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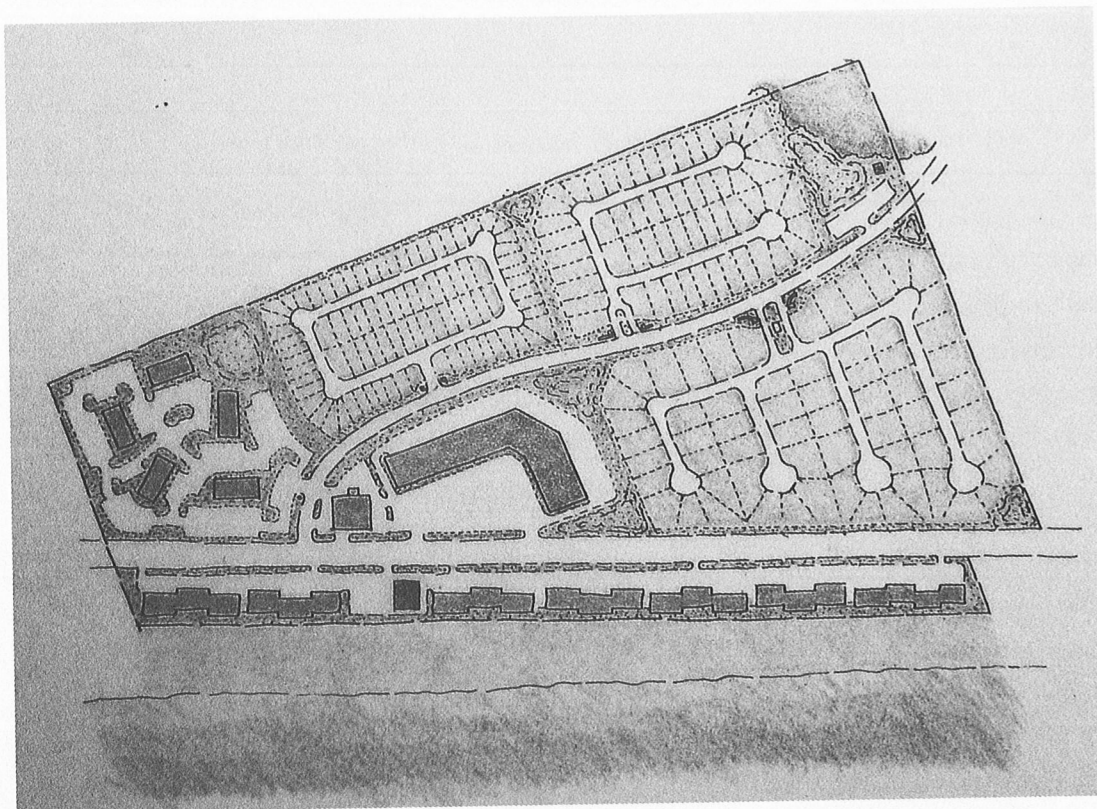
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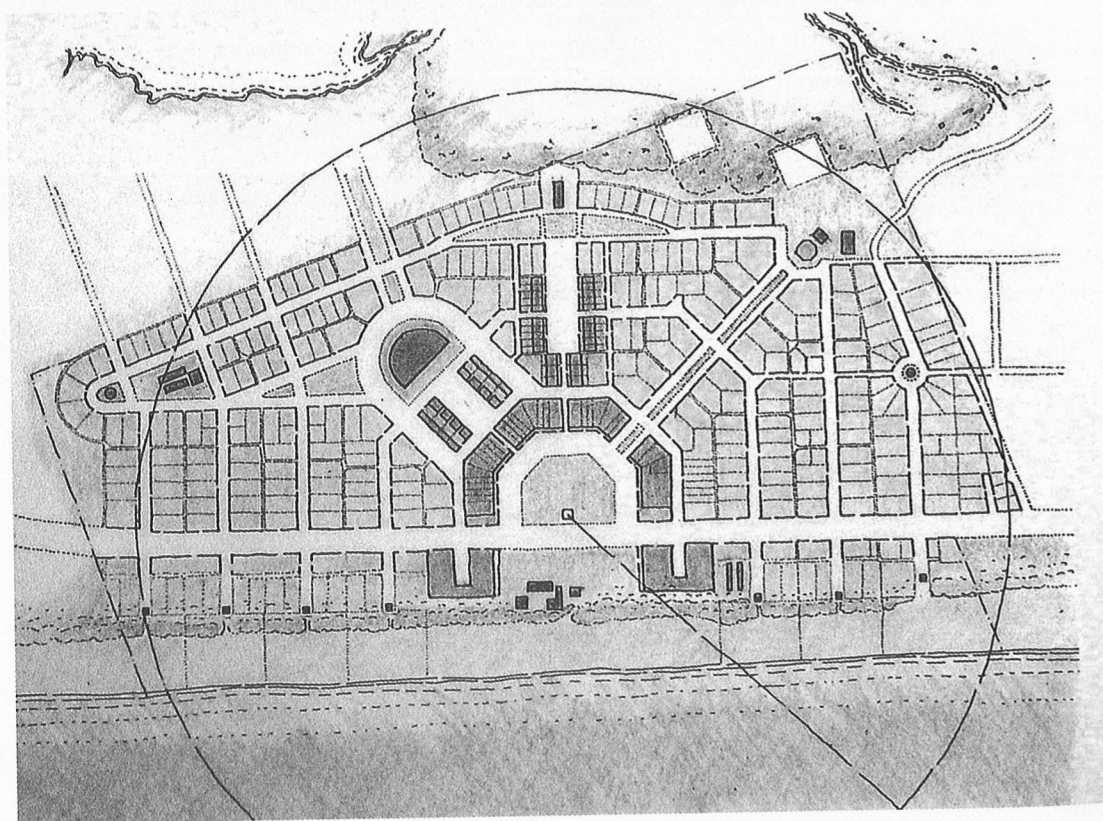
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## Eleven

