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Massachusetts city aims for a downtown remake

An unusual financial arrangement will provide most of the \$1.6 billion needed to redevelop Quincy Center with a design by the architect of Mizner Park.

PHILIP LANGDON

Architect Richard Heapes made his name more than two decades ago by planning Mizner Park, a stylish, extremely popular town center that rose like a phoenix from the site of a failed shopping mall in Boca Raton, Florida.

In the years since, Heapes moved to Street-Works LLC, a design and development company based in White Plains, New York, where he orchestrated endeavors such as Blue Back Square — gracefully stitching a 20-acre mixed-use complex onto the venerable town center of West Hartford, Connecticut.

Now Heapes is involved in probably the most challenging urban project of his career — the replacement of most of the existing downtown of Quincy, Massachusetts.

The scope of the Massachusetts project is enough to make many planners queasy. Street-Works, where Heapes is a principal, intends to build practically a new downtown — “20 blocks of pretty traditional development: retail on the ground floor, something else above it,” as Heapes puts it — where now stands the partly attractive, partly nondescript business center of Quincy.

Street-Works envisions two hotels; destination retail, including a movie theater, a department store, and a supermarket; street retail with at least 30 restaurants; a wellness center including a full-service health club and medical facilities; two to four educational institutions; more than a million square feet of offices; eight parking

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Retail buildings on Hancock Street (foreground) in Quincy, Massachusetts, will be torn down to make way for 20-foot sidewalks, shade trees, and mixed-use buildings of a new downtown. The historic Granite Trust building, in the background, will be preserved.



COURTESY OF STREET-WORKS

How to grow a Garden City

A book by Andres Duany offers a blueprint for what he calls the development tool of the future: Agrarian Urbanism.

REVIEW BY ROBERT STEUTEVILLE

Four years ago, Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company (DPZ) was hired to create a plan to develop an “agricultural community” on a 528-acre farm site near Vancouver, British Columbia. Andres Duany and his team worked with master farmer Michael Ableman and other experts: This creative fertilization produced a plan to build a town of 2,000 housing units on one-third of the site’s acreage while tripling the value of the land’s agricultural production.

The as-yet-unbuilt project, called Southlands, was unique in that it sought to integrate agriculture and urbanism at all levels, from high-density units with window boxes to medium-sized farms. Duany has since refined his thinking on

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‘Sharing’ bikes, taming streets

PHILIP LANGDON

In the past several months, I’ve ridden bicycles in two cities that are hundreds of miles from my New Haven home — thanks in both cases to “bike-sharing.”

Last November, Jim Sebastian, bike program manager for the District of Columbia Department of Transportation, arranged for me to ride with him through downtown Washington and close-in neighborhoods — both of us pedaling bright red, three-speed bicycles rented from Capital Bikeshare.

And early in June, during CNU 19, I made several rides in Madison, Wisconsin, using bikes from B-cycle — a system then making its Madison debut.

Bike-sharing is on the verge of being a common amenity in urban America, just as it already is in parts of Europe. B-cycle, a Waterloo, Wisconsin, firm owned mostly by the bike-maker Trek, introduced its first bike-share network in April 2010 in Denver. In the 15 months since, B-cycle has launched operations in Boulder, Colorado; Chicago; Des Moines, Iowa; Omaha, Nebraska; San Antonio, Texas; and Kilauea, Hawaii, as well as the Wisconsin capital. By year’s end, B-cycle expects to add Louisville, Kentucky, Spartanburg, South Carolina, and Broward County, Florida, to its list of locations.

The term “bike-sharing” seems a little off — “sharing” customarily meant *giving* something to others, not charging them for use of a common service. But no matter. Bike rental charged by the half hour — for short trips rather than all-day or multi-day touring — is enjoying phenomenal growth.

Capital Bikeshare, which is affiliated with Alta Bicycle Share of Portland, Oregon, already has nearly 15,000 members. Most members pay a \$75 annual fee for access to bikes scattered around DC and Arlington, Virginia. In addition to that fee, riders pay rental charges for each trip lasting more than 30 minutes. On Capital Bikeshare, the charge is \$1.50 for the second half-hour and \$3 for the third half-hour. On Madison B-cycle, the first half-hour is free, the second half-hour costs \$2, and each additional half-hour costs \$5. The escalating rental charge pretty much guarantees that people will use the bikes only for short periods — thus maximizing their availability to other riders each day.

For-profit bike-share firms generally collaborate with local governments or nonprofit entities; this helps ensure that bike-sharing contributes to communal good. Not-for-profit organizations inject knowledge of local people’s desires into the equation.

CONGESTION, POLLUTION, HEALTH, TRANSIT BENEFITS

The environmental benefits can be significant. Capital Bikeshare has recorded 557,282 trips on 1,100 bikes since startup last September. Even if trips are short — the average ride on Washington’s network is 1.15 miles and 21 minutes — that’s a lot of automobile trips avoided. “It helps with congestion, pollution, health, transit,” Sebastian observed. “It takes pressure off transit in peak time.”

“Our first season in Denver [from April to December], we had 103,000 rides, averaging a little over two miles,” says Jason McDowell, projects and logistics manager for B-cycle. In the absence of rental bikes, he estimates that 43 percent of those trips would have been made by car.

The expanded availability of bikes reinforces municipal efforts to make streets safer and more comfortable for nonmotorists. Cities such as Madison and Washington have been installing bike lanes, “bike boxes” (designated areas where cyclists stop at intersections), special traffic signals for cyclists, and other features that help tame the streets.

When I rode with Sebastian, he noted a young woman in a dress who looked perfectly comfortable pedaling calmly through downtown. In the past, Sebastian observed, biking was largely the province of risk-taking males. Now, with bike-sharing and more civilized streets, biking is expanding its appeal, attracting the risk-averse. As these changes take hold, the urban environment should become better for everyone.

At CNU 19, it was liberating to be able to go places by bike whenever I chose. There were plenty of kiosks (docking stations) throughout the downtown, and more were in the works. Because the bikes contain electronic chips that record trips, city planners can discover which locations and routes attract cyclists, and which ones cyclists avoid. That could spur needed intervention.

Short-term bike rental surely will aid the humanizing of America’s cities. ♦

Jurisdictions get ready to pounce on TIGER III

US Department of Transportation (DOT) is seeking proposals for the third round of multimodal, discretionary TIGER grants totaling \$527 million. Like the first two rounds — \$1.5 billion in 2009 and \$600 million in 2010 — TIGER III is likely to be highly competitive.

Those entities that apply for the grants have an advantage if they have already done planning for a project — particularly a project with “livability” and economic development benefits.

TIGER is the largest grant program under the federal government’s Partnership for Sustainable Communities (DOT, HUD, and EPA), and the program stands out for its innovative approach to transportation spending. TIGER funds a variety of projects — many of which are beneficial to smart growth and more efficient transportation. These include streetcar systems, arterial-roads-to-boulevards transformations, transit-oriented development, and freight rail improvements, along with highway, bridge, and port investments.

The emphasis on economic development, livability, and environmental sustainability stands out. There are five primary criteria for project funding:

- **State of good repair:** Improving the condition of existing transportation facilities and systems, with particular emphasis on projects that minimize life-cycle costs.
- **Economic competitiveness:** Contributing to the economic competitiveness of the US over the medium to long term.
- **Livability:** Fostering livable communities through place-based policies and investments that increase transportation choices and access to transportation services.
- **Environmental sustainability:** Improving energy efficiency, reducing dependence on oil, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and benefiting the environment in other ways.

- **Safety:** Improving the safety of US transportation facilities and systems.

Projects don’t have to meet all of the criteria. Yet DOT officials have emphasized repeatedly the livability aspect — and by that they mean transportation improvements that will have a positive affect on the built environment by encouraging more compact, mixed-use, land development. The potential for a project to trigger the kind of real estate activity that has long-term sustainability benefits is a big plus.

TIGER originally stood for Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery — it was part of the economic stimulus package. Now the program is officially called TIGER Discretionary Grants.

The program encourages broad and innovative partnerships of state, local, and regional governmental agencies and private entities.

Unlike TIGER II funding, TIGER III will offer no grants for planning and design. All grants will be for capital projects — although some planning and design may be part of the proposal. A 20 percent match is required, but that’s a threshold — projects with a higher than 20 percent match are likely to be more competitive.

Final applications are due by October 31, 2011. DOT wants at least some of the planning and design to be done ahead of the application to promote quick implementation. Some officials have complained that this creates a “chicken and egg” problem, particularly for projects that would not be able to move forward without DOT funding. In these highly competitive grants, however, projects are more appealing if applicants have already carried out planning and design and know how the project will be able to obtain environmental approvals. ♦

Debate intensifies over bike-ped issues

Participants in CNU 19 question whether communities are doing enough, and whether bike lanes may worsen conditions for people on foot.

PHILIP LANGDON

Disagreement over how to make communities more bike-friendly — without detracting from pedestrian life — cropped up in June when more than 1,100 people gathered for CNU’s 19th annual congress.

“CNU is 10 years behind on bikeway planning and design,” Mike Lydon, principal in the Street Plans Collaborative, declared during the June 1-4 gathering in Madison, Wisconsin. “Bikeway design is a rapidly advancing field,” Lydon emphasized, and he urged new



Cyclists use a “bicycle block” in Madison.

urbanists to become much better versed in it.

DeWayne Carver, a planner with Hall Planning & Engineering in Tallahassee, Florida, responded with skepticism to some methods proposed by bike advocates. In particular, the idea of lay-

ing out new communities with roads that are wider — to accommodate bike lanes — may make those corridors less comfortable for pedestrians, Carver warned.

Biking was the focus of five separate sessions in the congress, reflecting the

rapid growth of bike initiatives around the country.

Cities from New York to Portland, Oregon, are installing “cycle tracks,” “bike boulevards,” and other facilities aimed at increasing the number of people traveling on two (nonmotorized) wheels. Yet Lydon, in his CNU presentation and in later elaboration for *New Urban News*, said many traditional neighborhood developments (TNDs) have not kept up with bike planning’s advances.

