



What is New Urbanism?

Description

What exactly are the principles of this “New Urbanism” concept?

Ten Principles comprise New Urbanism, according to the [Michigan Land Use Institute](#). On the surface, many of these principles sound fine and dandy. A lot of the precepts sound like something we might enjoy. Let’s look a little closer into the concepts and as to how this idea might or might not be a good fit for Hot Springs Village.

Walkability

New Urbanism principle number one is walkability, leading to much less use of personal vehicles. [Discouraging ownership of automobiles](#) is a basic tenet of the New Urbanism plan. Furthermore, there is encouragement of alternate methods of travel, such as on foot.

Connectivity

New Urbanism principle number two is connectivity. This involves all of the streets, trails, paths being walkable, ridable and interconnected. New Urbanism discourages the use of personal automobiles and wants everyone walking, riding their bicycles on these interconnected paths and narrow streets.

Connecting the whole community is great and has already been accomplished in Hot Springs Village. But connecting the whole of HSV with walking/bicycling trails has not and is probably not a good idea unless we make it a Village of Mountain Climbers and Mountain Bikers.

Bella Vista, AR is Undergoing Connectivity

Isn’t that what is being promoted in Bella Vista, Arkansas with all the bicycle trails connecting so much of the community? Imagine having a home and then realizing what you thought was common property, owned by the whole of the community, was given to the Trail Blazers.



Woman Pushes Bicycle Up Hill

In Bella Vista, AR it was just announced (March 2019) that they are having a meeting about a new trail proposal. Of course, Bella Vista does not have gates, so this project can be funded with Federal Grants. This is information about a meeting to discuss the project: “A proposed secondary connector path which would go from Metfield Park to Blowing Springs Park, ultimately connecting with the Razorback Greenway. This 10-foot wide concrete path would be funded through a grant. Representatives from the Property Owners Association, City of Bella Vista, and NWA Trailblazers will be at the meeting to seek input.”

One of the concerns about this project is the close proximity to the children’s play areas and schools and this may be seen by predators as an opportunity. Whether it is or not, Bella Vista has been inundated with these trails, making the community more and more connected. Maybe a little too

connected.

Where they once had a certain level of privacy with the buffer of common property, now some Good Citizens of Bella Vista have folks traipsing/riding past their back door on a continual basis. Not only that, they are paying to maintain these trails. Most of the use is by people outside the community who of course are not being charged to use them. The following is being said facetiously, but maybe it is time for Hot Springs Villagers to sign up for the mountain biking group or the trail-blazing group.

Mixed-use and Diversity

New Urbanism principle number three promotes mixed-use and diverse communities. Think New York City, Old Paris. Homes, shops, apartments, offices, buildings of all types intermingled together. People of all ages, income levels, cultures, and races, living together, harmoniously or maybe not so harmoniously.

We take no offense to anyone of any religion, race, gender, age or any other identifying and probably dividing term that can be used. Nor do we discourage this diversity, after all this is America, where we still have freedom of choice.

Natural Separations

The problem we see with mixed-use communities is that people do naturally tend to separate themselves. Golfers tend to live on the golf courses (if they can swing it), boaters on the lakes (if they can float the finances) and so on and so forth. Many like being with those who they have much in common. Is this a bad or good thing? Diversity **AND** distinctive living, both, can be supported by valid arguments. What this boils down to, is that people should have a choice.

If people of Italian backgrounds prefer to congregate their homes in “Little Italy”, that should be their right. The same for people in many other identity groups. Like attracts like and people should be able to make choices that are comfortable to them.

While on the surface, this sounds like an ideal lollipop, fluffy cloud, and bunny rabbit world, it usually doesn't work. This is another instance where like attracts like and people want to congregate where they feel most comfortable. A lot of retirees prefer to live in fairly close proximity to other retirees and that was their reason for moving to HSV. Not saying HSV is an age-restricted community, per se, only that the majority living here are of retirement age.

Mixed Housing

New Urbanism principle number four promotes the principle of “mixed housing”. Mixed housing is where homes of all types, price range, sizes, etc. are closely situated. This means single family homes, apartment buildings, and duplexes, fourplexes, all in the same neighborhood. In other words, you may own a mansion, but next door may sit a midrise apartment complex. A couple of blocks down, the less financially blessed people may reside. One big happy family!

Quality Architecture & Design

New Urbanism principle number five is quality architecture and design. No problems with high-quality architecture, as long as there is also quality construction. As far as design, that has always been a personal choice. What one sees as quality design, another may see as poor design.