Neighborhoods should be compact, pedestrian-friendly, and mixed-use. Districts generally emphasize a special single use, and should follow the principles of neighborhood design when possible. Corridors are regional connectors of neighborhoods and districts; they range from boulevards and rail lines to rivers and parkways.

ELIZABETH PLATER-ZYBERK

The fundamental elements of a true urbanism are the neighborhood, the district, and the corridor. Neighborhoods are urbanized areas having a balanced range of human activity. Districts are urbanized areas organized around a predominant activity such as a college campus. Corridors are linear systems of transportation or green space that connect and separate the neighborhoods and districts.

### THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Neighborhoods mass together to form towns and cities. A single neighborhood isolated in the landscape is a village. Though the nomenclature varies, there is general agreement regarding the composition of the neighborhood. The neighborhood unit of the 1929 New York Regional Plan, the Quarter described by Léon Krier, the traditional neighborhood development (TND), and transit-oriented development (TOD) all share similar attributes. They are:

#### 1. THE NEIGHBORHOOD HAS A CENTER AND AN EDGE.

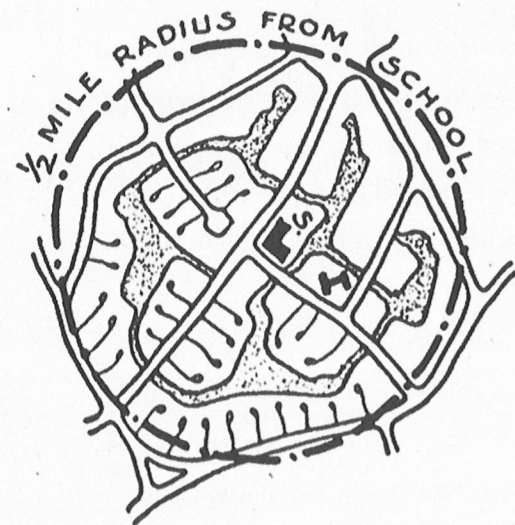
The combination of a focus and a limit contributes to the social identity of the community. Though both are important, the center is necessary. The center is usually a public space—a square, a green, or an important street intersection. It is located near the center of the neighborhood unless geography dictates that it be located elsewhere. Eccentric locations may be justified by a shoreline, a transportation corridor, or a promontory creating a view.

"In recent decades Americans have been focusing too much on the house itself and too little on the neighborhood, too much on the interior luxury and too little on public amenity. By reconsidering the design of our houses, we might begin again to create walkable, stimulating, more affordable neighborhoods where sociable pleasures are always within reach. The country can learn much from the neighborly kinds of housing we used to build. They made—and continue to make—good places for living."

PHILIP LANGDON

The center is the location for civic buildings, such as libraries, meeting halls, and churches. Commercial buildings including shops and workplaces are also associated with the center of a village. But in the aggregations of neighborhoods that create towns and cities, commercial buildings are often at the edge, where, combined with the commercial edges of other neighborhoods, they form a town center.

