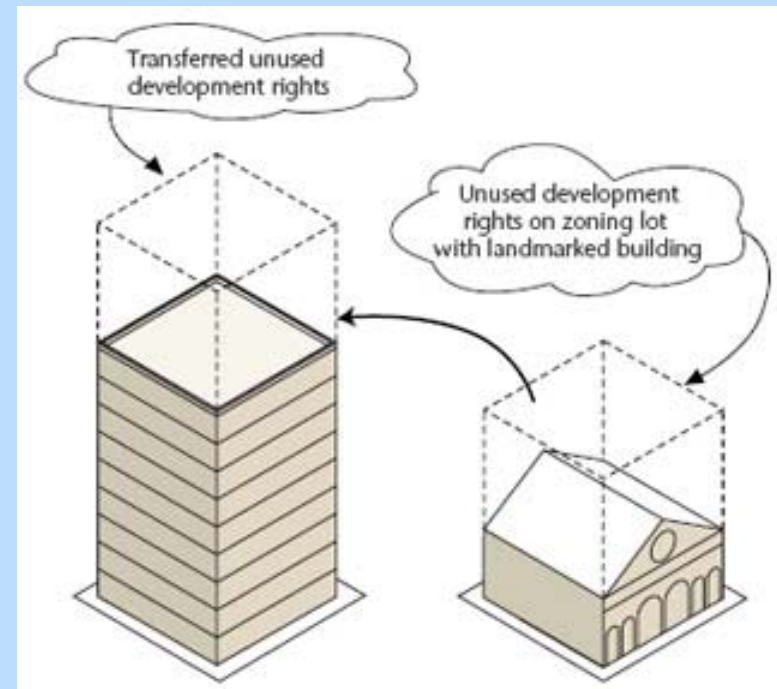
- Expedited Permits & Fee Reductions
- Tax Incentives (Property Tax Breaks)
- Density Bonuses
- Conservation Easements
- Transferable Development Rights



