The social goals of new urbanism

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Abstract

New Urbanism is most often appraised in terms of its physical design, while analysis of its social goals is limited to unsubstantiated claims about New Urbanists' desire to engage in social engineering. This article presents the results of an evaluation of the explicit, stated link between the physical planning proposals of New Urbanism and three types of social goals: community, social equity, and the common good. The analysis is based on the *Charter of the New Urbanism*, which describes each core principle in detail.

Of the 27 principles, 8 are related to equity, while 19 are connected to promoting the common good. None of the principles is explicitly related to community, although notions of community are often invoked for descriptive purposes. It is hoped that these results will help clarify the discussion of the relationship between physical planning and social goals in the context of New Urbanism.

Keywords: Community; New Urbanism

Introduction

The appraisal of New Urbanism is most often focused on its physical design, while analysis of its social goals is limited. This is not difficult to explain: Establishing a link between the physical design of cities and social goals like "sense of community" and "equity" is difficult. On the one hand, social goals often elude a territorial basis. On the other, city designers would be remiss if they failed to recognize the ways in which physical design affects social phenomena. Further, the effects are not one dimensional. Physical design may affect, for example, social and political forms of organization through the design of public spaces, social equity through the spatial arrangement of public facilities, and social encounters through the design of sidewalks. The uses of design for social purposes may be explicit, such as the Parisian boulevard system, constructed in part for social control, or they may be more discreet, such as Clarence Perry's implicit attempt to foster social homogeneity via his neighborhood unit plan (Silver 1985).

Almost every physical design proposal faces the dilemma of having to find the right balance between what design can and cannot achieve in social terms. Physical planners can easily fail on either front. If, for example, New Urbanism—currently one of the most influential physical planning proposals—becomes too involved with social objectives, it

will be accused of attempting to engineer and control society. If, however, it fails to acknowledge its impact on social objectives, it can be accused of committing the same error that redevelopment schemes of the 1960s committed—ignorance of their social effects. New Urbanism may work well as a physical planning model, but any good physical planning model must also come to terms with its social effects.

This article presents the results of an evaluation of the link between physical planning and social goals. New Urbanist principles are used as a basis for this assessment. The main objective is to develop a more balanced, constructive framework for discussing the interrelationship between social goals and physical planning proposals like New Urbanism. It is hoped that this will help move the discussion of the relationship between physical planning and social goals further ahead. It is also hoped that a discussion of New Urbanism's social goals will progress beyond simple dismissal based on perceived social engineering (a critique to which it is regularly subjected; see Harvey 1997 and Audirac 1999).

The article begins by delineating three different types of social goals: community, social equity, and the "common good." Each of these goals has played a role in physical urban planning in a general sense, and thus each is potentially relevant to exploring the link between social goals and New Urbanism. This is followed by a discussion of the overt social goals of New Urbanism, analyzed through a careful examination of the *Charter of the New Urbanism* (Congress for the New Urbanism 2000), the official treatise of New Urbanism. Using this information, the remainder of the article focuses on laying out whether and by what mechanism New Urbanism, as a specific physical design proposal, could hope to achieve one or more of the social goals of community, social equity, or common good.

It is important to emphasize that this article is an evaluation of the *stated* goals of New Urbanism, not an assessment of whether these goals have actually been achieved. Many critics of New Urbanist developments have pointed out that, so far, the self-contained communities constructed (for example, Seaside, Celebration, and Kentlands) have failed to meet their stated social objectives. Certainly, few would disagree that they tend to be exclusively high income and that they lack racial diversity. This assessment may be true for selected high-income areas, but what assessment can be made of the movement as a whole? Such an evaluation begins with an understanding of its stated social goals.

Setting aside the discussion of *why* New Urbanist developments have failed to meet their social objectives (regulatory barriers, opposition by local residents to higher densities, outdated lending practices), there is

a subtle distinction that must be made between addressing social goals and solving social problems. The difference is one of degree. The ability of physical design to solve social problems outright is a far more ambitious proposal, and the history of planning has shown repeatedly that this approach has had limited success. A statement made by Cafferty more than 20 years ago still holds true today: "The bricks and mortar approach to solving social problems is dangerous because it wastes scarce resources, raises community expectations, and results in disillusionment and alienation" (Cafferty 1979, 508). What is important is the need to consider, in a realistic way, the social goals that can be affected by physical planning.