The edge of a neighborhood varies in character. In villages, the edge borders the lowest density of housing and is usually defined by land reserved for cultivation or conservation in a natural state. In urban areas, the neighborhood edge is often defined by boulevards or parkways, which may be lined by higher-density buildings.



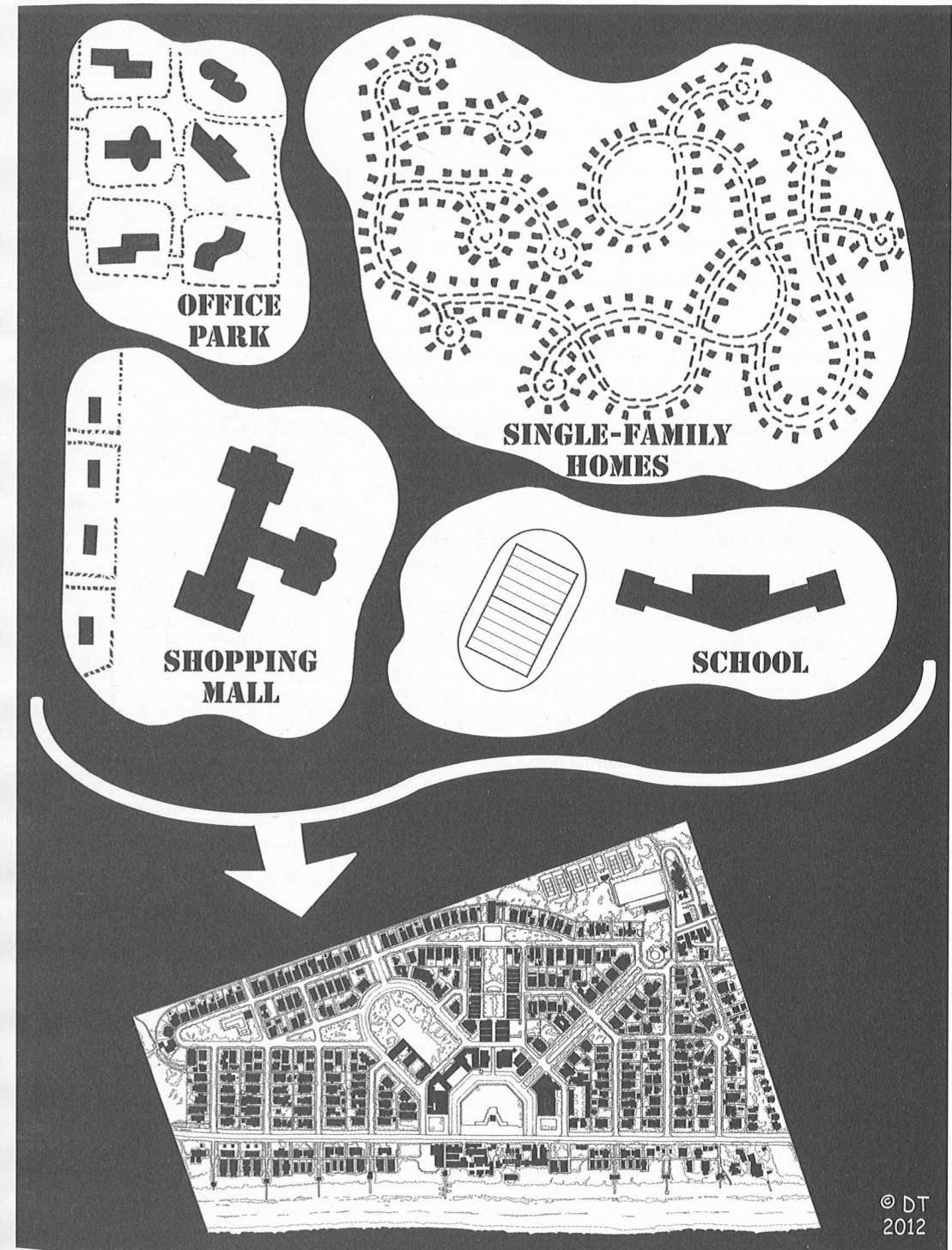
2. THE NEIGHBORHOOD HAS A BALANCED MIX OF ACTIVITIES: SHOPPING, WORK, SCHOOLING, RECREATION, AND ALL TYPES OF HOUSING.

This arrangement is particularly useful for those—young, old, disabled, or poor—who can't depend on the automobile for mobility.

