

Walkability

Pedestrian Friendly Development

By Theresa Artuso

Traditional Neighborhood Design, or TND, is an urban design movement whose resurgence and popularity continues to grow. Rooted in the American neighborhoods of the early 20th century, the concept emphasizes mixed-use development, opposition to sprawl and encourages pedestrian friendliness and accessibility. Over time, original town planning principles were abandoned to accommodate rapid growth and the urban condition soon became suburban.

A successful community development is usually traditional and well designed with high quality features, especially toward the center of town. It is a place where people are not forced to use a car unless they choose to. A walkable community is any neighborhood focused as much on its people as it is on its cars, where walking is the most pleasurable means of travel even while cars are accommodated.

There is a sharp contrast between traditional and conventional patterns of development. "Campus planning" encompassing a synergy of disciplines versus standard land planning principles ensures sensible, comprehensive growth. Sprawl and dysfunctional development negatively affect commerce, property

values, neighborhoods and lifestyles. The urban village is the obvious solution to new and old neighborhoods, being small, connected and containing mixed uses. The purpose of cities and villages is to maximize exchange between people and minimize their travel needs.

Housing types such as live/work units where the owner can reside where he does business or residential over office or retail where the owner lives in the midst of commercial activity allow the residents to take advantage of what the area has to offer without getting into a car.

Pedestrian circulation should be prioritized by reducing walking distances, connecting every residence and amenity and reducing street and apron crossings. Walkability can be provided in neighborhoods of 125-200 acres by designing elements at a "walkable scale". Everyone should be within 800' or 1/8 mile of green spaces and/or parks. The "walkshed" of a community should be 1/4 mile or what can be accessible in a 5 minute walk. Connectivity between neighborhoods is assured with proximity to regional travel.

By reinventing intersections, pedestrians and bicyclists can more safely nav-



igate both simple and complex intersections. Specific tools such as crosswalks, stop bars, signal placement, signage, roundabouts and other traffic calming devices all contribute to safer travel. The average pedestrian pace is approximately 3.5' per second. By reducing the widths of intersections, the pedestrian can safely cross from one side to the other in less time. The use of curb extensions, decorative pavement and clear travel markings also contribute to intersection safety.

Healthy, walkable neighborhoods where the residential units are closer to the sidewalks and roadways offer increased mobility with increased walking and bicycling access, contributing to a unique sense of community and "sense of place".

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