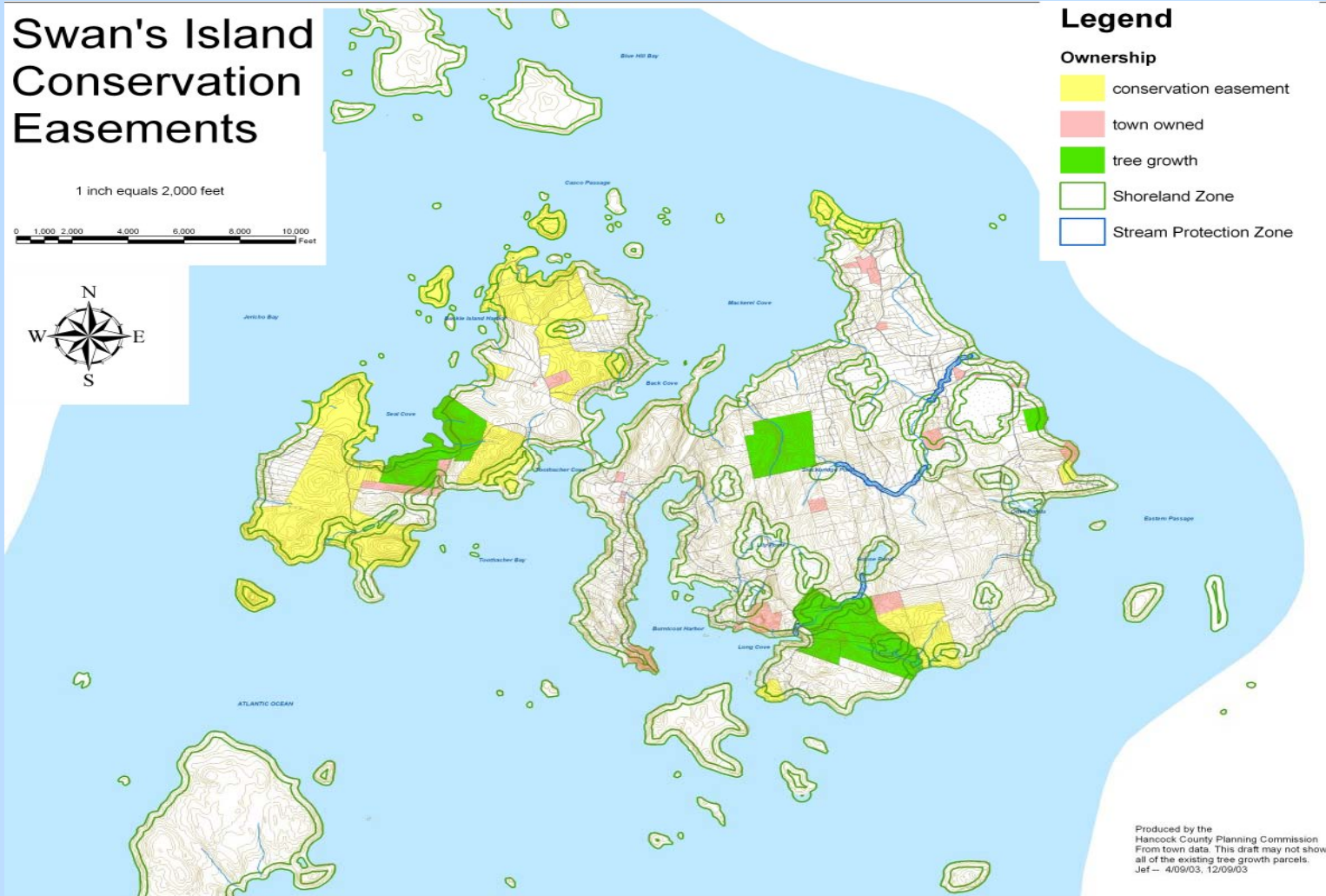
INCENTIVES



Transferable Development Rights