Three types of social goals

New Urbanist principles are evaluated in terms of three social goals: community, social equity, and the notion of the common good. Obviously, there are more than three types of social goals. These particular goals were selected because they are prevalent in discussions about the social implications of city design (Talen 2000).

Often the social goals of planning are oversimplified to mean planning for social services, such as health care delivery or job training. But others take a broader view, one defined as planning's ability to produce some type of social change (Cafferty 1979). Taking this larger perspective, the social goals selected here are those that have been seen or could be seen as desirable components of social change. In addition, because this article is about the relationship between physical design and social goals, goals were selected based on whether they would in fact be relevant to an assessment of physical planning proposals.

Community

The notion of community is usually defined in terms of two aspects, a *social* component, consisting of various types of social interaction, and an *affective* component, involving a whole range of psychological and emotional responses. Research on each of these dimensions is voluminous. During the past 30 years, researchers have built on one another's conceptions of the varied meanings involved, such that our understanding of the social life of communities and neighborhoods is now fully multidimensional.

The social interaction component consists of social networks and the emotional support that can exist among neighbors. Such activity ranges

from strong social relationships, for example, when there is an exchange of help or goods, to weak social ties involving casual greetings. The affective component of community considers the psychological aspects of community, beyond overt social interaction (although in many ways tied to it). McMillan and Chavis (1986) identified membership, influence, need fulfillment, and shared emotional connection as the main determinants of community.

The connection between physical design and community, particularly its affective component, is complicated. Some even view the linkage as potentially harmful. For example, a key paradox confronting attempts to build community through physically oriented policies and planning proposals is that, at least at the neighborhood level, such community-building efforts have historically been linked to efforts to promote social homogeneity and exclusion (Silver 1985). Planners have admonished the neighborhood unit concept and other attempts to socially engineer particular types of "balanced" communities (Banerjee and Baer 1984). Similarly, the effect of perceived threats to property values has been shown to be a strong factor in generating a locality-based sense of community (Panzetta 1971). Harvey (1997) likened the quest for community via physical planning to "surveillance bordering on overt social repression" (69).

It should be emphasized that these criticisms are confined to the notion of physical determinism. They should not be construed to mean that community and community-building efforts are not viewed as essentially positive and indeed essential in the planning process. The issue is whether specific physical design proposals can be linked to fostering community. And even though empirical evidence linking the physical and social realms is mixed (this is discussed in more detail later), there is widespread recognition that attachment to place, locally based resident interaction, and sense of community are generally positive social goals, whether or not they can be linked to specific design proposals.

Social equity

Like community, social equity can also have many different meanings. Robert Putnam (2000), in his Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey, defines social equity as equality of civic engagement across a community, or how widespread civic involvement is across class lines. An alternative meaning, one more applicable to the physical design aspects of urban planning, defines social equity on the basis of the spatial distribution of people and resources. This can mean, for example, distributive equality—the issue of balancing who gets what. As it

relates to principles of city design, social equity can thus be defined as the equalization of access to resources. One approach to this is to administer territorial equity, that is, equalizing access to public goods and services. This view is closely related to the notion of equity planning—a procedure for rectifying the inequity of class divisions—which has been extended primarily through the writings of Norman Krumholz (1982) and more recently by Krumholz and Forester (1990).

The provision of resources on the basis of equity can be variously interpreted. Lucy (1981) identified five categories of equity relevant to planning for local services. Subsequent taxonomies relevant to planning have been offered by Truelove (1993) and Marsh and Schilling (1994). The equity categories that have evolved essentially amount to differences in the methodology that should be used for distribution. Equity can be defined as equality, in which everyone receives the same public benefit regardless of socioeconomic status, willingness to pay, or other criteria. Alternatively, equity in the distribution of public benefit can be based on need, termed "compensatory" equity by Crompton and Wicks (1988). Lucy (1981) refers to this as "unequal treatment of unequals" (450), based on indicators such as poverty, race, and, ideally, the nature of the service being provided.

