New Urbanism: An Introduction

This presentation was developed by the New Urbanism Division of the American Planning Association

Additional information provided by:

Smart Growth America
Congress for the New Urbanism
Hillsborough County Planning Commission, Tampa
APA Has a Smart Growth Project

It responds to the need to reform planning and land use to make great communities happen.

New Urbanism is an important component of smart growth that promotes alternative housing types that many people prefer.
Smart Growth Means
More Home Choices
Definitions

- Sprawl is an excessively low-density development pattern, in an unplanned and haphazard fashion, requiring tax support from existing communities to extend streets, utilities, services, and community facilities such as schools to undeveloped land.

- Smart growth is well-planned development that utilizes tax dollars effectively and provides more diversity for the community.
Ten Principles of Smart Growth

1. Mixed land uses
2. Compact building design
3. A range of housing opportunities and choices
4. Walkable neighborhoods
5. Distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place
6. Preservation of open spaces, farmland, natural beauty, and environmental areas

(Smart Growth America)
Ten Principles of Smart Growth

7. Development directed toward existing communities

8. A variety of transportation choices

9. Predictable, fair, and cost effective development

10. Community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions
What Smart Growth
“Is” And “Is Not”

- Is more transportation choices and less traffic
- Is vibrant cities, suburbs, and towns
- Is wider variety of housing choices
- Is well-planned growth that improves quality-of-life
- Is not against cars and roads
- Is not anti-suburban development
- Is not about telling people where or how to live
- Is not against growth

(Smart Growth America)
Sprawl vs. Smart Growth

(Smart Growth America)
How Smart Growth Works Better

- **Economy**: Results in lower public service and transportation costs
- **Employment**: Enables better access to jobs and lower commute time
- **Environment**: Causes less air and water pollution, and destroys fewer farms and open space
- **Equity**: Encourages more affordable housing and creates better choices in transportation and housing
- **Engagement**: Encourages participation in civic life and supports healthier and more active residents of all ages

(Smart Growth America)
New Urbanism

New Urbanism land use patterns support Smart Growth
Giving Physical Shape to Community

- Across North America, and around the world, an urban design movement called New Urbanism is improving the way our cities and towns are built.
Giving Physical Shape to Community

- Conventional developments are large, single-use places hostile to pedestrians.

- New Urbanist communities are walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods.
New Urbanism provides a range of housing choices, from single-family homes with yards to apartments over storefronts.
The Principles of New Urbanism

- The principles of New Urbanism are applicable to all scales of community:
  - The Region: Metropolis, City, and Town
  - The Neighborhood, the District, and the Corridor
  - The Block, the Street, and the Building
The Neighborhood

Conventional
- Set back far from street
- Automobile-based
- Garage in front

New Urbanist
- Near the street
- Pedestrian-oriented
- Front porches
The Neighborhood

- In New Urbanism, each neighborhood has a center
  - The center should be a public space, whether a square, a green, or an important intersection.
  - This is used as a public gathering place and as a landmark identifying the neighborhood.
The Neighborhood

- **Quarter-mile from center to edge**
  - For most people, a quarter mile is a five-minute walk.
  - Stores and services, schools, houses of worship, and recreational areas should be located in this area

(Congress for the New Urbanism)
The Town Center

- Diverse, walkable villages and town centers are what distinguish New Urbanism from other modern development styles.
The Block, Street, and Building

- Spread out development patterns of most post-war suburbs discourage walking.

(Congress for the New Urbanism)
The Block, Street, and Building

- **New Urbanist streets are comfortable and interesting places for people to walk and meet.**
  - Buildings open onto sidewalks, rather than parking lots.
  - Windows and doors facing the sidewalk make streets safer, and more interesting, for everyone.

(Congress for the New Urbanism)
The Block, Street, and Building

- Conventional versus New Urbanist street patterns
  - Amount of traffic on arterial
  - Number of route choices
  - Walkability

(Congress for the New Urbanism)
Conventional Growth

- Suburbs have not been immune to decline.
  - As places, they often engender even less loyalty than older cities.
  - Today's suburbs can be as impersonal as the gray cities of the past.
  - Traffic many times proves worse.
A Suburban Alternative

- Suburbs provide fertile ground for the New Urbanism
  - Infill projects
  - Housing redevelopment
  - Retrofitting existing commercial areas into town centers

(Congress for the New Urbanism)
New Urbanism

The Challenge
What Issues Need to Be Addressed?

- Pedestrian access
- Automobile dependence
- Mixture of buildings and uses
Pedestrian Access

- Development without pedestrian amenities does not encourage walking
  - Lack of sidewalks
  - Narrow sidewalks with no protection from vehicles
  - No connections between sidewalks
Automobile Dependence

- Even public buildings are often accessible only by driving
  - Community amenity areas
  - Schools
  - Churches
Automobile Dependence

- Garage-dominated design makes it hard for residents to keep an eye on the street
Automobile Dependence

Even the most attractive conventional suburban developments require driving to community facilities.
Automobile Dependence

- Overly wide streets
  - Expensive to build and maintain
  - Encourage speeding
  - Dangerous for children and pedestrians
New Urbanism

Case Studies
Early Examples

- The first New Urbanist development to be built from the ground up was Seaside, on the Florida coast.

