



Neighborhood Plan

The Official Website of the Davis Islands Neighborhood Planning Task Force

Andres Duany – Expert on the Future

By Renae Tvedt

Andres Duany, an internationally renowned designer and planner and member of Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company, presented a planner's perspective of Temple Terrace August 22, 2002, to the Temple Terrace CRA and a large group of citizens.

Duany is one of the founders of New Urbanism, and author of the book, *Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream*. He developed the comprehensive masterplan for the city of West Palm Beach and is currently working on a similar plan for Madiera Beach. Among Duany's other credits are Seaside, FL, Mashpee Commons on Cape Cod, and the 5th Ave. South. Shopping District in Old Naples.

According to Duany, city planning began when the United States Congress acquired property in Washington, D.C., in order to create our nation's capital city. In 1791, President George Washington appointed Pierre-Charles L'Enfant to design a city on the banks of the Potomac River.

1920s Best Planning Years

The 1920s were the best planning years in America, Duany said. During that decade, the planning and zoning movements got their start. At the end of the decade, however, cities suspended planning and zoning efforts as the 1929 Depression forced dwindling resources toward direct assistance to their citizens.

"This generation is the one that needs to complete the planning process," Duany said.

Temple Terrace has three options for redevelopment, Duany said. Redevelopment can be private, with developers taking the initiative. Redevelopment can be city directed and subsidized. Or, redevelopment can be according to a city-initiated master plan, but performed by private developers who bid on specific projects.

"Citizens should decide which option they want," Duany said.

Town Center Provides Focus

Temple Terrace, although blessed with beautiful older trees and pleasant river views in its neighborhoods, does not have a town center to give focus to the community, Duany said.

A town center "is not a geographical center, but is the soul of a city," he said.

According to Duany, a town center fits within a neighborhood structure; it is not outside the distance a person can walk or bicycle. "Fifty percent of Temple Terrace residents cannot meet their daily needs by walking," Duany said.

A town center also has park land, places where residents can enjoy with nature, Duany added. He pointed to New York City's Central Park, where the pioneering urban park design by Frederick Law Olmsted created a lasting treasure for New Yorkers.

The components of park spaces, trees, grassy areas for sitting and picnicking, paved areas for "wheels" (bicycles, roller blades, and skateboards), compactness and "pedestrianism", are both obvious and often overlooked, Duany said.

"Walkability" is more important than ever, Duany said, and communities that offer pedestrian-friendly town centers will attract visitors and new residents from communities without walking areas. He pointed to the popularity of areas like Hyde Park and Ybor City

as examples of how walkable areas attract people.

Commerce Overlooking Central Square

Town centers also have commerce, ideally in structures situated around a central square or open spaces that invites social interaction among residents.

Duany said citizens must always consider aesthetics when deciding redevelopment issues.

Living next to a convenience store is "like living next to a small atomic plant," Duany said. Illogical land use drastically reduces property values, he added.

By increasing the amount of tax money generated, higher density land use, such as multi-story apartments and condominiums, can actually benefit a city. "Getting more people into the area can increase cash flow and help finance redevelopment of the town center," Duany said.

Incubators for Local Business

Higher density commercial use can also provide "incubators" for new small businesses and stores, he added. "The citizens have to decide if they want national chains or unique local merchants," Duany said. "Local businesses, however, need inexpensive space in which to start."

Right now Temple Terrace is wearing "shorts and sneakers," Duany said. "It needs a suit, and suit is the first good street."

"You are the experts of the past. I am the expert of the Future," Duany said. "I will help you with what will happen 20, 30, 50 years from now. Let us truly dream...and break the shell of the present."