The neighborhood provides housing for a range of incomes. Affordable housing types include backyard cottages, apartments above shops, and row houses. Houses and apartments for the wealthy may occupy the choice sites.



BY 1928, THERE WERE 21.3 MILLION CARS ON AMERICA'S ROADS. Clarence Stein and Henry Wright's 1928 plan for Radburn, New Jersey, attempted to accommodate pedestrians and cars in neighborhoods designed for 10,000 people. Shopping centers placed on the edges are accessible by foot and car.



IN A TYPICAL SUBURBAN LAYOUT, even short local trips require a car. In contrast, Seaside's layout provides local roads for local trips.

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### 3. THE IDEAL SIZE OF A NEIGHBORHOOD IS A QUARTER MILE FROM CENTER TO EDGE.

This distance is the equivalent of a five-minute walk at an easy pace. Within this five-minute radius, residents can walk to the center from anywhere in the neighborhood to take care of many daily needs or to use public transit. The location of a bus or light-rail stop within this walking distance substantially increases the likelihood that people will use public transit.

A cluster or string of transit-oriented neighborhoods creates a regional network of villages, towns, and cities that people can access without relying solely on cars. Such a system provides access to major cultural and social institutions, a variety of shops, and the kind of broad job base that can be supported only by a substantial population of many neighborhoods.

### 4. NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS ARE DETAILED TO PROVIDE EQUALLY FOR THE PEDESTRIAN, THE BICYCLE, AND THE AUTOMOBILE.

Neighborhood streets that provide wide sidewalks, street trees, and on-street parking encourage pedestrian activity. People are more apt to walk or bicycle if the route provides safe, pleasant, shady sidewalks

**"An average block perimeter of a quarter mile ensures an optimum plan for pedestrian convenience."**

and bike lanes. Drivers are more apt to drive slower in areas with pedestrian-filled sidewalks, crosswalks, and on-street park-

ing. Streets designed for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers also encourage the casual meetings among neighbors that help form the bonds of community.

Neighborhood streets are laid out to create blocks for building sites and to shorten pedestrian routes. An average block perimeter of a quarter mile ensures an optimum plan for pedestrian convenience. An interconnected network of streets and small blocks provides multiple driving routes that diffuse traffic and keep local traffic away from long-range transportation corridors.

### 5. THE NEIGHBORHOOD GIVES PRIORITY TO THE CREATION OF PUBLIC SPACE AND TO THE APPROPRIATE LOCATION OF CIVIC BUILDINGS.

Private buildings form an edge that delineates public spaces and the private block interior. Public spaces such as formal squares, informal parks, and small playgrounds provide places for gathering and recreation. Sites that honor individuals or events are reserved for public buildings such as schools, municipal buildings, and concert halls. Such sites help support the civic spirit of the community and provide places where people can gather for educational, social, cultural, and religious activities.

#### THE DISTRICT

The district is an urbanized area with special functions, such as a theater district, capitol area, or college campus. Other districts accommodate large-scale transportation or workplaces, such as industrial parks, airports, storage and shipping terminals, and refineries. Although districts preclude



TUCSON, ARIZONA. View of a 25,000-square-foot neighborhood center for the new town of Civano.

the full range of activities of a neighborhood, they need not be the single-activity zones of suburbia; complementary activities can support the district's primary identity.

The structure of the district parallels the neighborhood. It has an identifiable focus that provides orientation and identity, and clear boundaries that allow for special taxing or management organizations. Like the neighborhood, the district features public spaces—plazas, sidewalks, important intersections—that reinforce a sense of community among users, encourage pedestrians, and ensure security. Transit systems benefit districts greatly and should be connected to neighborhoods within a regional network.

#### THE CORRIDOR

The corridor is the connector or separator of neighborhoods and districts. Corridors are composed of natural and technical components ranging from wildlife trails to rail lines. The corridor is not the haphazardly residual "open space" buffering the enclaves of suburbia, but a deliberate civic element characterized by its continuity. It is defined by the boundaries of neighborhoods and districts and provides entry to them.

The path of a transportation corridor is determined by the intensity of its use. Highways and heavy-rail corridors remain tangential to towns and cities and enter only the industrial and transportation districts. Light-rail and bus corridors may be incorporated into the boulevards at the edges of neighborhoods, where transit stops are designed for pedestrian use and can accommodate building sites. Bus corridors may pass through neighborhood centers on small streets.