The notion of social equity, particularly the goal of equitable resource distribution, can be directly linked to physical planning (Talen 1996). For example, an interesting study of the ability of the compact city to address the goals of social equity was recently undertaken by Elizabeth Burton (2000). The study compared higher-density and lower-density cities in terms of their ability to improve public transport and access to facilities, reduce social segregation, and increase the supply of affordable housing. From a sample size of 25, the study concluded that "higher urban densities may be positive for some aspects of social equity and negative for others" (Burton 2000, 1969).

Common good

The most familiar usage of this term is one that promotes the view that actions should benefit all individuals, not just a privileged few. According to proponents of the common good, a focus on protecting individual rights rather than the common good lessens the accountability of individual actions to society. Emphasizing the common good requires that, at certain times, private rights yield to common concerns. Thus Etzioni (2000) defines the common good in terms of what it stands against: the expansive privileging of private rights, and "the right to be let alone" (25).

Through the work of such writers as Amitai Etzioni (1993), Robert Bellah (Bellah et al. 1982, 1985), and Mary Ann Glendon (1991), the common good has come to be associated with social responsibility, civic engagement, and the protection of public goods like health, safety, and the environment. This is in fact a long-standing idea that originated with Plato and Aristotle. It states that individual benefit must be secondary to common benefit, that it is possible to maintain conditions that benefit everyone, not just a few. This means that our civic and social institutions, our political and economic system, our environment, and our systems of justice must function in a way that benefits all the people. Certainly, clean air and clean water are prime examples of a common good from which all benefit (to the extent that all have access to them).

As is the case with community, there are some problems with the notion of a common good. Who defines what the common good is? Since there is no objectively correct definition, it is necessary to confront a plurality of definitions that may not coincide. This is especially true of a pluralistic society in which individual freedom is very highly regarded. There is thus an inherent difficulty in attempting to translate civic commitment into a utopian community structure that can succeed in contemporary society (Kantor 1972; Mandelbaum 1988).

There are other issues as well. Some people will be forced to give up more than others in the quest to obtain the common good. A prime example is the protection of environmental resources. Current owners of such resources may be forced to limit their ability to sell their property for its highest and best use in the interest of protecting the common good. Related to this is the likely event that many who benefit from the common good will not have paid their fair share for its attainment but will nevertheless share equally in its benefits. For example, there may be unequal participation in resource conservation programs, but all will likely receive the benefit of resource protection.

In planning, the legitimacy of a notion like the common good is likely to meet with little opposition. Many of the critics come from a libertarian perspective, one not particularly well aligned with urban planning and design. Planners are in the business of offsetting the burdens imposed by unchecked free market economies, and although well aware of the difficulties cited above, planners often use the notion of the common good as a basis for urban planning objectives, including physical design proposals.

The social goals of New Urbanism

This section evaluates New Urbanist principles, as published in the official Charter, in terms of how they coincide with the three social goals identified above. There is no presumption of hidden meanings or agendas: The stated goals are taken at face value.

It was pointed out in the previous section that all three types of social goals can be viewed in different ways, not all of them positive. However, in the evaluation of New Urbanist social goals presented in this section, there is an implicit assumption that the social goals being evaluated—community, equity, common good—are both valid (i.e., positive) and capable of being influenced by physical design.

New Urbanism's charter

The *Charter of the New Urbanism* (Congress for the New Urbanism 2000) comprises a list of 27 principles, each of which is accompanied by an essay from a leading architect, planner, or policy maker that explains it in greater detail. The principles move from general to specific and are organized into three categories: The Region: Metropolis, City, and Town; Neighborhood, District, and Corridor; and Block, Street, and Building.

This succinct compilation of principles provides a convenient means for evaluation. For the analysis, each principle was evaluated in terms of the three social goals of community, equity, and common good. The goal to which the principle seemed most directed was selected. The possibility that none of the three social goals was relevant was left open. However, it was found that all 27 principles could be tied in some way to one of the three social goals.

