

DOVER, KOHL & PARTNERS

town planning

Where would you prefer to live?

Conventional (so called mixed-use) P.U.D.



An arrangement of single-use pods with no beginning, center, or end; each use is strenuously isolated by code from the others by highways, walls, fences, parking lots, canals, etc.

Housing is mass-produced and strictly segregated by income level.

Everything beyond the front door requires a car trip; everyone over 16 must have a car.

Commuting to work is strictly by car, on roads simultaneously jammed with trips to school, exercise class, 7-11, breakfast...

Even neighborhood streets are engineered exclusively for cars; the rare pedestrian is frightened, embarrassed, sunburned, and bored.

Public buildings and churches are scattered along the strip among the McDonalds, Tire Kingdoms, and Payless Shoes.

Authentic integrated-use community



A distinct center of integrated retail, office, and high density residential uses forms the nucleus; a wide mix of housing types, public spaces, and corner stores form the fabric; greenbelts create distinct edges.

Most daily needs and quite a few jobs can be found within a five minute walk of the front door; multiple cars become optional.

Mass transit stops are within a five minute walk for commuters; non-commuting car trips are also reduced as children walk or bike to school.

All streets are designed for people as well as cars; sidewalks are shaded and pass stores and homes, not parking lots; neighborhood streets are designed for low speeds.

Streets and squares create important locations for civic buildings that become symbols of community identity.

Civic buildings, churches, daycares, community centers, belong in special places; the top of a hill, the terminated vista of a street.

HOMEWORK: Testing your own community

Can you find within a five minute walk from your home, a gallon of milk or a newspaper? A school? A public transit stop? A video rental store?

- A strength of traditional neighborhoods is the mix of uses: commercial and civic needs can be found within a few minutes' walk of the homes, and streets are detailed to encourage pedestrian flow, from residential to commercial activities, for example, rather than prevent it. Conventional zoning, on the other hand, seeks to completely isolate the uses in "zones"...

Do you live on a "block" What are its dimensions?

- Small blocks facilitate walking. Traditional towns have small blocks, increasing the valuable edges; they vary in size but the ideal is 220 'x 240'; the Traditional Neighborhood District (TND) Ordinance for Dade County (FL) limits the average block perimeter to 1300 feet, and prohibits block faces longer than 400'...

How many car trips per day does your household make? What are those trips for? Keep a log for a week, recording the purpose and distance of your trips.

- Households in metropolitan areas in Florida generate an average of 14 car trips per day per household; these trips average 10-12 miles in length. This causes more than loss of productivity. Annually Palm Beach County produces more than 2,000,000,000 pounds of poison emissions from family cars alone. Half the state budget goes to transportation, almost all for road "improvements"...

How wide is your street? Does it need to be that wide? Has an important street in your

neighborhood been widened recently to accommodate commuter traffic?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Neighborhood streets in Coral Gables (FL) are 18' wide. But in most other places, if you can't walk anywhere it's no wonder that the road needs to be continually adjusted to accept more traffic as sprawl grows. Close-in neighborhoods suffer as more commuters cut through. Worsening the pedestrians' predicament, even local neighborhood streets are often detailed with high-speed highway standards: lanes 12' or 14' wide, broad 'turning radii' on the corners, gradual curves...
Ask your local planning director to sketch what the community will look like in 10 or 20 years.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If he or she can't, you're not alone. Most "planning" departments should really be called "permitting departments", because they are in the business of reacting to zoning requests rather than pro-actively planning. While all towns and counties must prepare a diagrammatic "future land use" plan to satisfy state requirements, few have actually articulated a vision of what they want the community to become...
Do you own two or more cars? What house upgrade could you afford if you had one less car?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You could divert the \$600 per month you spend on owning and operating an extra car towards upgrading your home...
If your community were to incorporate into a town or city, what would be its boundaries? Does it have an identifiable center or gathering place?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suburban sprawl diminishes the clear edge between town and countryside, diluting the strengths of both. One low-density development bleeds into the next, continuing for such long distances no clear political or social unity can develop. Traditional towns, created where rivers or railroads or streetcars provided a transportation link, were naturally compact developments which had their own focus and sense of place...
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