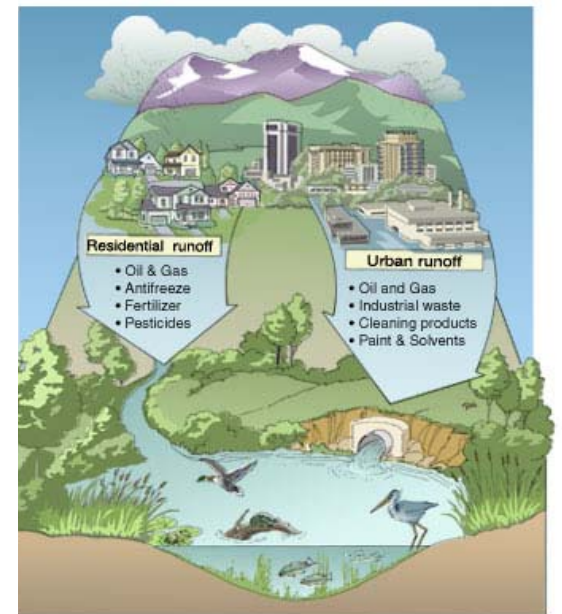
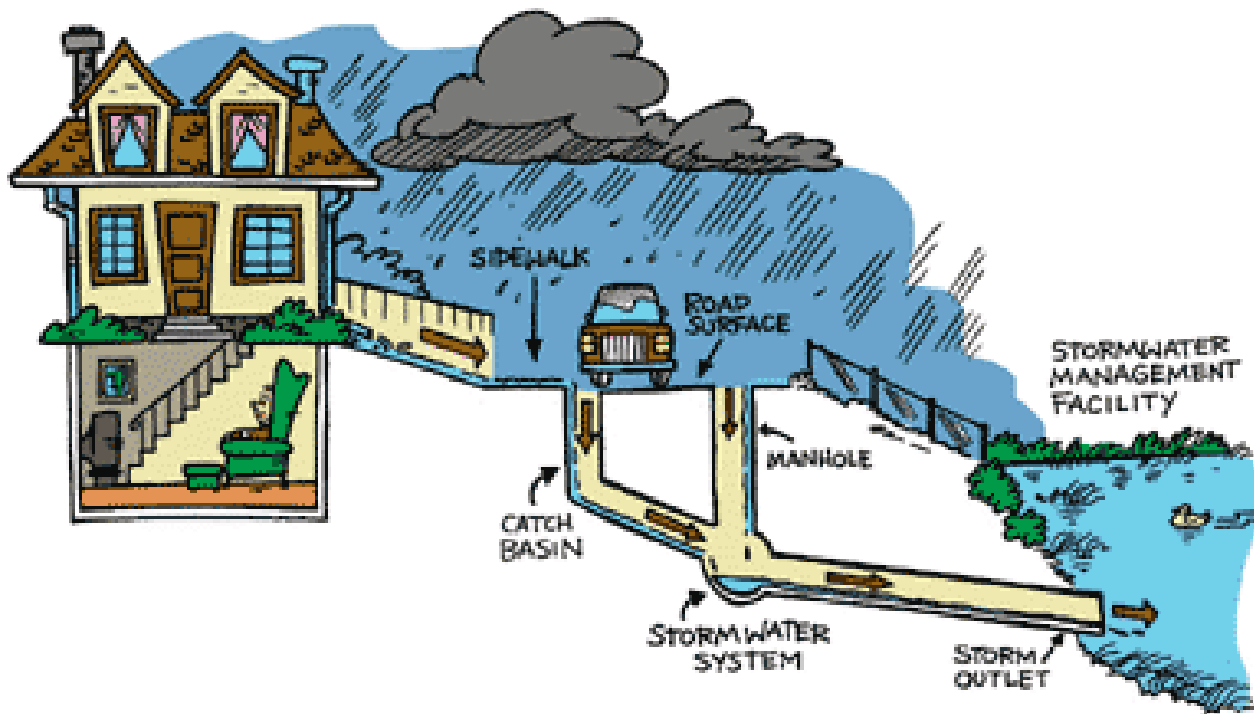
Conservation Easements