Traditional Neighborhood Structure

New Urbanism principle number six promotes traditional neighborhood structure. This means traditional before the present day. In order to escape the crowded and oppressive “city life”, many Americans have moved to the suburbs. In fact, the “American Dream” is a dream of choices and opportunities. Opportunities abound, allowing achievement of goals and dreams, meaning career, personal, lifestyle, etc. For many, the dream is to live in an urban environment, for many, it is not. We still have this choice. The keyword here is STILL.

Increased Density

Promoting convenience, New Urbanism principle number seven advocates increased density of people and buildings. Admittedly, we do love our conveniences. Convenience stores, convenient offices, all within reach of everyone without the use of an automobile. This involves little effort on our part in accessing our everyday needs and wants. Imagine living in a building, where the grocery store is located on the ground floor, business offices on the second floor, maybe apartments on the third floor. Think of all the exciting hustle and bustle happening right below you. People coming and going, to and fro, never a dull or quiet moment.

Some people like this, some people don't. Why would we want HSV to be a dense community? Dense brings to mind mega-cities. Is there a place for these? Of course, there is. Is the place for a New Urbanism environment in the pristine and unspoiled community of Hot Springs Village? We do not believe so. There is no backtracking once New Urbanism is implemented.

Smart Transportation

New Urbanism principle number eight is “smart” transportation, which includes a number of public transit systems. Think of the Twiggs Trolley idea and city buses, subways, etc. Sounds like something for a big city. This principle also includes walking, bicycling, rollerblading. More examples are roller skating, skateboarding and use of nonmotorized scooters.



Trolley Cars

Utilizing One's Own Steam

Utilizing one's own body to get around can be a great idea. Exercise helps to achieve and sustain a healthy body and mind. As one becomes older, however, it is not feasible or maybe not even advisable for most of us to "run a marathon" or walk everywhere we need to go. Loss of strength, flexibility, endurance naturally occurs as one becomes older. It is great for the folks that have sustained a large percentage of these qualities, but most haven't. This is because it takes a massive,

life-long ongoing effort to achieve this level of fitness. It also takes time and to a certain extent, it takes money. Not saying exercise or walking is bad, but the steep terrain and dangerous drop-offs in HSV make walking most places challenging.

HSV also has a much older population than the whole of Arkansas. According to [City-Data](#), the median age in Arkansas is 38 years and the median age in Hot Springs Village is 67.8 years.

Again, HSV is a community of mostly retirees. It is difficult to imagine a lot of older folks tooling around on roller blades and scooters. Imagine a trip to the grocery store, balancing your groceries, while at the same time trying to keep yourself upright on some of these massive inclines and declines. This seems like an accident waiting to happen – many accidents

Sustainability

New Urbanism principle number nine is sustainability. Sustainability sounds wonderful! This principle of New Urbanism results in locally grown food. Guess that may mean no more pineapples or coconuts at the market. New Urbanism also advocates less use of resources (think gasoline). Preservation of land is an excuse to promote the development of highly dense communities. Everyone lives in much more dense places, allowing for the rest of the world, outside of these controlled enclaves to revert back to it's "natural state". This encourages closeness among neighbors, whether you get along with or like the neighbor. New Urbanism pushes many folks into our direct world, whether they are kind or unkind, givers or takers.

Should human needs and desires not be considered "natural"? Suppose natural means fewer modern conveniences (like the automobile).

Quality of Life

New Urbanism principle number ten is "quality of life". We take no issue with a high quality of life, but who determines what makes a "high quality" life? Is what is enjoyable for one, enjoyable for the other? Does a densely populated, New Urbanism environment lead to a high quality of life? Is a home in the pristine woods of HSV a low quality of life? Who determines this? New Urbanists?

New Urbanism – Stack & Pack

The New Urbanism movement promotes "stack em and pack em" type communities with fewer property rights for individuals. Furthermore, it is a socialist movement, that's main objective is social engineering by attempting to "corral" human beings into denser, more populated diverse areas. This results in tighter control of our lives. If you have any doubt about that, take a gander at the New Urbanism Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP) for HSV. Also look at the accompanying, oppressive Protective Covenants. Andre Duany, the father of New Urbanism designed the CMP using New Urbanism principles.

New Urbanism is the antithesis to our gates, to a community of retirees, to our automobiles, which could result in changing our very way of life. Do they want to transform our community and push out the retired and mostly older folks? It sure seems that way.

Written by Cheryl Dowden

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Author

lynn

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