From Urban Nowhere Zones to Everyday Neighborhoods

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Nowhere Zones

Characteristics

- Underperforming or deteriorated
- Create holes in urban fabric
- Divide neighborhoods
- Lack identity
Why do we need Everyday Neighborhood Framework?

- Counter retreat from public life
- Mitigate gentrification harms
Mitigate Gentrification

“For all the benefits it can bring, gentrification can impose great financial and social costs on the very families and business owners who are least able to afford them. If development is to be equitable, if revitalization is to have the essential support of those living in neighborhoods targeted for assistance, if the outcomes of these investments are to benefit more than those moving into the city, decision makers in the public and private sectors must anticipate these potentially harmful effects and take effective and timely steps to mitigate them now, and into the future.”

Communities of Interest

- shaping communities around special interests rather than the places we live → retreat from public life
- filled with people of similar activities, ages, incomes and values
- “Gated community of the mind”

(Calthorpe & Fulton)

Everyday Neighborhoods
Older Neighborhoods

- Counterpoint to COI
- Fostered random associations and connections
- Enhanced interaction beyond common interests and likemindedness
Communities of Place

- Daily interaction with a wide variety of people
- Civic life
- Everyday Neighborhoods ≈ COP
Everyday Neighborhood Framework

- Integrate the surrounding neighborhoods
- Improve local economic opportunities
- Quality development via 6 elements
Six Elements

1. Equity and social mobility
2. Sustainable
3. Pedestrian-friendly, transit-oriented
4. Mixed-use
5. Lifecycle community
6. Urban design
Equity & Social Mobility Element

- Neighborhood transformation which seeks to minimize displacement and improve economic opportunity for existing residents.
- They are the outcome of the successful creation of the other five elements of Everyday Neighborhoods.

Everyday Neighborhoods

September 21, 2006

Atlanta, Georgia
Need for a range of housing stock

- 2003 median housing prices in Atlanta, Chicago, Los Angeles and Houston were too high for teachers, nurses, janitors, sales representatives and police officers.
  - **National Housing Wage** is $15.37, almost three times the National Minimum Wage of $5.15.
  - Separation of housing types: the single most inequitable aspect of modern cities?
Preserve Affordable Housing

- **Inclusionary Zoning**: requires a minimum number of affordable units in housing redevelopment projects.
- **Deed Restricted Homeownership**: prevents new owner from flipping an affordable unit for a higher price.
  - **Permanently Affordable**: prevents home from being sold for a profit.
  - **Subsidy Recapture**: allows affordable unit to sell at market price but “recaptures” the subsidy and applies to a different unit.
Sustainable Element

“Sustainability is the ability to achieve continuing economic prosperity while protecting the natural systems of the planet and providing a high quality of life for its people.” (US Environmental Protection Agency)

“…development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” (Gro Harlem Brundtland, United Nations, 1987)
Environmental Sustainability

- Despite steady population growth throughout the United States, annual land use more than doubled to three million acres a year.

- Average house size increased from 983 to 2,265 square feet since 1950.

- Atlanta GA, one of the fastest growing housing markets in the United States -- average lot size is $\frac{3}{4}$ acre.

- Everyday neighborhood strategy promotes density.
Sustainable Construction

- LEED adds $3 to $5 per sq ft to construction costs; saves $49 to $66 per sq ft over 20 years.

- Standards
  - Location Efficiency: efficient use of available land and current infrastructure.
  - Environmental Preservation: erosion prevention, wetland protection, farmland conservation and storm water run-off reduction.
  - Compact, Complete and Connected Neighborhoods: infill or existing urban neighborhoods with density of at least 7 units per acre with pedestrian connection to surrounding areas.
Sustainable Construction cont.

- Earthcraft House standards used in Glenwood Park, Atlanta added only 1.3 percent to building cost and will return 20% over the property lifecycle.

- Standards include:
  - rainwater and bath water collection and re-use for irrigation, photovoltaic system, high performance windows, programmable thermostats, Energy Star lighting systems and appliances, sealed crawl space and attics, spray foam insulation and highly efficient heating and cooling systems
New affordable housing development, Patterson, NJ

- will use photovoltaic cells to subsidize residents’ electric bills.
- 3000 homes built of Styrofoam blocks filled with concrete. Along with Styrofoam wall panels, able to withstand a hurricane while environmentally sound and energy efficient.
- Photovoltaic cells allow the units to “sell” power back to the utility company for credits applied during less sunny days.
- Obtained U.S. Green Building Association seal of approval and only 3% - 6% more expensive to build.
Sustainable Construction:
Green Roofs

- vegetation-covered rooftops beautify, reduce heat island effect.
- make use of water runoff, insulate sound and improve HVAC efficiency.