Transportation corridors may be laid out within continuous parkways, providing long-distance walking and bicycle trails and a continuous natural habitat. Green corridors or greenways can also be formed by natural systems such as streams, by drainage ditches engineered for irrigation, or as drainage systems for water runoff. These greenways may include recreational open spaces, such as parks, playing fields, schoolyards, and golf courses. Such continuous natural spaces should flow to the rural edges, connecting the regional ecosystem.

"Above all else, a city is a means of providing a maximum number of social contacts and satisfactions. When the open spaces gape too widely, and the dispersal is too constant, the people lack a stage for their activities and the drama of their daily life lacks sharp focus."

LEWIS MUMFORD  
*The Highway and the City*



## Market Support

ROBERT STEUTEVILLE

One of the amazing aspects about the *Charter of the New Urbanism* book, and all of its distinguished authors, is that if the editors had switched the authors around and asked each to write a different chapter, the book would likely have been just as good.

**"It is still illegal to build Walkable Urbanism in most communities throughout the United States."**

That's because the New Urbanism came together as a multidisciplinary group immersed in every aspect of place-

making. Architects learned street design, transportation engineers became connoisseurs of architecture,

developers taught themselves the physical dimensions of appealing civic spaces, and all believed that this knowledge would create a better world in the immediate future.

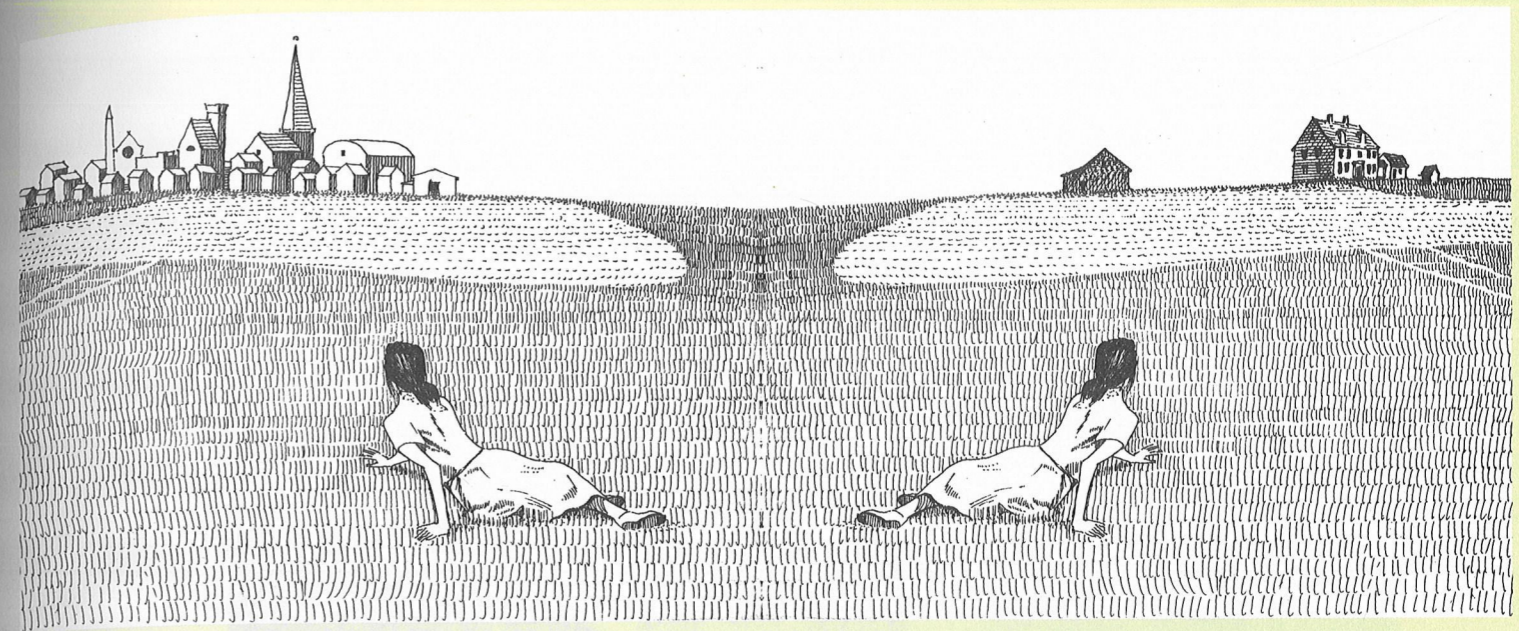
Fourteen years later, is it a better world? New Urbanists may have underestimated the intractable nature of the systems that make placemaking difficult and sometimes impossible.

