Principles of Community Placemaking in Practice

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Objectives of the Presentation
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- Provide background on the need for and evolution of the principles
- Give community development professionals an overview of the 5 functional areas and the 19 principles
- Illustrate how the principles have been presented in practice
- Give examples of how the principles have been integrated in learning, assessment and visioning/planning applications in Wisconsin
- Help community development professionals understand their role in applying the principles of community placemaking to visioning and planning
Objective 1

Grounding on the need for and evolution of the principles
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Grounding on the need for and evolution of the principles

Situation

- **Process Support.** The University of Wisconsin-Extension (UWEX) provides extensive educational support in processes associated with comprehensive planning, community planning, community visioning and downtown design.

- **Emerging Concepts.** Community and downtown design resources are becoming more in demand with concepts of new urbanism, traditional neighborhood design, sustainable development and community placemaking emerging over the past 15 years.
Objective 1: 
Grounding on the need for and evolution of the principles

Situation

- **Recognized need.** There is a need for additional assistance to local officials, designers and aspiring citizen planners so that the accepted principles of quality placemaking or the “characteristics of quality places” can be incorporated into local planning and revitalization efforts.


- **Research Development.** Developed an initial curriculum and educational resources illustrating 19 principles of community placemaking.

- **Legitimizers.** The principles were further refined by a “Placemaking Imagery Forum” sponsored by the UWEX Downtown Vitality and Community Placemaking Team (DVCP).
Objective 1:
Grounding on the need for and evolution of the principles

Definitions of and Related to Placemaking

• **Place.** A place is a geographical space that is defined by meanings, sentiments and stories. (Hague, 2005) Places are places (and not just spaces) because they have identity. (Hague, 2005)

• **Place Identity.** Place identity represents the values and meaning we impart on a place based on what others tell us about the place along with our own socialization shaped by age, class, gender, ethnicity, education, etc. (Hague, 2005). Place identities are formed through milieux of feelings, meanings, experiences, memories and actions that, while ultimately personal, are substantially filtered through socialization. (Hague, 2005)
Definitions of and Related to Placemaking, cont...

- **Planning and Placemaking.** We see community planning as being about placemaking; that is to say that a key purpose of planning is to create, reproduce or mould the identities of places through manipulation of the activities, feelings, meanings and fabric that combine into place identity. (Hague, 2005)

- **Placemaking and Public Places.** Creating a vision around the places that citizens view as important to community life and their daily experience based on community needs and aspirations. (Project for Public Spaces Website.)

- **Definitions of Placemaking.** The process of adding value and meaning to the public realm through community-based revitalization projects rooted in local values, history, culture and natural environment. (Zelinka and Harden, 2005)

Relates to planning endeavors focused on spatial development, urban design and cityform, public realm, streetscapes and related infrastructure, and the general imaging and re-imaging of places. (Szold, 2000)
Research and Curriculum Development

• Individual need for this in Jefferson County, Wisconsin. Started work 8 years ago

• Moved from process of planning to content of what are quality places, ie. features of quality places

• Used Gene Bunnell’s book and his research to identify the 19 principles. Started assembling graphic imagery to illustrate the principles (people needed to “see” the principle in the real world)
Objective 1:
Grounding on the need for and evolution of the principles

Research and Curriculum Development, cont...

• Became a part of the Downtown Vitality and Community Placemaking (DVCP) Team with a University of Wisconsin-Madison Landscape Architecture professor

• Successfully held a “graphics image forum” with finest designers in Wisconsin

• Used trusted “consultants” to help assemble pool of images (600+) organized by principle
Objective 1:
Grounding on the need for and evolution of the principles

Current Product Line in Curriculum

• Four powerpoint presentations (from short summary to fully detailed)

• Professional Guide

• Image Library (600+ images organized by principle)
Objective 1:
Grounding on the need for and evolution of the principles

Professional Development on the “Principles” in Wisconsin

- Held a 2 day inservice (see agenda)
- Neighborhood walking tour night before

**Learning Objectives:**
- learn the 19 principles of community placemaking
- understand the rationale behind each principle
- understand the visual representation
- understand community form
- understand the application of principles
- learn a method of community visioning

- Evaluations from the 15 UW-EX participants were positive
Objective 2

Overview: The 5 Functional Areas and the 19 Principles
Objective 2 Overview:
The 5 Functional Areas and the 19 Principles

Functional Area I: Effective and Functional Physical Configuration
   Principles 1-7

Functional Area II: User-Friendly and Efficient Circulation
   Principles 8-9

Functional Area III: Preserved Natural and Cultural Resources and Environment
   Principles 10-12

Functional Area IV: Enhanced Local Identity and Sense of Place
   Principles 13-14

Functional Area V: Attributes to Instinctively Draw Us to Places
   Principles 15-19: Connectivity, Drama and Dignity, Variety and Whimsy, Reflection of Local Values and Sociable Settings
Functional Area I: Physical Configuration

Compact development that doesn’t sprawl, enabling urban and rural areas to be clearly differentiated from one another.