Density Bonuses



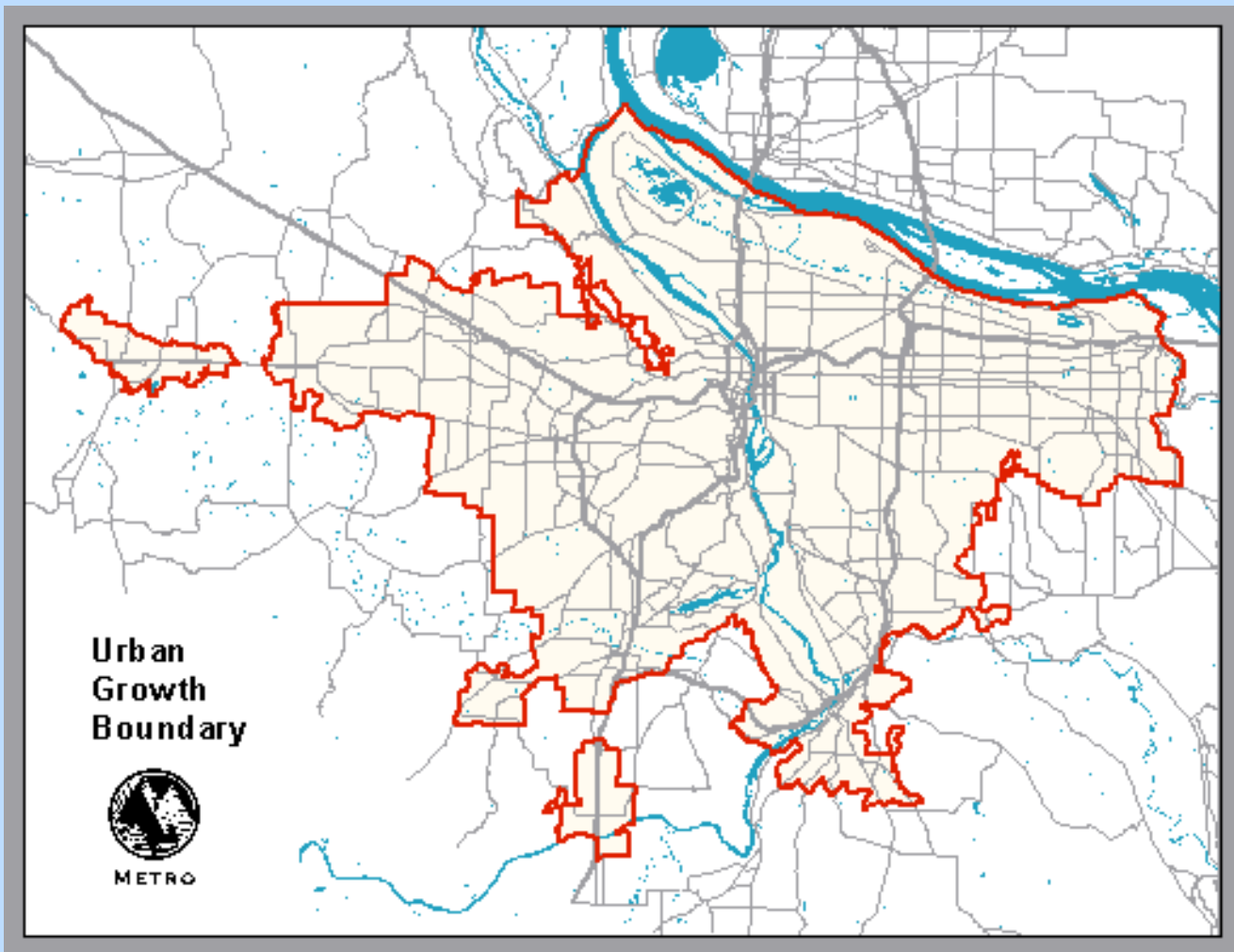
Stormwater Management



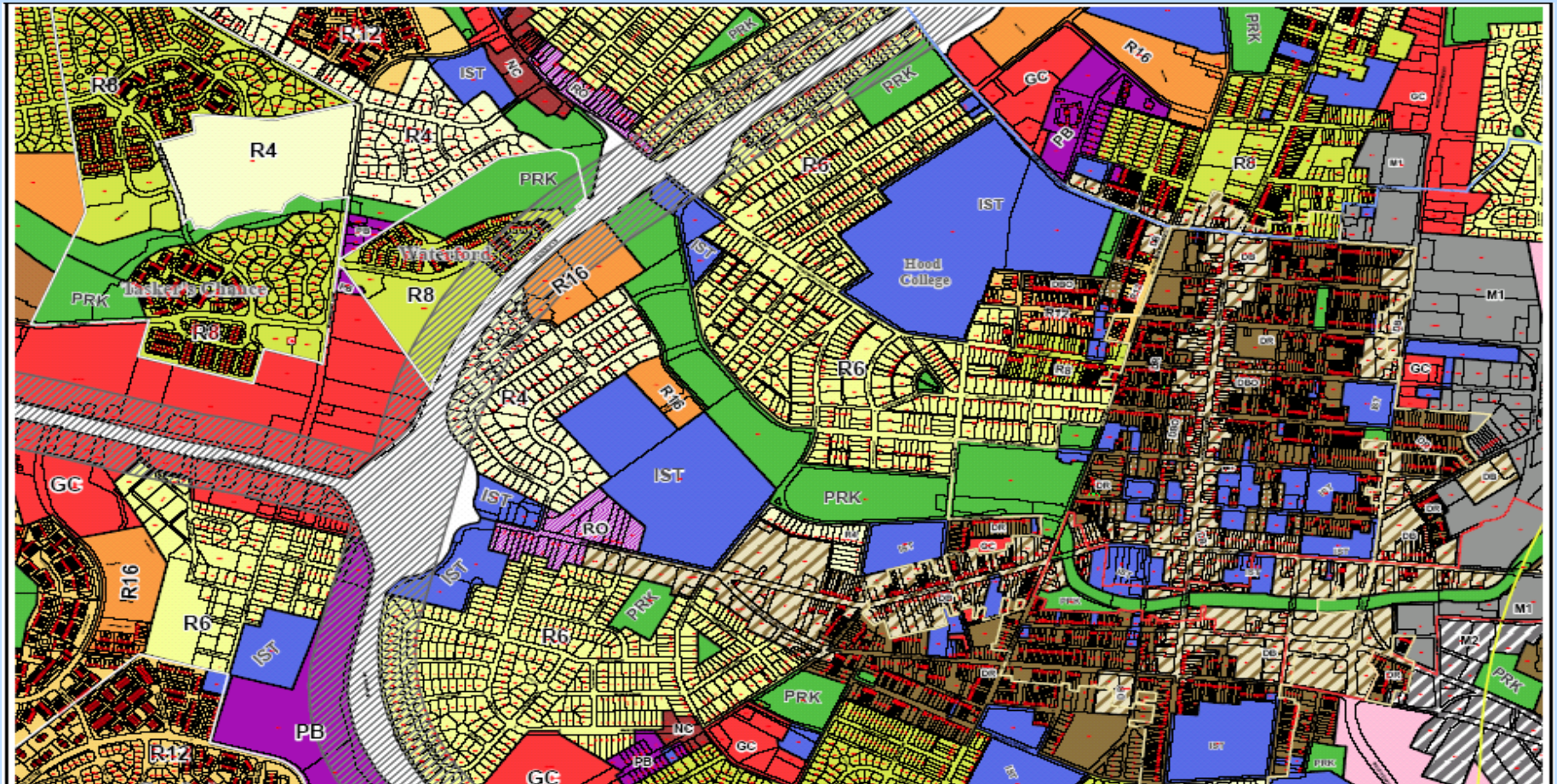
Moratorium



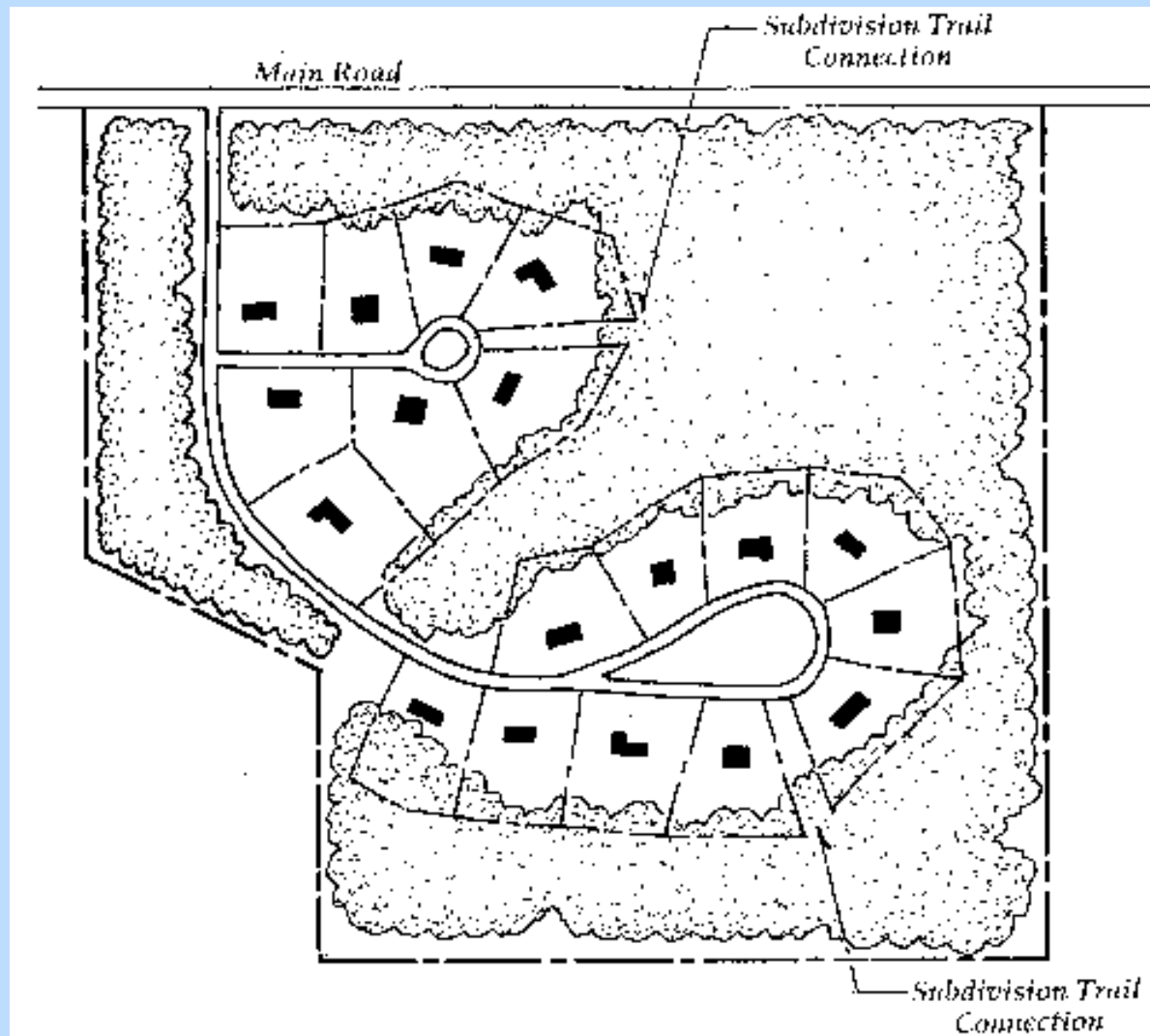
Urban Growth Boundaries



Overlay Zones



Cluster Zoning



MUNICIPALIDAD DE
SANTA ANA



Moratorium

CONCEPT:

Temporary ban on new development while the local government adopts new laws and procedures. Once the ban is lifted, new development proposals may receive a permit only if they follow the new laws. The ban may be total. In other words, it may ban all new development. Or the ban may be partial, only prohibiting new development of a certain class.



Moratorium

Example:

Moratorium in Península de Osa.

The Municipality declared a moratorium through a regulatory measure to halt all construction in the coastal area.