Among his contentions:

- “The deficiencies are most pronounced in greenfield development In the TNDs I’ve visited and studied, they tend to have several, or at least a few, connections to a main arterial road, but the **connectivity through the site to other neighborhoods tends to be very limited.**” It’s hard for cyclists in these mostly suburban communities to reach much of the region conveniently and safely. The main roadway rarely has any bikeway infrastructure to link to.

- Wayfinding is lacking. “Primary bike routes and destinations need to be made transparent in and through neighborhoods. ... If I bike to a new neighborhood that I am not intimately familiar with,” Lydon pointed out, “I’m going to want to know which street to take that will be comfortable, direct, and get me to a destination within or on the other side of the neighborhood.” **Often directional clues are absent.**

- **There is too much reliance on “sharrows”—** markings on the pavement reminding motorists that they must share portions of the road with cyclists. “Sharrows are an important treatment, and seem to be widely accepted by us new urbanists, but they will not attract” the many people who worry about riding next to fast-moving motor vehicles, said Lydon, a former DPZ employee whose Street Plans Collaborative has offices in New York and Miami.

- **“New Urbanists often just copy-paste bike parking ratio standards from other sources,** and those sources are not the best — most sources tie bike parking to car parking. The two should be unbundled so that if car parking requirements are reduced in the future, this does not negatively impact the supply of bike parking when it may be needed most.” The need for intelligent bike parking oversight is most crucial in downtowns.

- **“The base SmartCode oversimplifies the available types of bikeways** (Bike Routes, Bike Lanes, Bike Trails)” and “makes little distinction between existing and retrofit conditions.” Lydon said he and others wrote a SmartCode bike module to address several such issues, but are just now getting the opportunity to calibrate it in El Paso, Texas, and Fitchburg, Wisconsin. “It’s much more difficult to calibrate the module after the Code has been adopted,” he observed.

In many new urban communities, even the bike racks are out of date, according to Lydon. “Comb racks,” containing a series of vertical metal dividers to which you’re supposed to lock your bike, are awkward when compared to “inverted U-racks,” he explained.

A CONTRASTING VIEW

Carver, from his perspective as a planner of TNDs, found several ideas and techniques from the realm of bike advocacy troubling. Among them:

- Roads that are widened to provide a 5-foot bike lane on each side. **Adding a total of 10 feet to a street’s width can reduce the street’s sense of enclosure.** That, in turn, can make

the street less appealing, especially to pedestrians.

- The idea of “cutting off the grid” at certain points to prevent vehicular traffic from making cyclists uncomfortable. Carver believes **the grid is a valuable tool that should generally be allowed to prevail.** He praised the City of Madison for generally *not* including traffic diverters in its bike boulevard system.

- Removal of on-street parking so that the parking lane can be converted into a bike lane. Carver said that on some arterial roads in Madison where on-street parking had been replaced by bike lanes, he discovered that the building entrances facing the street no longer functioned; the operators had closed them, forcing people to use a back door — to the detriment of pedestrian convenience and sidewalk character and **potentially sacrificing urbanism to cycling.**

Carver argued that a tight-grained urban structure often can make a conspicuous bike “infrastructure” less necessary — by reducing the speed of motor vehicles. In Madison’s core, he noted, “the grid of modest two-way streets and small blocks worked effectively to evenly distribute traffic and manage traffic speeds — about 15-20 mph on the streets I measured with my pocket radar. The beautiful downtown square moved traffic at a stately pace, so that cyclists of varying abilities were able to circulate among the cars, trucks, and buses with no difficulty.”

Special routes for cyclists have become more of a necessity outside Madison’s core — in post-World War II areas with wide roadways and faster traffic, Carver observed.

One of the biggest concerns is the conflict between bicyclists and motorists at intersections. Carver suggested that Madison, probably because its downtown is a narrow area squeezed between two lakes, has ended up with a heavy flow of bikers on a bike path along a railroad and the waterfront. The high volume of cyclists on that route causes motorists to yield.

The lesson to be learned, he said, is that “when we must cross our street network with paths in our TND neighborhoods ..., we need to ensure that these paths generate as much bicycle traffic as possible.”

REACHING THE ‘CONCERNED’ MAJORITY

Tim Blumenthal, president of the Bikes Belong Coalition, pointed to the “20BY2020” campaign, whose aim is to have 20 percent of all the trips in Madison made by bicycle by the year 2020. That would be nearly six times the percentage of trips now powered by pedaling.

Blumenthal emphasized that spending on biking improvements results in “many benefits for little money — bicycling is a very cheap date.”

He divided the American population into four classes when it comes to biking:

- 1 percent describe themselves as “fearless.”
- 6 percent call themselves “enthusiastic and confident.”
- 60 percent are “interested but concerned” about their vulnerability.
- 33 percent say “no way, no-how” to biking.

The challenge, Blumenthal said, is to making biking appeal to the big “interested but concerned” contingent.

Lydon emphasized the importance of context when trying to create safe, inviting conditions. What’s appropriate in a TND or a new town center may not be right in an old, built-up city, he noted. “In New York, a bikeway facility will change from block to block,” he said. Context is key. ♦

Garden City

FROM PAGE 1

the subject, designed a series of projects, and now calls this approach “agrarian urbanism.”

Duany explains the name: “rather than ‘agricultural,’ which is concerned with the technical aspects of growing food, the term ‘agrarian’ emphasizes the *society* involved with all aspects of food. Not long after Southlands, Duany declared that “agriculture is the new golf.” In other words, access to locally grown food and the culture by which it is grown and processed is an amenity that people will pay for.

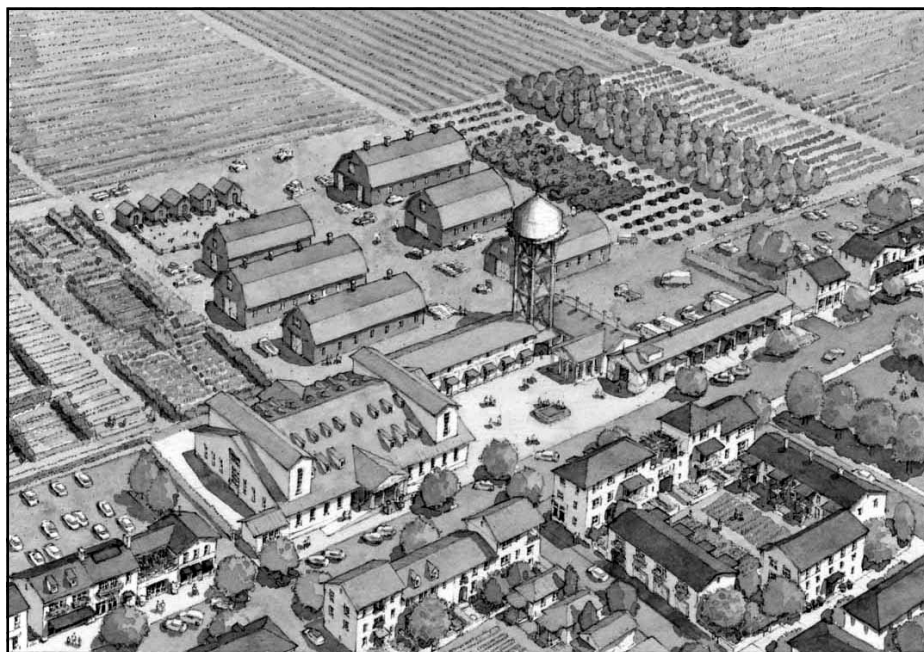
Now, Duany has produced *Garden City: Theory & Practice of Agrarian Urbanism*, a little book that thoroughly explains the use of urban design to promote food and farming culture. The Prince’s Foundation for the Built Environment, funded by Prince Charles, an early supporter of both traditional town planning and organic farming, is the publisher. The book is well illustrated by DPZ projects — most of them recent, but some dating back as far as 1994.

“As Michael Pollan argues, our food production must change; and as Leon Krier argues, so must our sprawling communities,” Duany explains. “Agrarian urbanism addresses these two great concerns simultaneously.”

Duany is a master theorizer, and this book explains four models of agriculture-related urban planning.

- **Agricultural retention** deploys an array of techniques to save existing farms, including farmland trusts, greenbelts, and transfer of development rights. One gem from this book is the insight that farmers “usually expect to subdivide lots only along their frontage roads, connecting to the utilities that run alongside.” Full development of a farm “requires costly infrastructure” and large debt, Duany writes. “Thus only the frontage of the farms need be purchased by the land trust, with the rest remaining in agriculture as a condition.” This insight is probably most useful today, when isolated houses can be built as sprawl but large developments likely will fail.

- **Urban agriculture** cultivates land within existing cities and suburbs, sometimes using parcels in depopulated sectors. “The format includes community



COURTESY OF DUANY PLATER-ZYBERK & COMPANY

This Market Square is the primary social condenser of Agrarian Urbanism. In close proximity are: the farmyard, for agricultural operations; the barn, which is also the meeting house; administrative offices and instruction rooms; processing areas; grocery store, dining hall; farmer’s market; shops with dwellings above; and residential buildings.

gardens and even small farms overlaid onto vacant blocks,” Duany says. “Where there is no surplus land, gardens may be installed in private yards or on rooftops. ... The food produced is supported by distribution and processing systems such as farmers’ markets, community kitchens, food cooperatives and contracted restaurants.”

- **Agricultural urbanism** “refers to settlements equipped with a working farm. The agriculture is economically associated with the communities’ residents and businesses, but it is not physically or socially integrated. Anyone may visit, volunteer, and learn from the farm, but few of the residents participate in the productive activities.” A number of modern developments — some new urban in design — fall into this category, including Village Homes in Davis, California, Prairie Crossing outside Chicago, Serenbe near Atlanta, and New Town at St. Charles, Missouri. Farms are managed as Community Supported Agriculture (CSA).