The results of the analysis are summarized in table 1. Each of the 27 principles is listed in order, and the main social goal to which each principle relates is marked in one of three middle columns. Keywords that summarize the main intent of each principle are listed in the right-hand column.

Of the 27 principles, 8 were found to be related to equity, and 19 were connected to promoting the common good. None of the principles were found to be explicitly related to community, except in terms of the inclusion of some descriptive statements.

Table 1. **Primary Social Goal Associated with *Charter of the New Urbanism* Principles**

Charter Principle	Community	Social Equity	Common Good	Key Concepts
The Region: Metropolis, City, and Town				
1. The metropolitan region is a fundamental economic unit of the contemporary world. Government cooperation, public policy, physical planning, and economic strategies must reflect this new reality.		X		Deconcentration of poverty Regional tax-base sharing
2. Metropolitan regions are finite places with geographic boundaries derived from topography, watersheds, coastlines, farmlands, regional parks, and river basins. The metropolis is made of multiple centers that are cities, towns, and villages, each with its own identifiable center and edges.			X	Protection of environmental and economic health
3. The metropolis has a necessary and fragile relationship to its agrarian hinterland and natural landscapes. The relationship is environmental, economic, and cultural. Farmland and nature are as important to the metropolis as the garden is to the house.			X	Preservation of farmland and nature
4. Development patterns should not blur or eradicate the edges of the metropolis. Infill development within existing areas conserves environmental resources, economic investment, and social fabric, while reclaiming marginal and abandoned areas. Metropolitan regions should develop strategies to encourage such infill development over peripheral expansion.		X		Infill development

Table 1. **Primary Social Goal Associated with *Charter of the New Urbanism* Principles** *(continued)*

Charter Principle	Community	Social Equity	Common Good	Key Concepts
The Region: Metropolis, City, and Town *(continued)*				
5. Where appropriate, new development contiguous to urban boundaries should be organized as neighborhoods and districts and be integrated with the existing urban pattern. Noncontiguous development should be organized as towns and villages with their own urban edges and planned for a jobs/housing balance, not as bedroom suburbs.			X	Sustainable development Regional structuring
6. The development and redevelopment of towns and cities should respect historical patterns, precedents, and boundaries.			X	Historic preservation Traditional urban patterns
7. Cities and towns should bring into proximity a broad spectrum of public and private uses to support a regional economy that benefits people of all incomes. Affordable housing should be distributed throughout the region to match job opportunities and to avoid concentrations of poverty.		X		Affordable housing
8. The physical organization of the region should be supported by a framework of transportation alternatives. Transit, pedestrian, and bicycle systems should maximize access and mobility throughout the region while reducing dependence on the automobile.		X		Public transit Walking and biking

Table 1. **Primary Social Goal Associated with *Charter of the New Urbanism* Principles** *(continued)*

Charter Principle	Community	Social Equity	Common Good	Key Concepts
The Region: Metropolis, City, and Town (continued)				
9. Revenues and resources can be shared more cooperatively among municipalities and centers within regions to avoid destructive competition for tax base and to promote rational coordination of transportation, recreation, public services, housing, and community institutions.		X		Equalize funding for public services
Neighborhood, District, and Corridor				
10. The neighborhood, the district, and the corridor are the essential elements of development and redevelopment in the metropolis. They form identifiable areas that encourage citizens to take responsibility for their maintenance and evolution.			X	Need to provide alternatives to sprawl
11. Neighborhoods should be compact, pedestrian-friendly, and mixed use. Districts generally emphasize a special single use and should follow neighborhood design principles when possible. Corridors are regional connectors of neighborhoods and districts; they range from boulevards and rail lines to rivers and parkways.	"Social identity"		X	Good urban form, based on the neighborhood unit
12. Many activities of daily living should occur within walking distance, allowing independence for those who do not drive, especially the elderly and the young. Interconnected networks of streets should be designed to encourage walking, reduce the number and length of automobile trips, and conserve energy.		X		Promotion of pedestrian access