Urban places with a strong center, where multiple uses and activities are clustered in fairly close proximity (strong village and city centers).

A clear strong edge defining city from rural shows Portland, Oregon’s growth boundary.

Main Street in Downtown Watertown
Principle 3

City-centered redevelopment and infill

Principle 4

Integration of housing and employment centers and shopping areas, so that communities contain places to live, work and shop, and contain a full range of facilities.

Downtown Minocqua, Wisconsin’s redeveloped Gaslight Square shopping mall

Middleton Hills, Wisconsin incorporates employment and shopping with residential development nearby
Functional Area I: Physical Configuration

**Principle 5**
Vital, distinctive and varied neighborhoods in close proximity to the urban center.

**Principle 6**
Avoidance of low-density residential development on the urban fringe.

**Principle 7**
A mixture of housing types that meets the needs of a variety of households with different income levels.
Functional Area II: Circulation

**Principle 8**

Pedestrian and bicycle friendly environments (pattern of development that supports and encourages sidewalk pedestrian activity and bicycle path travel).

*Glacial River Trail in Fort Atkinson allows pedestrians and bicyclists to explore the city*

**Principle 9**

High quality and convenient public transit coordinated with land use and development, and concentrated development along transit corridors and proximity to transit stops.

*Milwaukee’s Intermodal Station connects travelers through bus and train transportation*
Functional Area III: Environment and Culture

Principle 10
Environmental resources, natural amenities, scenic qualities, parks, recreation and open space that are preserved and are consciously integrated into the fabric of the community.

Principle 11
Preserved farmland and related open space, wildlife habitats and environmental corridors.

Principle 12
Historic and cultural resources consciously preserved and integrated into contemporary settings.

The city of Horicon, WI is the gateway to the Horicon Marsh

Preserved farm within the rolling countryside of western Lake Mills, WI

Milwaukee's historic Third Ward preserves a rich history of warehouse buildings
Functional Area IV: Sense of Place

**Principle 13**

Strong local character, community identity and a sense of place.

*The Julia Belle Swain riverboat calls La Crosse home while conveying the Grand River lifestyle*

**Principle 14**

Well designed public buildings and public spaces that strengthen community sense of place, often reinforced and enlivened by works of art and sculpture.

*Fort Atkinson Municipal Building with bronze sculptures adorning the entrance*
**Functional Area V: Attributes that Draw Us**

**Principle 15**
Connectivity: Vehicular, pedestrian and transit connectivity and ease of movement from one part of the community to another.

**Principle 16**
Drama and Dignity: Landmarks and building façades providing evidence that it is a real place, not just superficial.

**Principle 17**
Variety and Whimsy: As expressed in architectural forms and design details.

*This scene from La Crosse shows multiple connection routes for pedestrian and other modes of transportation*

*Dramatic view of the Wisconsin State Capitol from the Monona Terrace*

*The Pineapple Fountain reflects the friendly hospitality of the people of Charleston, SC*
Reflection of Local Values:
Appropriate architectural styles, materials and vegetation.

Sociable Settings: Many choices and many things to do, not just consumerism and shopping, not just a workplace or a bedroom community.

Covered bridge south of Fort Atkinson, WI, was built using boards from a nearby obsolete barn.

Milwaukee’s riverfront connects restaurants, shops, festivals and the downtown.
How the principles have been presented in practice
Objective 3:
How the principles have been presented in practice

Use of Resources

• Four powerpoints have been developed from short and simple---to more detailed and extensive examples

• Varying amount of detail in presentations

• Different clients= different needs for detail
Objective 3:

How the principles have been presented in practice
Principle 1 in PowerPoint versions 1 and 2

Version 1: Brief presentation
(1 slide per principle)

Version 2: Extended examples
(2 slides per principle)
Objective 3:
How the principles have been presented in practice
Principle 1 in Powerpoint versions 3 and 4

Version 3: Hybrid

**Principle 1: Compact Communities and Clear Urban/Rural Differentiation**
Compact development that doesn’t sprawl, enabling urban and rural areas to be clearly differentiated from one another.

**Additional Examples of Compact Communities and Clear Urban/Rural Differentiation**

- Lineworth in England is surrounded by a greenbelt with compact urban development.
- City grid versus urban services.

Version 4: Customized by client

**Functional Area 1: Effective and Functional Physical Configuration**

1. **Principle 1**
Compact development that doesn’t sprawl, enabling urban and rural areas to be clearly differentiated from one another.

2. **Principle 2**
Urban places with a strong center, where multiple uses and activities are clustered in fairly close proximity (strong village and city centers).

**Insert your own images selected by your community participants for principles 1 and 2**

- Principle 1
- Principle 2
Objective 3:
How the principles have been presented in practice
Professional guide as a resource and presentation prompt

**Functional Area I: Effective and Functional Physical Configuration**

**Principle 3: City-centered Redevelopment and Infill**

City-centered redevelopment and infill.