- **Agrarian urbanism** applies to settlements where “society is involved with food in all its aspects: organizing, growing, processing, distributing, cooking and eating it. ... Agrarian urbanism is a complex pattern that transforms lawn-mowing, food-importing suburbanites into settlers whose hands,

minds, surplus time and discretionary entertainment budgets are available for food production and its local consumption.” The concept is based on the English Garden City, Israeli kibbutz, 1960s commune, and US master-planned golf course community.

The latter is important, because Duany describes a modern community with modern housing and middle class inhabitants who would not necessarily work in the farming or food processing business for a living. The agrarian activity would be the social center of the community — an amenity with health and environmental benefits.

Unlike historic agrarian societies, these communities would have paid employees do the hardest work. While running an agrarian community would not be cheap, Duany says the expense and labor would be comparable to that of golf course communities, which employ greenskeepers. Beyond the golf course, master-planned communities spend a lot of money on landscaping. Redirect these funds toward food growing, add garden clubs and a CSA, shift some municipal landscaping dollars toward food-producing plants, attract avid gardeners and foodies as residents, and plug in food processing entrepreneurship — voila, there’s agrarian urbanism.

The indispensable tool for agrarian urbanism, Duany says, “is the property owner’s association or co-op — an administrative arrangement similar to that of any community that has a common facility like a lobby, parking lot, golf course, marina, pool, or security guard to maintain.”

The book presents a fascinating vision of a new real estate development tool, one that Duany says “is *all* about the future. Sustainability to the point of self-sufficiency is where the market is going, especially if it becomes apparent that the campaign to mitigate climate change is being lost.”

Garden Cities mixes pragmatism — e.g., the use of homeowners’ associations and co-ops to fund the management — and visionary idealism with a splash of pessimism (Kunstler’s *The*

Long Emergency is mentioned as a critical resource).

For all of its attractive social, health, and environmental features, agrarian urbanism is not going to be easy to pull off: “To make a difference in the campaign against climate change, agrarian urbanism must succeed in being profitable, popular and reproducible — with no downsides if possible,” says Duany. That may be a hard row to hoe.

The first printing, called Theory & Practice of Agrarian Urbanism, will be available in mid-July through Amazon.com. The second printing, reviewed here and retitled Garden Cities: Theory & Practice of Agrarian Urbanism, is expected to be available in August from Amazon. The price is \$20 for the 94-page paperback. ♦



COURTESY OF STREET-WORKS

An aerial plan for Quincy Center. The historic town common is at lower left, by the train station.

Quincy, MA

FROM PAGE 1

garages; and up to 1,400 housing units of varied kinds.

All of the existing infrastructure, such as the collapsing clay pipes of 200-year-old sewers, is to be replaced. Streets and sidewalks will be rebuilt, five new public spaces will be created, and a sixth public space will be rehabilitated. In all, Street-Works and the 91,000-population City of Quincy anticipate \$340,000 of new infrastructure and more than \$1.3 million of construction for private development.

The “new Quincy Center,” as city officials call it, encompasses 50 acres that will begin to see replacement of its

infrastructure in 2012 and will get the first of its private real estate construction in 2013. Downtown Quincy is now a hodgepodge — a few historic buildings, a cemetery where John Adams and John Quincy Adams are buried, some modern office buildings, and quite a few mundane storefront buildings, some of them just one story high.

“Except for about five historic buildings, it comes down,” Heapes told *New Urban News* during an interview in the 82-year-old Granite Trust building, the first property that Street-Works acquired when the firm’s wooing of the city began.

The extent of demolition and rebuilding conjures up unhappy memories of 1960s urban renewal — a program that

left blocks in many cities empty for decades.

A NEW FINANCIAL MODEL?

One of the things that sets the Quincy project apart from old-style urban renewal is its financial structure. After nearly three years of negotiations, the city and Street-Works agreed that the bulk of the financial risk would be borne by the developer (and its lenders and investment partners) rather than the municipality.

Street-Works will round up the money to pay for the infrastructure replacement as well as for private portions of the project. This mechanism — the “purchase model” — “largely eliminates the public risk often associated with

redevelopment projects," Mayor Thomas P. Koch emphasized in a press statement. "The City will purchase the public infrastructure — including parking garages — from Street-Works only when new buildings are occupied and producing enough revenue to cover the City's debt costs."

"We think we have the model for urban redevelopment," says Chris Walker, the mayor's director of policy and information. "This will avoid the empty-hole feeling when making a commitment. This protects the City from losing out on its investment."

"For Street-Works," Walker says, "the benefit is that they have the full faith of the City behind them," which should help the company raise capital from nongovernmental sources. *The New York Times* reported April 6 that by the time construction starts, Street-Works "will have spent \$50 million of its own funds, as well as money raised from Quincy Mutual Fire Insurance Company, Ronus Properties of Atlanta and others."

For construction financing, the developer plans to take the city bond guarantee and its signed leases to the private equity and debt markets for institutional and traditional loans, Ken Narva, a partner of Heapes, told *The Times*. Joint venture partners are expected to be involved in developing at least 12 of the 25 new buildings with financing they raise themselves.

Jerold Kayden, a professor of urban planning and design at Harvard, calls the Quincy arrangement the "build-operate-transfer model." It's unusual but "not shockingly new," says Kayden, noting that "the larger the project, the more likely it is that the developer is building some infrastructure."

Heapes says one reason for turning to an unusual financial arrangement was that after the strong public reaction to the use of eminent domain in New London, Connecticut, to clear a large site for Pfizer pharmaceuticals (which built a research complex and later closed it in a corporate cutback), reliance on eminent domain appeared to be out of the question.

Kayden says that in fact, "eminent domain is not impossible. A bunch of projects around the country rely on eminent domain or the threat of eminent domain. It hasn't been shut down by *Kelo*" — the 2005 US Supreme Court decision that prompted a backlash against government seizures of property for private redevelopment.

In any event, Street-Works worked out deals with more than 30 land owners without resorting to eminent domain.

"We're into the permitting process now," says Walker. Work has begun on a project to move a brook that for years has been in a culvert under a downtown street. Nearly 200 feet of brook will be opened up, and a park setting will be created around it.

A road project will "get a lot of through-traffic out of downtown and eliminate a traffic bottleneck," Walker continues. A bridge is to be built over tracks of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) to help people reach Quincy Center.

THE TRANSIT CONNECTION

The impetus for remaking downtown Quincy came from Stop & Shop, a supermarket chain that had tired of having its headquarters in a tired-looking downtown which long ago ceased being a regional retail destination. Street-Works had worked with Stop & Shop on many projects and thus was strongly recommended to the city.



COURTESY OF STREET-WORKS

Everything in the photo, up to the single-family houses near the top, is slated for demolition to create the new Quincy Center.

"We told the mayor you can't do it piecemeal," Heapes says. "You've got to do the whole downtown." The new Quincy Center has been approved for 3.5 million square feet of development, with a few buildings allowed to rise as high as 20 stories.

"The private sector designs it all and constructs it," Heapes explains. "The private sector takes the risk on the cost. The city is not taking a lot of risk. This is really the model" for current era. There will be about 5,000 parking spaces — a number that Walker says is not excessive, given the quantity of office, retail, and entertainment space and the number of households. "The city lowered the parking requirement because it's a transit-oriented development," he notes.

Why does the developer think such a large and complicated project, requiring perhaps 10 years from groundbreaking to completion, will succeed? A key factor is the shortage of developable areas within the Rt. 128 beltway that encircles Boston and its nearer suburbs. "Within the 128 circle of value, there's no land, and where there is land, it takes 10 years to get it entitled," Heapes asserts.

Downtown Quincy can capitalize on that situation because the city is not only well-connected to highways, including Interstate 93; it is also on the MBTA's Red Line, just six stops (about 20 minutes) from downtown Boston by rail. A "T" station is about a two-minute walk from one of the main downtown streets.

Consequently, Heapes thinks that businesses, medical institutions, and schools will want to be in Quincy Center, and that many people, from students to empty-nesters, can be enticed to live there. He points out that "neighborhoods do come right up to downtown."

In previous projects, including Santana Row in San Jose, California, and Bethesda Row in downtown Bethesda, Maryland, Heapes has demonstrated a talent for designing streets, sidewalks, and public spaces that attract people. He learned from Disney the importance of having a huge number of "points of detail" per block. "A hundred of those points have to be lovable, delightful,"

"It's about a matrix of layers," Heapes says. "There have to be differences. Every café has different seating. You can't do what the tenant next door to you is doing."

The big challenge for projects of this size, says Harvard's Kayden is: "Do they really happen? Often there's demolition and then nothing." Such setbacks occur, he says, "even in Boston. There's the Filene's [former downtown department store], an empty hole in the ground."

In City Hall, Walker swats away such doubts. "Over the course of 2 ½ years, we've had more than 30 public meetings," he relates. "The overriding sentiment was not *if* but *when* can we start. We've seen nothing but wholehearted support." ♦

Unlocking the value in remnant land

What do you do when you have a strip of land 125 feet wide and a mere 15.25 feet deep?

The answer: Design a building 15.25 feet deep.

When a section of the double-deck Central Freeway in San Francisco was replaced with a short, ground-level Octavia Boulevard in 2005, the project generated thin strips of left-over land along the new thoroughfare. The 125-foot width of the properties was "the end grain of a city block," explains architect Daniel Parolek, a principal in Opticos Design in Berkeley.

The San Francisco Prize, which is meant to promote good urban design, sponsored a competition for designs for a half-dozen parcels along the boulevard in Hayes Valley. At CNU 19 in Madison, Wisconsin, Parolek presented his firm's proposal for two lots, which won an award of merit in the competition.

Each shallow lot, said Parolek, could accommodate 15.25-foot-deep, four-story buildings containing small, incubator retail spaces on the ground level and three floors of housing above. To compensate for the lack of outdoor space at the rear, each building would have two-story terraces overlooking the boulevard.