Although the elements of complete streets are becoming well understood ("complete streets" is a term coined and popularized after the original Charter book was written), it is still enormously challenging to get narrow streets and travel lanes built. Narrower streets, with on-street parking to further slow travel speeds, are essential for urban street life and compact neighborhoods.

"Form-based code" is another term introduced since the Charter book. New Urbanists in the 1990s knew how codes needed to be reformed, but substantial work has since been done on the concept, including coming up with the term that has taken hold among planners. Despite such progress, it is still illegal to build Walkable Urbanism in most communities throughout the United States.

One area where New Urbanists have achieved substantial success is in popularizing the concept of the walkable neighborhood. The mixed-use neighborhood, with a network of streets and diverse building types, and with public spaces, shops, and civic buildings to anchor the center, was a radical concept in the 1990s.

As Jonathan Barnett points out, these kinds of neighborhoods had entirely disappeared from new development planned after World War II. While many of them had continued to thrive in cities and



CHRISTINA'S TWO WORLDS

towns, others had been abandoned or had struggled with disinvestment. These kinds of neighborhoods were under siege as the original Charter book went to press.

As a result of the diagrams of Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company, Douglas Kelbaugh, Peter Calthorpe, and others, planners were just beginning to grasp how much had been lost when the components of the walkable neighborhood were built separately and scattered along the commercial strips of conventional suburban development.

Now the mixed-use neighborhood scaled to the 5- or 10-minute walk has become conventional wisdom. Many environments of this kind have been built in traditional neighborhood or transit-oriented developments. This piece of the New Urbanist philosophy has penetrated the public consciousness—especially among planners, public officials, developers, and even the highest levels of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

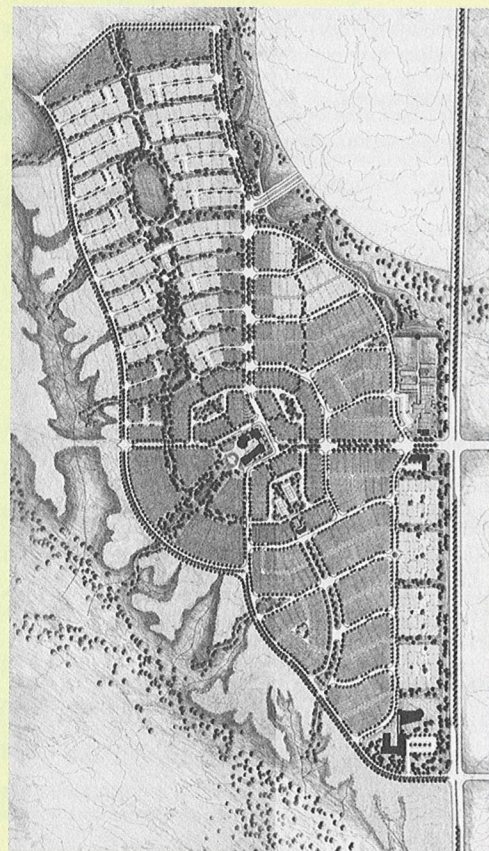
Nearly everybody agrees that the walkable neighborhood is both more sustainable and better for quality of life. The most encouraging trend, however, is that the market is clamoring for it.

The worst housing recession since the Great

Depression—a homebuilding collapse that started in 2007 and persists in 2013—has revealed the fragility of sprawl and the relative strengths of urban neighborhoods. More important, the youngest generation of adults strongly prefers a walkable neighborhood as a place to live.

Millennials, born in the 1980s and 1990s, drive much less than previous generations. Motorists aged 21 to 30 accounted for 14 percent of miles driven in 2010, down from 21 percent in 1995.<sup>33</sup> They want to live where they can get around on foot and by bicycle or transit. That the walkable neighborhood has become part of the culture just as the most urban generation in 60 or 70 years has come of age is a momentous concurrence.

The difficult task of fulfilling this market demand and building more walkable neighborhoods is ahead of us. For that, we need to go back to the multidisciplinary culture of placemaking that New Urbanists cultivated among their small community in the 1990s. This culture must penetrate the popular mind-set—just as the idea of the walkable neighborhood has done. Only then will our transportation and finance systems, codes, and the construction and design industries align to make these places as easy to build as sprawl.



CIVANO, ARIZONA, MASTER PLAN