Table 1. **Primary Social Goal Associated with *Charter of the New Urbanism* Principles** *(continued)*

Charter Principle	Community	Social Equity	Common Good	Key Concepts
Neighborhood, District, and Corridor *(continued)*				
13. Within neighborhoods, a broad range of housing types and price levels can bring people of diverse ages, races, and incomes into daily interaction, strengthening the personal and civic bonds essential to an authentic community.	"Personal and civic bonds"	X		Promotion of diversity
14. Transit corridors, when properly planned and coordinated, can help organize metropolitan structure and revitalize urban centers. By contrast, highway corridors should not displace investment from existing centers.			X	Need to avoid the harm that highways cause cities
15. Appropriate building densities and land uses should be within walking distance of transit stops, permitting public transit to become a viable alternative to the automobile.			X	Promotion of public transit
16. Concentration of civic, institutional, and commercial activity should be embedded in neighborhoods and districts, not isolated in remote, single-use complexes. Schools should be sized and located to enable children to walk or bicycle to them.	"Loss of community"	X		Harm that dependence on the car does to women, children, the poor, and the elderly
17. The economic health and harmonious evolution of neighborhoods, districts, and corridors can be improved through graphic urban design codes that serve as predictable guides for change.			X	Importance of codes and ordinances

Table 1. **Primary Social Goal Associated with** *Charter of the New Urbanism* **Principles** *(continued)*

Charter Principle	Community	Social Equity	Common Good	Key Concepts
Neighborhood, District, and Corridor (continued)				
18. A range of parks, from tot lots and village greens to ballfields and community gardens, should be distributed within neighborhoods. Conservation areas and open lands should be used to define and connect different neighborhoods and districts.	"Celebrating neighborhood life"		X	Importance of neighborhood parks
Block, Street, and Building				
19. A primary task of all urban architecture and landscape design is the physical definition of streets and public spaces as places of shared use.			X	Importance of the public realm
20. Individual architectural projects should be seamlessly linked to their surroundings. This issue transcends style.			X	Architecture as place making
21. The revitalization of urban places depends on safety and security. The design of streets and buildings should reinforce safe environments, but not at the expense of accessibility and openness.			X	Design of public safety
22. In the contemporary metropolis, development must adequately accommodate automobiles. It should do so in ways that respect the pedestrian and the form of public space.			X	Ways to balance cars and pedestrians

Table 1. **Primary Social Goal Associated with *Charter of the New Urbanism* Principles** *(continued)*

Charter Principle	Community	Social Equity	Common Good	Key Concepts
Block, Street, and Building *(continued)*				
23. Streets and squares should be safe, comfortable, and interesting to the pedestrian. Properly configured, they encourage walking and enable neighbors to know each other and protect their communities.	"Enable neighbors to know each other"		X	Design for safe, walkable streets
24. Architecture and landscape design should grow from local climate, topography, history, and building practice.			X	Responsible building practice
25. Civic buildings and public gathering places require important sites to reinforce community identity and the culture of democracy. They deserve distinctive form, because their role is different from that of other buildings and places that constitute the fabric of the city.	"Reinforce community identity"		X	Importance of the civic realm
26. All buildings should provide their inhabitants with a clear sense of location, weather, and time. Natural methods of heating and cooling can be more resource efficient than mechanical systems.			X	Sustainable building design
27. Preservation and renewal of historic buildings, districts, and landscapes affirm the continuity and evolution of urban society.			X	Respect for history

Source: Congress for the New Urbanism 2000.

Discussion

Having established that the physical design proposals of New Urbanism do have explicit social goals, how feasible is it that applying New Urbanist principles will be able to address these goals? This section attempts to sort out this question.

Can New Urbanism create community?