Buildings 20-feet deep



The living units — six dwellings with two-story layouts that interlock with one another — would range from 950 to 1,590 sq. ft. Above or below each main living space would be a flex space capable of being used as a home office or a guest room.

"Being one room deep, the dimensions would be good for lighting and ventilation," Parolek pointed out. The terraces were designed with shutter inserts to create semi-enclosed space in the chilly San Francisco evenings. No on-site parking would be provided. (Opticos gave the scheme a contemporary look after first designing in a more traditional style and then deciding that "the jury would not select the traditional building due to their modernist leanings.")

In the six years since the competition, nothing has been built on the sites, mainly because the dimensions were so constrained. Nonetheless, Parolek sees this scheme — in whatever style is ultimately selected — as a model liner building, something that could be useful in many situations.

"It could be used to repair downtowns (by lining set-back parking structures) and in suburban retrofit conditions. It basically can add value to a piece of 'remnant' land that currently has no value."

If the emerging trend toward compact urban development continues to gain force, the Octavia Boulevard solution could yet find a home — perhaps many of them. ♦

'Sell the neighborhood first' helps Louisville project

"Norton Commons's focus has always been selling the neighborhood first and the home second," says Angela Hepner, Marketing and Neighborhood Manager of Norton Commons. The New Urban development, outside Louisville, KY, has been growing steadily throughout the economic downturn and is outperforming its surrounding neighborhoods according to John Gilderbloom, a professor of urban and public affairs at the University of Louisville, who has been studying the Louisville region's real-estate market.

Sales have averaged 60 to 70 units per year with the average home price at about \$375,000, Hepner says. Norton Commons, which began construction in 2003, has sold approximately 450 residences. There are about 40 businesses operating within the neighborhood. Twenty-one units are to be displayed in a "Home-a-rama" event that takes place in late July — 16 of those units were sold as of late June.

Norton Commons is planned to have a total of 2,880 dwelling units and 560,000 square feet of retail at buildout. The developer anticipates that completion will take 15 years.

Norton Commons brings a holistic approach to its marketing. The neighborhood center has been the host of a continuous stream of events, bringing outsiders into the development and building a sense of community among the residents.

The neighborhood center has outdoor movie nights, Thursday night live music, weekly farmers' markets, summer programming in a community pool, 4th of July fireworks, and has hosted several bike races through the community.

Events frequently piggyback multiple agendas: the weekly farmers' market often features a charity event across the street. Home-a-rama, a regional home show put on by the Home-

builders Association of Louisville, also features the raffling of one home with the proceeds benefiting the local Children's Hospital.

The development has focused on building community amenities to maintain a consistent buzz around the project, even when home sales slowed during the recession. Several parks and a pool were built in the early years of the project. The development has a YMCA and church under construction and has plans for two schools. "We continued to concentrate on building things that showed progress during the worst of times," says developer David Tomes. "The firehouse, parks, and civic buildings ... there was always a perception that a lot was happening here and only here."

There are currently about 60 buildings under construction, which is fewer than had originally been planned at any given time, but, "when you look at everything else in town it's the only place doing anything," says Tomes.

A variety of housing types and price points helps. "Functional, creative and unique floorplans seem to be the way the world is moving and this is exactly what we offer," says Tomes. Norton Commons includes condominiums, townhouses, apartments, single-family houses, and live-work spaces, as well as market-specific units such as age-restricted housing. The price range is wide. Condominiums have sold for as little as \$139,000 and some houses have been priced as high as a million dollars. High-end houses are still being built, but under contract — not as spec houses.

"We concentrated efforts to deliver products that hit market needs," Tomes says. Yet primary focus is always on creating a good place. "If someone loves the neighborhood, they will find a house," says Hepner. ♦



Storefronts at Norton Commons.

COURTESY OF NORTON COMMONS

'Not So Big' concept works in Illinois

For the first time, Sarah Susanka, architect and best-selling author of the popular *Not So Big House* book series, has designed a house for a development — SchoolStreet Homes in the Village of Libertyville, Illinois. The new urban infill project, located 35 miles north of Chicago with commuter rail service to the city, has been selling well — at odds with national trends.

Only about three acres in size, the development has sold 24 of 26 lots in 10 months. The formula is to provide architect-designed houses with many of the same materials so that prices can be kept down. "By using the same pallet of high quality materials in each of the 26 houses, SchoolStreet Homes is able to bring a semi-custom house to the marketplace at a reasonable price point,"



The SchoolStreet Homes plan (center-right of image), is embedded in the urban fabric of Libertyville, with its main street, Milwaukee Avenue, a half a block away.

COURTESY OF ZACH BORDERS, HOK

Susanka says.

The developer is calling the units "Front-Porch Revival" houses, designed with a combination of bungalow and Craftsman details. The houses are designed to fit in well with early 20th Century houses in surrounding neigh-

borhoods.

The project also includes the conversion of a historic school into 15 lofts. The houses and rehabilitated school fill a streetscape that connects to Libertyville's main street, Milwaukee Avenue. The "Walkscore" of the site is

88. In addition, another three-acre parcel — now covered with surface parking — between the 41-unit project and Milwaukee Avenue is being planned as a mixed-use development by the architecture and urban design firm HOK.

In today's economic environment, the "Not So Big" idea is appealing, says SchoolStreet's developer, John McLinden. "The success of SchoolStreet is due largely to offering homeowners the opportunity to interact with our architects, and also to a level of customization that was previously unheard of in residential development," he says. "We truly have found a like-minded visionary in Sarah."

The Susanka "Showhouse" sold within days of its announcement in November 2010. Susanka is known for her "build better, not bigger" approach to residential architecture. A decade ago, Susanka's message from her first book, *The Not So Big House*, became the rallying cry for professionals and homeowners seeking houses designed with quality, character and sustainability in mind, rather than sheer square footage.

Both Susanka and McLinden see this development as embodying these same principles for more a compact life. "What excites me most is that the Showhouse will give people an unprecedented opportunity to explore what it means to build Not So Big," says Susanka. "It's a wonderful opportunity to bring this design to life in a charming community such as Libertyville—a Not So Big village, if you will."

The 2,450 square foot Showhouse features informal, multi-use rooms with lots of built-in cabinetry. "People today want



A rendering of the Sarah Susanka-designed house at SchoolStreet.

houses that are more proportioned to their actual needs, rather than designed to knock the socks off the neighbors," says Susanka. "... This home is designed so that every space is used every day, without the formal rooms that only get used once in a blue moon. It also sports a number of spaces that can do double duty." ♦

Street fight: Landscape Urbanism vs. New Urbanism

In their first substantive dialog, landscape urbanist Charles Waldheim and new urbanist Andres Duany reveal that the issue is less about sprawl than what lies beyond everybody's front door: The street.

ROBERT STEUTEVILLE

For the better part of a year, an Internet controversy has simmered over the relative merits of New Urbanism, the most influential urban design movement for the last two decades, and Landscape Urbanism, embraced by Harvard but still the "new kid on the block."

To many planners, developers, and public officials, the debate — if they are aware of it at all — must sound academic. Yet the outcome could shape the built environment for decades to come.

Much of the discussion has focused on whether Landscape Urbanism, which specializes in expansive open spaces that celebrate ecological features, represents a greener form of sprawl. Based on the comments by Harvard's Charles Waldheim, the biggest name in Landscape Urbanism, and a response by Andres

Duany, the biggest name in New Urbanism, at the Congress for the New Urbanism June 4, the sprawl accusation seems misplaced.

The real issue is the design of what lies just beyond everybody's front door. A little history is needed to explain how much is at stake.

It was Jane Jacobs who in her 1961 classic, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, praised the urban street, with its regular building frontages — a form of development that had been under assault since the 1920s from automobile-oriented planning and street design. That assault nevertheless continued for nearly a half century longer — until the recent housing crash — as sprawl marched across the land, lining thoroughfares with parking lots and garage doors.

The new urbanists took up the cause in the 1980s, arguing that well-ordered streetscapes were essential for walkability. Although new urbanists, who are champions of compact communities, have not vanquished sprawl, they have had a good deal of success in popularizing their ideas about walkable streets. Waldheim, a product of the University

of Pennsylvania architecture program in the 1980s, noted that "New Urbanism has emerged as the default setting for urbanism in North America" over the course of his career.

Now a professor and chair of landscape architecture at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, Waldheim addressed about 1,000 CNU attendees in Madison, Wisconsin. He joked that he was "traveling under diplomatic papers" — an acknowledgment of new urbanist hostility toward Landscape Urbanism. He assured CNU that he fully supports "dense, low-carbon, low-emission development." Landscape urbanists are "not apologists for sprawl," he said, in response to characterizations in blogs.

Waldheim presented a development called Lafayette Park — a 78-acre modernist undertaking built in Detroit from the late 1950s through the mid-1960s — that clarified the real argument between Landscape Urbanism and New Urbanism.

Despite looking vastly different from any new urban development, Lafayette Park meets many of the goals of the New Urbanism, Waldheim argued. It is com-

pact, has a mixture of housing types and uses, and is built with a connected network of streets. But Lafayette Park, designed by modernists Ludwig Hilberseimer and Mies van der Rohe along with landscape architect Alfred Caldwell, turns its buildings away from the street in favor of frontages that consist mostly of greenery. Lafayette Park shows that you “can do without that one particular tool” of buildings facing the thoroughfare, Waldheim said. He explained that this is a “substantive difference” between new urbanists and landscape urbanists.

This remarkably straightforward assessment also provided Duany with an opening. Hilberseimer provided “neither a garden in back nor street life in front,” Duany said, adding that “Density and urbanism are not the same.” Duany explained: “Unless there is tremendous density, human beings will not walk” except when there is appealing street frontage.

He criticized Landscape Urbanism renderings that show park-like settings full of pedestrians. “I really doubt that the humans that have been Photoshopped in will be there” in reality, he said.