(Congress for the New Urbanism)
Early Examples -- Seaside
Between 1985 and 1993, several more high-profile projects were undertaken in America’s fast-growing suburbs.

- Laguna West, California
- Kentlands, Maryland
How Does it Really Work?

Celebration, Florida
Case Study 1.
Celebration, Florida

- One of the largest and most visible New Urbanist communities in the country
- Design embodies New Urbanist principles
- Community design has significant effect on behavior
Architectural Variety

- Single-family homes can take on a variety of architectural styles to provide an interesting community environment

(Hillsborough County Planning Commission)
Setbacks

- Reduced front and side setbacks foster interaction among pedestrians and residents

(Hillsborough County Planning Commission)
Alleyways

- Attractive, well lit alleyways become alternative pathways for many purposes
Efficient Use of Amenities

- Use of retention ponds as recreational amenity promotes community involvement
Pedestrian-Scaled Streets

- Human scale to streets sometimes using a one way design allows for narrower streets and slower traffic

(Hillsborough County Planning Commission)
Integrated Housing Types

- A creative mixture of duplexes with single-family housing provides many opportunities in the same neighborhood.
Integrated Housing Types

- Apartments integrated into the community enable people to stay in the community when their lifestyle changes.
Paths and Trails

- Alternative pathways provide a variety of interesting ways of getting around

(Hillsborough County Planning Commission)
Attractive Infrastructure

- Attractive physical infrastructure not only serves its main purpose, but actually becomes an asset to the overall appearance of the community.

(Hillsborough County Planning Commission)
School

- The school as the center of community life can enhance community interaction
Public Recreation

- Recreation right in Town Center brings children into the community
Hidden Parking Lots

- Rear parking lots are not visible from pedestrian-oriented street front keeping an attractive streetscape for walking
Public Squares

- Pedestrian squares throughout community provide places to meet neighbors

(Hillsborough County Planning Commission)
Pedestrian Amenities

- Shaded pedestrian sidewalks enhance the quality and opportunity for walking
Parking

- Interconnection between pedestrian and hidden parking complements both functions
Pedestrian Storefronts

- Pedestrian-oriented storefronts provide an attractive streetscape
Public Interaction

- Private and public realm blending provide opportunities for community building
Focal Points

- Restaurant and residential mixed together creates a focal point in the town center for people to gather.

(Hillsborough County Planning Commission)
Mixed Uses

- Residential and Town Market in one building creates a complementary mixture of uses
How Does it Really Work?

- What residents said about Celebration
  - Celebration ACT Program
  - Report to the Community, Stakeholders, and Founders
    - January, 2000
Community Survey

- How much would you say you agree or disagree that Celebration’s physical characteristics promote your family’s involvement in the community? (245 answers)

(Hillsborough County Planning Commission)
Community Survey

- How much would you say you agree or disagree that Celebration’s physical characteristics contribute to and improve your quality of life? (245 answers)

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>59.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Somewhat Agree</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
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(Hillsborough County Planning Commission)
### Community Survey

- There is someone in Celebration outside of my immediate family who I can count on when I have a problem. (249 answers)

![Bar Chart]

- **Strongly Agree**: 70.6%
- **Somewhat Agree**: 25.7%

(Hillsborough County Planning Commission)
Community Survey

Since moving to Celebration, do you use your car more, less or about the same as in your previous community? (250 answers)

- More: 8.0%
- Less: 62.8%
- Same: 29.2%

(Hillsborough County Planning Commission)
How Does it Really Work?

West Park Village, Tampa
Case Study 2.
West Park Village

- Part of Westchase Development in Tampa
- New Urbanist community part of conventional planned development
  - Built as final 200 acre section of existing conventional subdivision
Town Center

- Town Center Provides Place to Meet
Town Center

- Vertically mixed Town Center brings residents and retail close together
Integrated Housing Types

- A mix of housing types are integrated into a single neighborhood bringing about a greater mix and diversity of residents
Front Porches

- Single Family with porches encourage “eyes” on the street, making residents feel safer when walking.
Architectural Compatibility

- The architectural streetscape creates a compatible environment to mix other housing types with single family
Integrated Housing Types

- Residential apartments at 30 units per acre are made compatible by design with adjacent neighborhoods.
Integrated Housing Types

- Accessory apartments over the garage provide opportunities for multi-generational families
Media Coverage

- The media is beginning to notice with many articles being written about New Urbanist communities.
Public Parks

- Ample parks complement private yards
Front Porches

- Homes with porches foster pedestrian activity
Pedestrian Activity

- Pedestrian activity builds a sense of community in the neighborhood
New Urbanism
The Bigger Picture

Other Applications of the Principles of New Urbanism
Principles

- New Urbanist principles are not only for up-scale development
  - Cost-effective
  - Economical amenities
New Urbanist concepts such as rear parking can modify conventional suburban development
Principles

- Rear parking concepts in urban redevelopment projects can open up existing streets to pedestrians
Housing

- The New Urbanist model is ideal for entry-level homes
  - Smaller size
  - Sense of community
APA’s Growing Smart project

- 7-year project to develop model state statutes governing planning
  - Key product: Legislative Guidebook available for free from www.planning.org
  - Contains model legislation and practical tools for redevelopment, affordable housing, and farmland preservation
  - Provides model legislation enabling local governments to enact a detailed traditional neighborhood development ordinance
Summary
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