Moratorium

Legal Basis:

- Preventive & precautionary principles
- Municipal autonomy (protection of environment is a local interest)
- Municipal power to give building permits



Moratorium

Application to Santa Ana:

Until the Municipality completes its new Plan Regulador, it can impose a moratorium on all new development on the grounds that they still do not know whether the new growth will accord with new land use plans. Alternatively, they may temporarily ban new condominium developments, since those are the most problematic.



Unexpected Challenges

- Identifying a municipality
- Santa Ana government didn't know scope of its legal powers
- Deciding on a final work product
- Choosing the most appropriate tools
- Determining whether the urban planning tools are legal in Costa Rica
- Translating urban planning concepts into Spanish



Lessons Learned

- Projects take more time than anticipated
- Clearly identify the client and the client's needs from the very beginning
- Costa Rican municipal law is complex and still developing
- “Plan Reguladoras” are infrequently updated
- Some municipalities are committed to balancing growth with environmental stewardship
- Municipal governments don't have much expertise with land use regulations and could use outside help
- Many opportunities for municipalities to better manage land use



Planned Follow-Up

- Final report and presentation to the mayor's office
- Long-term extension of the project
 - UCR consultorio
 - More tools
 - Other municipalities
 - Revisions of Costa Rican law
 - Sister cities and partnerships with U.S. universities