Waldheim took a brief shot at new urbanists’ love for interconnected street networks. “To the extent that you co-opt good new ideas, that’s to your credit,” he said, “but if each one of them maps easily on the 19th century street grid,” it raises a question of shouldn’t there be friction between these ideas and the new urban vision.

CLIPPING THE GRID

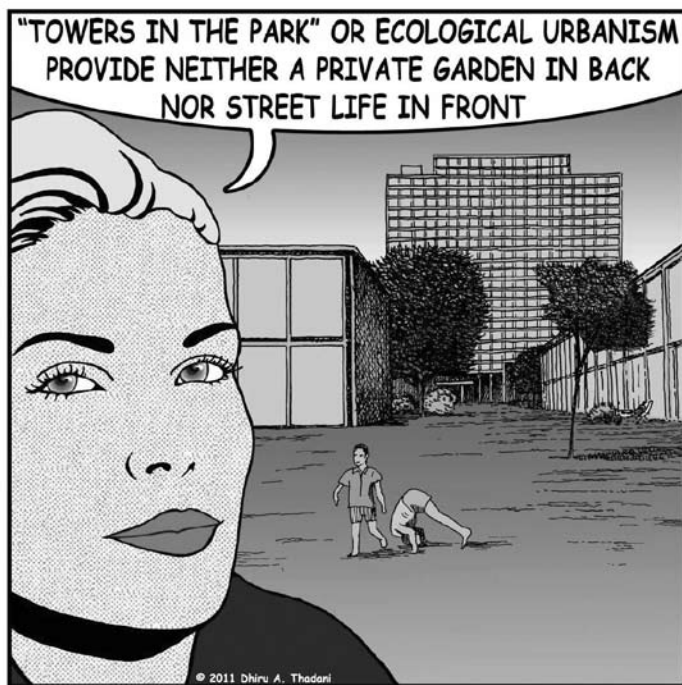
Landscape urbanists’ determination to leave streams and wetlands undisturbed, regardless of location, “clips the grid,” Duany said, explaining that to landscape urbanists, “the pipe is anathema.” Manhattan has 2,700 streams in pipes, he said. If each of these streams were respected ecologically, the city would be unable to operate a taxi fleet and its residents would be scattered far and wide, he said. The refusal to move water through a pipe to be processed elsewhere negatively affects density and increases automobile use — especially in urban centers. “Is not the urban core achieving environmental performance by other means?” he asked.

The Harvard professor’s strongest charge was leveled at the retro design tendencies of many new urbanists. “Your cultural program is circa 1979,” he said. According to new urbanists, he said, “the 20th century was meant to be seen as a historical anomaly. ... There is still a latent and poor neoclassicism at the core of New Urbanism.” Waldheim argued that young architects have a right to be “engaged in architecture as culture at the highest level” but to nonetheless pursue an environmentally conscious urbanism.

Duany agreed that “our greatest deficiency is first-rate design.” He added that Waldheim “was astonishingly informed” about New Urbanism’s vulnerability on this front. Landscape Urbanism is self-indulgent at times, but it is “almost universally better designed and better presented.”

In New Urbanism, there’s very little hostility to modernism except that it displeases the market and therefore modernism is generally avoided, Duany added. Devotees of classical and traditional architecture, who gravitate towards New Urbanism, may disagree with Duany on this point.

Proponents of the two “urbanisms” can agree on measuring greenhouse gases and other aspects of environmental performance, Waldheim said. One unbuilt project that he presented,



By Dhiru Thadani

the Lower Don Lands on the Toronto waterfront, included Ken Greenberg, generally thought of as a new urbanist, acting as urban designer under project leader Michael Van Valkenburgh — a landscape urbanist. “I would put the density and carbon metrics” of that project “against any project in this room,” Waldheim said.

Waldheim also presented The High Line in New York City, which Duany said that new urbanists “adore.” But costs are an issue — The High Line “cost \$30,000 per lineal foot. A good street costs \$700 a foot,” Duany explained. “There needs to be a [Landscape Urbanism] proposition that is cost-effective.”

Landscape Urbanism, with only a handful of projects completed and these mostly parks, is untested in dealing with the problems of broad metropolitan areas — including downtowns, urban neighborhoods, and smaller cities and towns, where new urbanists have worked for decades. “We don’t have any dots on the map in the State of Florida,” Waldheim said, referring to scores of new urban projects in that state. “We have a lot of work to do to get to the position of hegemony that you enjoy.”

“As nonideological pragmatists,” Duany said, new urbanists “will absorb what works from Landscape Urbanism.” But, he told Waldheim, “if you don’t absorb [from new urbanists] the sidewalk street frontage and the ability to put a stream in a pipe. The hegemony will be unchallenged.”

The decline and then revival — the Death and Life if you will — of cities is one of the big trends of our time. Much of this revival has focused on the urban street, as articulated by Jacobs and the new urbanists, who have driven home, to audiences of all kinds of citizens for the better part of three decades, the importance of building frontages to lively streets. As creative as the landscape urbanists are, the presentation by Waldheim will leave many in doubt as to whether this group has received the message — and the degree to which Landscape Urbanism will promote real urbanism. ♦

A resort community eludes the down economy

Oklahoma's down-home Carlton Landing will feature an organic farm with "the nicest chicken coop this side of the Mississippi."

Despite sluggish real estate conditions across most of the US, the Humphreys Company has been moving ahead on developing a 950-acre resort community on Lake Eufaula, about a two-hour drive east of Oklahoma City.

The project, Carlton Landing, laid out by Duany Plater-Zyberk & Co. (DPZ) largely in the form of a traditional neighborhood development, got under way in late 2009 with road and utility installation, and advanced to construction of the first 10 houses, plus a community building, in late 2010.

The business strategy, says developer Grant Humphreys, calls for building Carlton Landing's anticipated 2,500 houses gradually over the next 25 years — responding to conditions as they evolve.

The plan calls for a broad range of housing types and low-cost placemaking techniques. Agriculture is incorporated into the community as a key amenity.

"The unit types that DPZ and Zimmerman-Volk Associates put together are pretty varied," which should help attract a considerable range of buyers, says Humphreys. Spec house are being built with asking prices of \$170,000 to \$430,000, on lots ranging from a little over \$20,000 to \$150,000. Most lots are between \$35,000 and \$50,000, "attainable for a large portion of the market," Humphreys points out.

Though the first houses will average about 1,900 square feet, the second group, scheduled to begin construction this Fall, will be a dozen cottages of 700 to 1,500 square feet. Nine of them will form a cottage court — a clustered form of housing that architect Ross Chapin has had success with in Washington State (see April 2011 *New Urban News*) and that architect Donald Powers has done well with in New England, but which is unfamiliar to people in the Oklahoma-North Texas market.

Among the designers are Bill Harris of Allison Ramsey Architects; Tom Low of DPZ; Jim Hasenbeck; Eric Moser; and



The design for Carlton Landing's chicken coop by Eric Moser

Steve Mouzon. Mouzon's design, called the "Fish Camp" — just 170 sq. ft., plus a porch nearly half that size — will be an outbuilding for one of the cottages. "For a lake getaway, it's a great idea," Humphreys says.

The concept of placing houses around a shared open space has also been employed for four of the dwellings currently under construction — courtyard, rear-yard, and duplex units that look onto a common, semi-public space. "Our belief is that the creation of these public realm spaces is a great economic value-builder that costs little," says the architect of those four, Eric Brown of Beaufort, South Carolina.

ORGANIC FARMING

"We've had 11 acres under cover crop and soil preparation for last 18 months," with the expectation that it will become an organic farm," Humphreys says. "My wife, Jen, is the town farmer."

"We're starting with what we call the 'greeter farm,'" he explains, "It's a large garden with raised beds and small plots, to give people a sampling of what we'll be growing on the farm." The scale of the two will differ; the farm will be large enough to use a tractor, whereas hand tools will suffice for the garden.

He believes that the character he's creating in the development — a "down-home, authentic neighborhood feel" in a setting that offers plenty of outdoor activity, including food production — now resonates with buyers more than it did prior to the global economic crisis of 2008.

The first couple to put down a deposit for a house in Carlton Landing — Jeff and Rhonda Davis of Oklahoma City — had expected to buy in the Destin area of the Florida Panhandle, well

known for Seaside, Watercolor, and Rosemary Beach, but they discovered the Oklahoma lakeside community and concluded that it would be a better geographic choice.

Before the Davises move in, however, another group of occupants will arrive, says Humphreys. "We've got 12 chickens that are excited to be there. They will be the first residents of Carlton Landing."

"A chicken coop has been designed by Eric Moser," Humphreys boasts. "It will be the nicest chicken coop this side of the Mississippi."

Financially, Humphreys is proceeding conservatively: "On the development side, we're able to move forward without any debt. It's all private equity. If the market is slow to respond, we cut the grass and come back next year."

Humphreys moved his family from Oklahoma City to the rural property along Oklahoma's largest lake about two months ago, and he thinks the time is right for a development geared to second-home buyers from Oklahoma City, Tulsa, and Dallas — three areas that have fared better during the downturn than have many other places across the US.

"For home construction, we've been able to find great local lenders," something he attributes to the "good underlying value" of the houses and the development.

"Folks have been in a waiting mode for the past few years," says Humphreys. But, he avers, "when the product type is appropriate to the market, they'll respond." ♦

BOOK REVIEWS

In-laws, Outlaws, and Granny Flats

Your Guide for Turning One House into Two Homes

By Michael Litchfield

Taunton Press, 2011, 224 pp., \$24.95 paperback

REVIEW BY PHILIP LANGDON

As I write this, the ebullient family across the street from me — a mid-thirtyish husband and wife with four bouncy small children — is preparing to move into the home of the children’s grandparents, two blocks away. The grandparents are not exactly departing; they’re constructing an addition on the back of the big, century-old house that they’ve lived in for decades.