- **Value and Importance**
  - Infill development within existing urban areas conserves environmental resources, economic interests and the social fabric. (Urban Design Associates, 2003)
  - Infill reclaims marginal and abandoned areas. (Urban Design Associates, 2003)

- **Community Preference**
  - Urban villages and town centers are beginning to appear on urban infill sites and in redevelopment areas including brownfield sites often to serve a nearby workforce or residences. (Bohl, 2002)
  - The redevelopment of shopping centers and strip commercial areas into main streets, town centers and urban villages has become increasingly common.

- **Reuse**
  - A livable city needs diversity in design and building types—thus the importance of preservation and reuse not only of notable historic buildings, but of ordinary serviceable buildings. (Barnett, 2003)

- **Trends**
  - Urban villages are “a blend of old-fashioned neighborhood living and 21st century technology and convenience.” (Bohl, 2002)

**Value and Importance**
- Design for the human—the community must be a place for people to live, work, play and interact. (Nelissen, 1994)
- Town center and main street projects are promoted as “live, work, play” settings that offer relief from the totally automobile-dependent lifestyles of “soccer moms, business commuters, and others who feel trapped by suburban sprawl.” (Bohl, 2002)
- Development should be planned for a job/housing balance, not as bedroom suburbs. (Urban Design Associates, 2003)

**Community Preference**
- Survey research indicates the need for more diverse residential, retail, hotel and office formats. (Bohl, 2002)
- Mixed use environments offer an appealing alternative for “the new economy worker” tired of the isolation in office and technology parks. (Bohl, 2002)

**Making Places Special: Professional Guide**
- This multi-use development in Madison, WI houses offices, retail and upper living quarters.
- Middleton Hills, WI incorporates employment and shopping in the center with residential nearby.
Objective 4

How the principles have been integrated and applied to process in Wisconsin
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Context on Integrating Processes

• **Change Processes.** The University of Wisconsin-Extension has been a leader in developing guidebooks and assistance in developing sound protocol for community development, planning and “change” processes (Grabow, Hilliker, Moskal, 2006).

• **Blending Purpose Based Action.** These guidelines suggest the importance of designing processes that integrate community research, community learning, community visioning and comprehensive planning processes (Grabow, October 2004).

• **Integrating Content and Process.** Considerable effort is now being given to the importance of integrating the necessary education about principles of placemaking with sound planning processes.
Objective 4: How the principles have been integrated and applied to process in Wisconsin

• **Jefferson County Processes.** This presentation has been given many times in Jefferson County.

• Given to downtown organizations to launch planning efforts and to inform community groups and planning commissions about to begin a planning or visioning initiative.

• Given to community groups to “inform and inspire the vision” with a high standard of what a community or place could be.

• Adapted as a “worksheet and prompt sheet” for a community tour.

• Used as a tool to help assess the quality of “community visioning work”.

Objective 4: How the principles have been integrated and applied to process in Wisconsin

Jefferson County Applications
These resources have been widely used and distributed in Jefferson County and with UWEX colleagues.

- Downtown/Main Street Groups-2
- Towns-5
- Villages-1
- Cities-5
- County-1
- UWEX Colleagues-3
Objective 4: How the principles have been integrated and applied to process in Wisconsin

Applications outside of Jefferson County since the inservice

- Used to assist neighborhood planning
- Used in downtown and economic development newsletters
- Land Use Tracker Newsletter- circulation of 1,000 professionals
Objective 5

Role of the Professional
Objective 5: Role of the Professional

- **Educator** as a presenter of content
  - Prior to various follow up activities

- **Educator** of content/resource
  - Newsletters (Land Use Tracker)

- **Facilitator** of visioning/planning
  - Prompt for follow up processes

- **Researcher/assessment leader**

- **Capacity Builder**
  - Develop knowledge base and skills of aspiring citizen planners
Wrap Up Thoughts

Context, Caveats and Linkage to Sustainability
Wrap up thoughts: Context, Caveats and Linkage to Sustainability

• **Additional Notions.** The Professional Guide concludes with some additional context, caveats or cautionary notes about these placemaking, and a discussion about these principles relative to notions of sustainability.

• **The Big Idea About Sustainable and Liveable Places.** An argument can be made that the ultimate outcome or long-term vision for a high quality of life in the future is both sustainable and livable places; sustainable and livable places should reflect a balance among environmental, economic, equity and livability values. (Godschalk, 2004)

• **Common Criteria- Sustainability and Placemaking Principles.** There is extensive overlap between the desirable characteristics or criteria for sustainable cities (i.e. sustainable community design) and the principles of community placemaking offered in this document. (Carmona, 2001, adapted by Grabow)

• **The Aspiring Citizen Planner.** The University of Wisconsin-Extension is directing considerable efforts toward “gearing-up” aspiring citizen planners along with the professional design and development community to make places special.


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Bibliography and References


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Questions & Reflections?