Photo from: http://www.asla.org/meetings/awards/awds02/chicagocityhall.html
Making Neighborhoods Sustainable

- LEED – recently launched LEED ND which is aimed at providing standards for entire neighborhoods.
- Earthcraft Community Standards: new initiative based on the Earthcraft House Standards that has five pilot neighborhoods underway in the southeast.
- The Enterprise Foundation – a national public-private venture that has helped build communities and housing for two decades; provides funding for construction of green affordable housing through its Green Communities Initiative.
Mixed-Use Element

- Mixed-use neighborhoods are becoming popular again as people are attracted to the idea of village living.

- Fortunately, zoning regulations that restrict mixed-uses in the suburbs are usually not found in cities and their urban nowhere zones.
New Urbanism

Images from:
www.cnu.com
www.glenwoodpark.com

Everyday Neighborhoods
September 21, 2006
Atlanta, Georgia
Mixed-Use Element cont.

- Requires Flexible Zoning
  - Neighborhood/Commercial
  - Main Street/Commercial
  - Urban Residential/Commercial
  - Hotel/Residence
  - Office/Residential
  - Retail District Retrofits
  - Live/Work Zones
Lifecycle Element

- For a community to be lifecycle accommodating it must provide housing and accessibility for three distinct life groups:
  - young adults
  - families
  - elderly
Lifecycle Element cont.

- Requires diverse housing stock and accessibility to a variety of goods and services.

- Allows residents to stay in their neighborhoods even as their needs change over time.
Aging in Place

- Elderly: By 2020 more than 30% of the U.S. population will be over 55 years old.
- Ratio of working to retired Americans will drop from the current 5:1 to a 2:1 in the next fifty years.
- Children: despite 25% of the population being children, population in metro areas average less than 15%.
Aging in Place

- More than half of those 65 yrs or older have some form of disability.

- Universal Design helps elderly or younger citizens with disabilities live independently.
Aging in Place Cont.

- Design Features
  - Four feet wide hallways
  - Slightly wider doorways or off-set hinges
  - Master bedroom on ground floor or stair chair lift
  - Grab bars for bathtub and toilet
  - Handles instead of door knobs
  - Accessible light switches and cabinets
  - Step-less home entry
Pedestrian Friendly Element

- Pedestrian-friendly communities
  - Facilitate walking for work, shopping and recreational activities
  - Where streets are shared with cyclists
  - Sidewalks are ample enough for people to walk side-by-side
  - Shape and feel of the community is not dominated by autos
  - Encourage community interaction
Need for Pedestrian Friendly Design

- Beyond community building and smart growth principles -- *need to enhance safety*
  - 5000 pedestrians killed in auto/pedestrian accidents and 70,000 injured in the US (2003)
  - Automobile dominated design means pedestrians and cyclist often compete with cars for the right-of-way
  - Rapid flowing traffic not only makes walking, cycling and playing outside more risky, but also less attractive
Traffic Calming Techniques

- Speed Tables, Raised Crosswalks, Speed Humps, Rumble Strips and Pavement Treatments

Images from: www.walkinginfo.org/pedsafe
Traffic Calming Techniques cont.

- Median and Channelization Islands

Image from: www.walkinginfo.org/pedsafe
Traffic Calming cont.

- Road Diets, Chokers, Curb Extensions and Chicanes
- Neotraditional Street Design and Roundabouts

Images from: www.walkinginfo.org/pedsafe
Good Urban Design Element

- Urban form is both the most influential and controversial aspect of a livable neighborhood. It dictates the distances we have to walk and the environment we walk in. It can create inclusion and invite diversity -- but change will likely encounter resistance.
Why Urban Design Matters

- **Finance**
  - 15% premium in New Urbanist neighborhoods and preference of 40% of perspective buyers

- **Equity**
  - HUD (1996) recognizing importance of good urban design in low income housing, approved use of TND (traditional neighborhood design) in new low income developments

- **Sustainability**
  - Urban infill developments tend to have higher density, a greater housing mix, and are usually built on a more efficient grid street system
Why Urban Design Matters cont.

- Mixing Uses
  - Preserving the neighborhood feel and safety of suburban life in a mixed-use urban neighborhood requires creative design.

- Pedestrian Friendly
  - Inviting, tree lined streets with adequate resting facilities are as important to creating pedestrian traffic as traffic calming and adding density.

- Lifecycle
  - Creating a varied housing stock helps recreate the aesthetic of traditional neighborhood design, as well as provides housing alternatives for people who choose to age in place.
Conclusion

- Renewed concerns that today’s urban revitalization trends are gentrifying, widening inequalities, and displacing minorities
Everyday Neighborhoods

- Framework to guide public and private officials seeking to promote redevelopment
- Allows creation of a set of criteria by which public subsides and assistance for private development are made
- Create communities of place