When the addition is complete, all three generations will live — happily, they hope — in two connected units on a deep single lot. The young family will occupy the tall house facing the street, and the older folks (who don’t seem old at all) will live in the lower, shingled addition at the rear.

Auxiliary units, promoted for years by new urbanists and by planning consultants such as Patrick Hare, seem to be catching on — whether in old cities, established suburbs, or brand-new developments. *In-laws, Outlaws, and Granny Flats* is an excellent guide to the changes that are afoot.

Housing analyst Arthur C. Nelson recently pointed out that the number of persons in the average American household rose from 2.59 in 2005 to 2.63 to 2010. In this book, author Michael Litchfield reports that in 1990, less than 15 percent of elderly Americans lived with their children. By 2000, he says, “the percentage of multigenerational households increased — for the first time in more than a century — and by 2008 that number was up 12 percent from its low point.”

Observes Litchfield:

The shift reflected not only elders moving in with their kids, but also young adults who perhaps had never left home: more than a third of Americans 18 to 34 now live with their parents. This shift was partly economic, partly cultural (Asian and Latin American newcomers have far stronger kinship bonds), and partly spiritual. For many people, the Age of McMansions was an empty time. So

COMMON ZONING STANDARDS FOR IN-LAW UNITS

Drawn from municipal codes around the country, this table summarizes the more common zoning standards governing in-law units. However, always follow the latest standards for your community.

CODE ISSUES	TYPICAL SPECS	IMPLICATIONS/COMMENTS
OWNER OCCUPANCY. Property owner must live in house or in-law unit.		Owner can't rent out both units, thus has a stake in finding responsible tenants, maintaining property.
MINIMUM LOT SIZE. Can't build in-law unit on lot smaller than minimum sq. ft. specified by city.	5,000 sq. ft.	Keeps neighborhood from becoming too dense. Lots above minimum size may be allowed to have larger (or detached) units.
MAXIMUM LOT COVERAGE. Combined areas for house and in-law unit can't exceed a certain percentage of the lot.	30% to 40%	Owner must balance space allocated to house and in-law unit in order to avoid overbuilding the lot.
MAXIMUM UNIT SIZE. (Minimum unit size may also be specified.) Deck usually not included in calculation.	750 sq. ft. maximum	Unit size may also be specified as a % of the house size. In effect, small units limit the number of tenants.
MAXIMUM HEIGHT OF UNIT. Height depends upon type of structure.	12 ft. for cottage, 22 ft. for over-garage unit	Too-tall units can dwarf houses next door, block sun, compromise privacy, destroy the scale of the neighborhood.
SETBACKS. Minimum distance from property lines along front, back, side yards. Same as house setbacks.	Front 20 ft.; back 10 ft.; side 5 ft.	Setbacks help to prevent spread of fire, ensure access, reduce privacy and noise impact on neighbors.
DETACHED/ATTACHED. Determines if unit may be attached to house.		Prohibiting <i>detached</i> units means less privacy between dwellings. Prohibiting <i>attached</i> units means you need a larger lot on which to build.
MINIMUM DISTANCE BETWEEN DWELLINGS. (Detached unit allowed.)	10 ft.	Distance between in-law unit and storage shed or garage may be less.
MAIN ENTRY/EGRESS. Location of unit's front door in relation to street, main house front door, or neighbor.	Both entries can't face the street unless unit door is screened from view.	Varies greatly from town to town. Locating entries of attic and basement conversions may be problematic.
INTERIOR AMENITIES. Kitchen or second bedroom may not be allowed.	A kitchen is the room most often disallowed.	Prevents an in-law unit from being a self-contained unit; limits rentability.
PARKING. Add parking space(s) for unit, can't reduce existing spaces.	Need at least 2 parking spaces for house, 1 additional for in-law unit.	May specify number of spaces to be added, whether they must be covered, whether cars may be parked in tandem in the drive. May determine if garage can be converted into an in-law unit.
CONDITIONAL PERMIT. Conditional use and building permits required.		More complicated review process. Meeting code requirements may not guarantee right to build in-law unit.
SAFETY-RELATED. Codes protect health and safety of occupants.	Follow local building codes.	Windows large and low enough to climb out of, smoke detectors and hard-wired alarms, exterior exit for all second units, structural reinforcement in quake zones, etc.
LESS COMMON STANDARDS		
GRANDFATHER PROVISION. Older, nonconforming units may be allowed, with certain restrictions.	Owner can't aggravate a nonconforming condition.	Usually a setback or lot-coverage issue. Renovation can't enlarge or move unit closer to property line.
SPECIAL STUDY ZONES. These include watershed, slide, earthquake fault zones.		The more restrictions a zone has, the more difficult it will be to modify or develop your property.
EXTERIOR FINISH. Details of in-law unit must match those of house.	Siding, trim, roof pitch should match that of house.	Finish details help the unit to blend in and give the neighborhood a consistent aesthetic style.
UTILITIES. May require separate utility connections for unit.	Rare	Tapping into existing service okay in most locales, which reduces costs.
STORAGE. Supplemental on-site storage for in-law unit.	Rare	Acknowledges that small in-law unit may not have adequate storage.

perhaps our new interest in shared housing is also a search for something more satisfying, soulful, and sustainable.

The change, says Litchfield, can benefit communities:

Open land is preserved. When more people use municipal services, a city's per-resident costs go down, and city revenues are augmented by property taxes on new units. Because in-law units are typically small, their rents are often modest, too, increasing the pool of affordable housing for seniors, students, and service providers such as teachers, nurses, and elder-care workers. When located in older neighborhoods,

in-law units are frequently within walking distance of downtown services. Moreover, because private owners create that affordable housing, cities needn't tap their limited resources to do so.

And because they are built on existing parcels and often built within an existing footprint, in-law units are among the greenest ways to build. They're smaller and so require fewer resources to build, operate, and maintain.

Litchfield, who lives in Point Reyes, California, and who has been renovating houses or writing about them for more than 30 years, doesn't provide a

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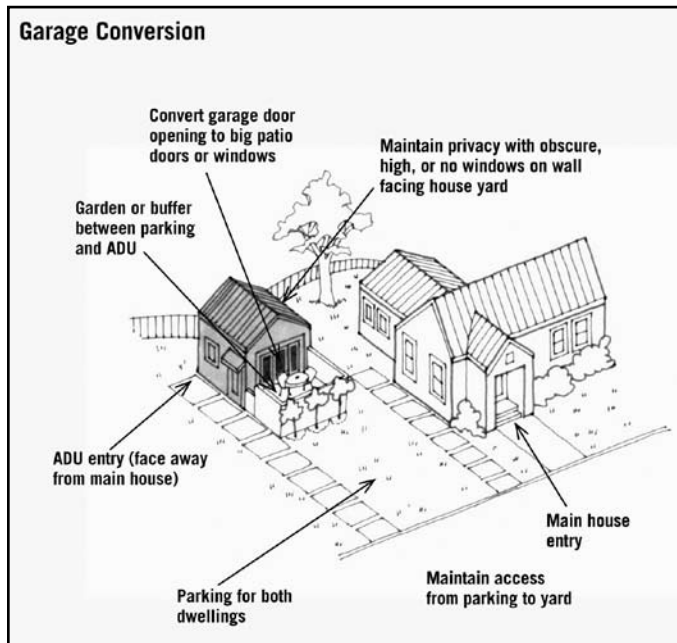
BOOK REVIEWS

tally of the number of communities that have changed their laws to allow secondary units. The law always evolves more slowly than people's lives, so I'm certain there are plenty of the "outlaws" referred to in the book's title — dwellings that evade zoning laws or building regulations.

At the municipal level, Litchfield praises the success of the Accessory Dwelling Unit Development Program of Santa Cruz, California, which streamlined the permit and approval process, reduced fees, produced manuals that walked homeowners through the development process, and created a set of seven prototype plan sets, which, if followed, result in an automatically approved in-law unit. In a high-cost locale like Santa Cruz, accessory dwellings help to provide much-needed housing.

Helpfully, Litchfield presents a one-page table on common zoning standards. Drawn from municipal codes around the country, it summarizes the more common zoning standards governing accessory or auxiliary units (popularly referred to as granny flats or in-law units). A typical specification may restrict the accessory unit to no more than 750 square feet, allow the combined house and accessory unit to cover no more than 30 to 40 percent of the lot, and require that the lot be at least 5,000 square feet.

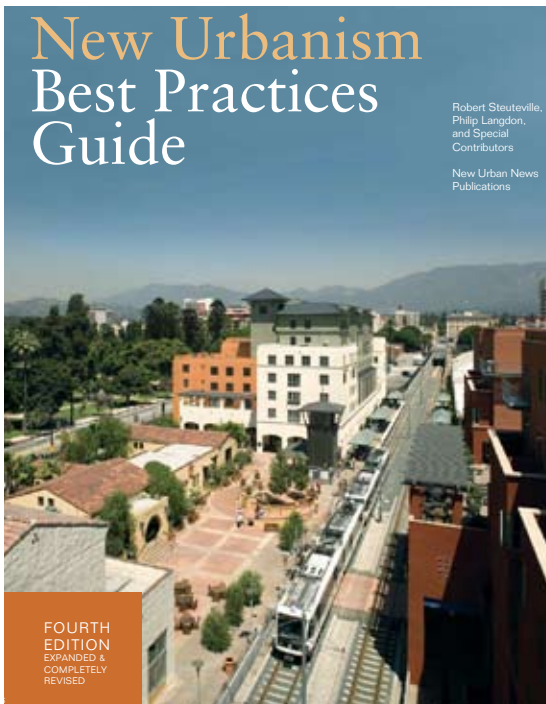
The standards often say that both units' entries cannot face the street, unless the smaller unit's door is screened from view — though this varies from one municipality to another. This sometimes makes it difficult to create an appropriate entrance for



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Design features for one kind of auxiliary unit — the garage conversion

an attic or basement conversion. Owner-occupancy is generally required; the property owner must live in either the house or the in-law unit. Consequently, the owner has a strong stake in finding



“It just might be the most useful single book on the New Urbanism I have ever seen. ... it's beyond essential ... you really must buy a copy if you haven't already.”

— *Architect and urban designer Steve Mouzon*

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BOOK REVIEWS

responsible tenants and maintaining the property.

The code often requires additional parking space and forbids the owner from reducing the number of parking spaces, Litchfield says. Generally, there must be at least two parking spaces for the house and one additional space for the in-law unit.

Besides rental income, an auxiliary unit may generate other financial benefits. "It's perfectly legal to combine federal tax credits, state credits, and local utility rebates for energy-saving work done on your home or in-law unit," he reports. "In fact, many agencies encourage homeowners to piggyback such incentives." In some areas, low-interest accessory dwelling unit loans are available from programs managed jointly by a city agency and, for instance, a local credit union.

The bulk of the book tells how to go about planning and building an accessory unit — over a garage, in an attic, in a basement, in other parts of a house, or as a bump-out, or in some other form. Litchfield presents a generous assortment of color images. He offers detailed advice on the challenges an owner is likely to face.

Examples of projects around the nation reveal how people have created accessory units in differing conditions and in all sorts of styles. Litchfield urges homeowners not to create an in-law unit without a building permit. If you're caught, there may be fines on top of the permitting fees.

This is an eminently practical as well as handsome book. It comes at a time when the demand for this kind of knowledge is destined to grow. ♦

Award-winning codes in Livermore, California, and Lee County, Florida

This year's winners of the Driehaus Form-Based Codes Awards are the Development Code Rewrite of Livermore, California, an 81,000-population city at the eastern edge of the San Francisco Bay Area, and the Compact Communities Code of Lee County, Florida, a county that encompasses Fort Myers, Cape Coral, and other communities.

The Livermore rewrite nestles a form-based code (FBC) into a larger development code overhaul, guiding a city that has sprawled over the years. The FBC applies to higher-density residential areas that are, or could easily become, walkable, compact neighborhoods. In addition, the form-based code is "designed to expand to all walkable areas — as the City is ready," the Form-Based Codes Institute said in announcing the awards.

The FBCI said of the mixture of code types: "the overall effect is an elegant development regulation that integrates FBC with conventional zoning... not muddled hybrid code." The aim is first to make the changes that are easiest and most efficient to complete, and then move on to more difficult challenges once some momentum has been generated.

The form-based code includes one T3 (suburban) and four modified T4 (general urban) Transect zones, with the hope that

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T5 (center) and T6 (core) zones will be instituted once density is massed. The FBC establishes frontage standards with porch, stoop, forecourt, shopfront, and gallery requirements as well as building and street typologies. Through a charrette process, Livermore's code writers illustrated alternative scenarios, showing how strip malls might be converted into main street shopping areas and how housing types might change under different code arrangements.

Lee County's code was described by the jurors — including academics and practitioners from the US and abroad — as a “unique and ground-breaking type of Form-Based Code. It offers administrative approval of new communities at the specified sites and is also a zoning overlay that can be applied to infill sites at the initiative of individual landowners.”

The code also includes a provision for Transferable Development Rights (TDR), which allows for higher-density development in “receiving areas” and which protects farmland and open space in the “sending areas.” The code seeks to reform the “extreme sprawl” that characterizes current development in the region; it is hoped that the code will serve as model for other nearby jurisdictions.

The code focuses primarily on standards for lots, blocks, buildings, and streets that will need only administrative approval. It also provides means for developers to propose plans that can be certified as meeting the conceptual plan requirements.

The primary goal — in a county with about 500,000 residents

spread over approximately 1,200 square miles — is to allow landowners to build new housing without displacing farming. This is achieved by making traditional neighborhood development (TND) the “default development pattern, allowed ‘by right.’” Density bonuses are also provided to encourage landowners to protect the most sensitive and productive open space. ♦

NEW URBAN UPDATE

■ **Richard Florida** describes how America is quickly changing into a more urban nation in an article for *The Atlantic* in early July. “How the Great Reset Has Already Changed America,” makes the case this “reset” — basically a reversal of suburbanization — is well underway and unstoppable.

The only question, Florida says, is whether public officials will support this transformation with infrastructure and policies — or whether it will occur in a haphazard way over a much longer period of time to the detriment of the US economy. This issue is not just a national one; it's local as well: Policies can be pursued at local and regional levels — to the economic advantage or disadvantage of cities and towns.

Florida explains how the trend is unfolding: “Great Resets unfold not from top-down policies and programs but gradually, as millions upon millions of people respond to challenging economic times by changing the ways that they live. ... It's been fascinating to see how quickly the once great

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NEW URBAN UPDATE

divide between our cities and suburbs has been shrinking. The most desirable neighborhoods look increasingly similar, no matter where they are. The best urban neighborhoods are safe and have good schools; they are becoming strollervilles and toddler-towns, filled with families as well as singles. The best suburban neighborhoods have great commercial districts with restaurants, movie theaters, and all manner of amenities."

The change is occurring, Florida explains, among younger families who reject their parents suburban lifestyle. But also middle-aged families and empty nesters are making the switch for economic reasons and because their needs are changing.

"All of this must be underpinned and supported by new kinds of infrastructure — from more efficient living patterns to more effective, less car-dependent transportation systems that run the gamut from more bicycle paths and sidewalks to improved mass transit and high speed rail. Just as government programs and policies underpinned the rise of suburbia in the 1950s and 1960s (think of all those subsidized highways), new public policies toward rental and affordable housing, alternative transport, and more sustainable energy will help encourage this shift today," Florida explains.

"But while individual Americans have already begun resetting their lives, our political and business leaders continue

to look backwards, wasting precious time and resources on futile attempts to resuscitate the same dysfunctional system of banks, sprawl, and inefficient and energy-wasting ways of life that brought about the crisis in the first place."

■ **Lost Rabbit**, a 260-acre traditional neighborhood development in Madison, Mississippi, has had no new lot sales in two years, reports Nathan Norris, director of implementation advisory for PlaceMakers. In a sluggish real estate market, Norris observes, "they have been stuck because the Public Improvement District bond holder (Allstate) has refused to make the necessary concessions to date, and Allstate along with two other banks have been hoping for a miracle (that is never going to happen)."

Planned in 2003 by Duany Plater-Zyberk & Co. for Neopolis Development LLC of Jackson, Mississippi, Lost Rabbit had seen construction of about 55 single-family houses and the beginning of work on a town center building by late 2009. But the market has been difficult in Mississippi for at least the last two years, similar to conditions across most of the US.

"The best thing that can happen to Lost Rabbit and other similarly situated developments is for the prices to be reset to a level consistent with the market instead of loans that were given on 2005 valuation models," Norris says.

■ The Olson Company, which specializes in in-town

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

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CNU 19: Growing Local a rousing success!

CNU 19 welcomed over 1100 attendees in Madison, many of whom were overheard saying that this year's Congress was the best one ever. From the stirring Opening Night Plenary from William Cronon, to the interactivity of the Open Source Congress, to the challenges brought against new urbanist orthodoxy by conservative economist Ed Glaeser and Landscape Urbanism leader Charles Waldheim, and to the numerous lively, debate-inducing, idea-generating, and city-saving sessions held throughout the four-day affair, CNU 19 solidified the Congress's place as the premier venue for spearheading the conversations that inform the design and shape of our communities.

Participation and interaction were the cornerstones of this year's Congress. As *Planetizen's* Tim Halbur wrote of the event, "the Congress for the New Urbanism (19 this year) is a living, breathing forum, a discussion that is historically ripe with different approaches and solutions." And solutions abounded at every scale during CNU 19, from the international level — as showcased in sessions such as "China: The Next Frontier" and the "Founders' Overseas Projects" — to the local level. Sessions focused on the

historic Madison plans of John Nolen, as well as looked toward the future for the host city. The AuthenticITY design competition, wherein a panel judged plans for the stalled-development Union Corners site, awarded the Woonerf plan, courtesy of Orlando, FL's Canin Associates, top honors. The confluence of past and present solutions rang throughout the Congress.

Such a successful gathering of determined urbanists and prominent thinkers has already garnered much attention in the press, with media outlets from *Planetizen*, *Grist*, *The Nation*, *The Cap Times*, and writers such as Anthony Flint and Matt Dellinger weighing in on the CNU 19 experience.

Relive CNU 19 by accessing just some of the media material that can be found online via the following links:

- Complete Press Clips: <http://liveblog.cnu19.org/press>
- Live Blog Archive: <http://liveblog.cnu19.org/archive>
- Video Series Archive: http://liveblog.cnu19.org/tagged/cnu_19_video

And be sure to login to your CNU.org account to access webcasts of the majority of CNU 19 presentations. ♦

CNU 19 brings changes to board

CNU 19 marked the end of service for three distinguished and valuable members of the CNU Board. The contributions of Zach Borders, Stephanie Bothwell, and Todd Zimmerman have left an indelible mark on the organization as well as the New Urbanism movement. Whether it be in the practical advice and application of helping CNU function at its best or in the visioning of the movement as a whole, the departing Board members' presence will long be felt moving forward.

In light of the three vacancies on the Board, CNU welcomed three new members to the Board of Directors during CNU 19. Sarah Lewis, Marcy McNelly, and Dan Slone each bring unique perspectives and a wealth of experience to the Board.

Sarah Lewis

Originally from Great Britain, Lewis received a Bachelor of Architecture degree from the University of Tennessee. Upon moving to Washington, DC, in 1988 to practice architecture, Lewis later shifted her focus to work on urban design. As President of the DC Chapter of CNU



Sarah Lewis

since 2002, Lewis has worked diligently in the development of cities, towns, and neighborhoods throughout the region.

In 2008, Lewis went on to join Ferrell Madden Lewis as principal in this urban design and town-planning firm.

Her expertise includes designing and refining project concepts with open public involvement, design guidelines and form-based coding, and the physical implementation of such projects, several of which have won CNU Charter Awards. "I'm so excited to have been voted by the chapters to represent them on the national board — perhaps honored is a better word," she said.



Marcy McNelly

Marcy McNelly

Hailing from Portland, Oregon, McNelly brings over 27 years of architecture and urban design experience to the Board. A graduate of the University of Oregon's School of Architecture and Allied Arts, she founded Urbsworks in 1997 and focused

on the issue of neglected space between buildings. She later concentrated her work on a multidisciplinary approach to sustainable urban design and placemaking, with an emphasis on smart, safe transportation and innovative codes.

Through her work, McNelly has continually demonstrated a commitment to realizing the principles of the CNU Charter in their highest form and has made great waves in the field of New Urbanism. "The work I've been doing with CNU for more than a decade is some of the most rewarding work I do," McNelly said. "I'm looking forward

to working with staff and the Board for the good of CNU."

Dan Slone

Slone is a partner in the Richmond office of the international law firm McGuireWoods LLP. He not only represents property owners developing innovative land use strategies, but also counsels green product manufacturers. Over the last

decade Slone has represented numerous national and international nonprofits, including the USGBC, the Congress for the New Urbanism, and the World Green Building Council.

Slone is consistently cited on lists of top lawyers for businesses and has shown strong dedication to environmental service, being the recipient of the Bet-



Dan Slone

ter Housing Coalition Groundbreaker Award from the Henry David Thoreau Environmental Conservator. Looking ahead at his time with the CNU Board, Slone said, "I look forward to helping to implement CNU's strategic plan and expanding the understanding of the role of urbanism in achieving sustainable and resilient habitats." ♦

The High Line brought down to Earth: Chicago's Bloomingdale Trail

It's been just a few months since Rahm Emanuel assumed the mayoralty in Chicago, and already pedestrians are beginning to feel the Mayor's presence on city streets. Emanuel has given free reign to new CDOT commissioner Gabe Klein to introduce a series of measures in envisioning a more multimodal, accessible, and interactive city whose streets serve a variety of functions.

Klein has responded in a flurry of pedestrian-oriented activity, already implementing Chicago's first protected bike lanes, floating the idea for Chicagoans to do the "Barnes Dance" via diagonal street crossings, and proposing to transform the city's "underutilized" bus shelter screens into gigantic smart-apps that indicate wait time for bus service, current bike- and car-sharing inventory information, and the length of time it would take to walk to one's final destination. Perhaps the biggest sign that Emanuel and Klein are pushing the city's functional form forward is the recent news that design work on the long-proposed Bloomingdale Trail is moving ahead.

The dormant, elevated 2.65-mile railway line is often compared to New York's successful High Line project, and while the two projects share similar characteristics (two fallow, elevated railroad lines being remediated and reapplied), the discussion over the design of the Bloomingdale Trail indicates a significantly different function. The High Line is showcased as a highly manicured park that prohibits dogs and bikes and exists as something of an open-air gallery piece. In contrast, the Bloomingdale Trail was included as part of Mayor Emanuel's transportation initiatives. As Adolfo Hernandez of the Active

Transportation Alliance puts it, "The High Line is a passive space. The Bloomingdale Trail is meant to be an active space that can connect neighborhoods via bike and walking transit."

BASED ON FUNCTION

Emanuel is aware of the economic benefit the High Line has brought to New York's surrounding areas and no doubt hopes to see comparable rates of return in Chicago. Yet, unlike in New York, the success of the Chicago model is based more upon its functionality as a space that seamlessly integrates itself into the neighborhood fabric and activates some of the locked-up potential in the immediate vicinity. In essence, the Bloomingdale Trail may be a more organic answer to many of the criticisms lobbed against the High Line in the past, such as in Witold Rybczynski's *New York Times* piece, "Bringing the High Line Back to Earth." Recognizing that most cities don't have New York's density and built-in, already activated assets, Rybczynski questions whether other cities should be looking towards the High Line as a model for reclaiming and remediating vacant spaces.

Ben Helphand, President of the Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail, echoes Rybczynski's doubts. "The High Line is a wonderful open space. It's just not something that can be replicated cookie-cutter across the world, just like Bilbao can't or shouldn't be replicated for every new museum," Helphand states. "What we do have, and will continue to have, are remnants from our industrial past and, increasingly, our auto-indulgent heyday. These remnants of rail lines, canals, river edges, factories, landfills, quarries, and too-wide streets can be reclaimed as new, active, often odd-shaped spaces."

Rather than glossing its identity over with audacious design, the Bloomingdale Trail aims to reenergize itself as a space that provides "a mixture of fun, exercise and transportation." Helphand continues, "I would not be surprised if you saw thousands using the Trail as part of their morning and evening commutes, connecting to existing bike routes to the Loop and the bike boulevard system on the west. It also has convenient connections to two CTA train stations, the Metra station at Clybourn, and several major bus routes. For students at the 12 schools within easy walking distance of the Trail, it'll help provide safe and healthy routes to school." The Bloomingdale Trail as envisioned is not a gallery; it's a functional corridor. ♦

Pulling the stake from the heart of New Orleans

CNU is proud to announce it has been awarded a \$50,000 grant from the Greater New Orleans Foundation's Metropolitan Opportunities Fund.

Building on the momentum of last year's successful introduction of the

Highways-to-Boulevards Initiative to the Crescent City, the Greater New Orleans Foundation award will enable CNU to continue strategizing for a revitalized North Claiborne Avenue and the replacement of the aging Claiborne Expressway/Interstate-10.

Working closely with the Claiborne Corridor Improvement Coalition, a neighborhood organization formed out of the NEWCITY Neighborhood Partnership, CNU will continue to educate community members, inform stakeholders, and foster further support for its efforts among a broad array

of constituents, such as residents of the Tremé/Lafitte and Tulane/Gravier neighborhoods, business owners, and regional and state policy makers.

By illustrating the economic, environmental, health, and transportation benefits of removing I-10, CNU and its partners will prove that walkable boulevards — and not elevated highways that isolate communities — are key to improving transportation, employment, and economic outcomes for residents. ♦

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NEW URBAN UPDATE



Citrus Walk residential units

FROM PAGE 17

development in southern California, has opened its newest residential community, Citrus Walk, in downtown Covina, within walking distance of the region's expanding Metrolink commuter rail system. The project will contain 37 LEED-certified townhouses, plus a dozen LEED-certified flats over 8,000 sq. ft. of street-fronting retail.

Citrus Walk is the company's fifth urban residential development in the Covina area, and culminates years of work with the City "to create a new brand of 'walkable' community within Covina's downtown," says Chairman and CEO Steve Olson. Covina is about 22 miles east of downtown Los Angeles.

The project is close to the new San Bernardino Express Line, part of the Metrolink system that has grown in 19 years from three lines and 12 stations serving 5,000 daily passengers to seven lines and 55 stations carrying 40,000 passengers a day. The Olson Company said "consumers are gravitating to LA's outlying cities, and making 'walkability' and proximity to public transportation a priority."

■ The US Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Environmental Protection Agency announced in June "a historic collaborative effort" to together award \$5.65 million to help recipients of Sustainable Communities grants plan for expanded housing choices, more efficient and reliable transportation, and healthy neighborhoods.

The program will build on the **Partnership for Sustainable Communities**, an effort that President Obama launched in June 2009 to foster interagency cooperation among HUD, EPA, and the Department of Transportation. A network of grantees will exchange ideas on successful strategies, lessons learned, emerging tools, and public engagement.

■ New Society Publishers has issued a third edition of *Fostering Sustainable Behavior: An Introduction to Community-Based Social Marketing* by Doug McKenzie-Mohr. The 288-page, \$24.95 paperback examines tools that can be used to get people committed to recycling, waste reduction, alternative transportation, and generally a more environmentally sound way of living.

■ Ethan Seltzer of Portland (Oregon) State University and Armando Carbonell of the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy are editors of a new 296-page book, *Regional Planning in America: Practice and Prospect*. The \$35 paperback, published by the Lincoln Institute, presents chapters on planning regions,

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NEW URBAN UPDATE

the legacy of Ian McHarg, "green regionalism," planning for sustainability, and other topics.

An essay by Kathryn A. Foster of the University at Buffalo Regional Institute observes that some people think that "for every regional planning problem, a society could create and empower a regional decision-making entity that has boundaries neatly matched to the territory affected." But that's no panacea, she makes clear. Even if such problem-focused regional entities could win authorization, the result may very well be a multiplicity of governmental jurisdictions — a problem in itself.

In a chapter by Frederick Steiner of the University of Texas on McHarg, patron saint of modern environmental practitioners, it's observed that "McHarg's method remains proficient at identifying where not to develop, [but] it is not necessarily good at determining *how* or *what* to develop."

A chapter by Robert Yaro of New York's Regional Plan Association offers an in-depth examination of plans for high-speed rail, which began cropping up many years before President Obama made passenger rail a federal priority. *Regional Planning in America* is written by individuals who are inclined to favor regionalism, yet who recognize how hard it often is to put such planning into practice.

■ **Interesting "green" techniques** abound in *Sustainable Infrastructure: The Guide to Green Engineering and Design* (Wiley, 2010, \$80). Author S. Bry Sarté, founder of the Sherwood Institute and Sherwood Design Engineers, devotes the third (and final) section of the 384-page hardcover to short case studies of city-scale, community-scale, and building-scale sustainable infrastructure and design.

New urbanists will be drawn to examples such as these from San Francisco: 1) the Mission streetscape plan, which includes flexible parking strategies to reclaim urban space for community gathering and outdoor seating uses; green connector streets; and a "living alley" network for smaller residential streets; 2) the Cesar Chavez Green Street Corridor; and 3) the Pavement to Parks Initiative.

"As we speed into the future, we must also delve into our history and reconnect with strategies that worked well for our ancestors ..." Sarté insists. "We can embrace technology without thinking that new technologies are the only solution; passive building design and bike-friendly streets are a look both backward and forward." ♦