Table 1 shows that there are no principles in the Charter that are directly based on the social goal of community. Instead, there are instances in which notions of community are used as descriptive material to support a given principle. Some of these phrases are listed under the community column, where references to some aspect of community building through design—the promotion of social life, civic bonds, social identity, and the like—are found. Another example is a reference to "loss of community" in the context of women and children needing to spend an inordinate amount of time in their cars. However, it is evident, and somewhat surprising, that community is not a primary goal under any of the 27 principles. Its use is limited to short descriptive phrases that signify, perhaps, an underlying perception among New Urbanists that aspects of community have somehow been damaged by sprawl.

As descriptive content, the references to community in the Charter essentially involve two notions: the idea of promoting a social or community identity and the notion of promoting civic bonds. The first instance is applicable to the notion of the common good: that the establishment of an identity that exists outside the individual is beneficial to the common good. The promotion of social and civic bonds, the second notion found in the Charter, is perhaps more in line with the conventional meaning of community. Here New Urbanist principles are mostly concerned with trying to foster social interaction: the need to "enable neighbors to know each other" (147) through the design of safe, walkable streets, for example. Again, these statements are descriptive and were not found to be substantively connected to any particular principle.

Related to social and civic bonds is the idea that social diversity within a neighborhood can promote social interconnectedness. When diverse groups are in proximity to each other, there is no requirement for social interaction, but the situation allows the possibility of mixing divergent groups (rich and poor, white and nonwhite). When this diversity happens in a place such as a neighborhood, it is possible that diverse

populations can find something they share in common, since they occupy a shared world.

What evidence is there that social interaction, perhaps leading to social bonds, can be strengthened or at least affected through physical design? Empirical research has demonstrated that physical factors can affect certain aspects of social interaction. For example, it has been documented that an increase in neighboring results from greater use of public space (Levine 1986) and greater use of local facilities for shopping (Riger, LeBailly, and Gordon 1981), and a decrease in neighborhood social ties has been correlated with an increase in sprawl, specifically, level of automobile use (Freeman 2001).

An extensive study of neighborhoods in Pittsburgh (Ahlbrandt 1984) showed that the use of neighborhood facilities (for shopping, worship, or recreation) was linked to higher levels of resident interaction. Empirical research has shown that neighborhood is an important factor in determining whom residents interact with (Greenbaum 1982, 1985), and this may be based on the spatial boundaries of neighborhoods (Ahlbrandt and Cunningham 1979; McMillan and Chavis 1986). Further, although the enclosed space within which residents are forced to interact may create relatively weak social ties, high levels of these ties have been found to increase the occurrence of strong social affiliation (Granovetter 1973; Greenbaum 1982). The view that sense of community is a function of the quantity of social contacts (the "contact hypothesis"; see Doolittle and MacDonald 1978) is consistent with an approach to building community via promotion of neighborhood-level interaction.

It is not known whether design's effect on social interaction extends to other dimensions of community. Specific site designs, such as better and more accessible public space, may promote some aspect of social interaction, and social interaction may eventually lead to some dimension of community. But along the way, there are likely to be interactions with other variables and indirect effects that are beyond the designer's control.

It is important to recognize that most research on the link between physical design and social goals like community identifies the importance of indirect effects and interaction variables. For example, in terms of indirect effects, increased neighboring has been found to result from feelings of safety (Newman 1972), which in turn are based on environmental design factors. However, in terms of interaction effects, if use of public space and shopping facilities is promoted via the physical form of urban areas, this may occur only for certain socioeconomic groups. Thus, if the effect of environment on behavior varies by age, gender,

presence of children, or stage in the life cycle, it is likely that there are interaction effects in the independent variables (Franck 1984).

Because of these factors, it is prudent that the link between physical design and community in the Charter is limited to descriptive phrases. Perhaps it is recognized that, in practical terms, the attempt to link physical design to community introduces problems that are beyond the control of New Urbanist design. Relatively speaking, social equity and the common good may be more realistic goals because they do not depend, as community does, on building social relationships.

Can New Urbanism create social equity?

The goal of social equity is defined here as providing access to public goods and services on an equitable basis. This definition was used because it is especially relevant to urban planning policy. The achievement of this goal through physical planning principles is found throughout the Charter and is based on the notion of accessibility and how to increase it. Since distance has a significant effect on the time, effort, and resources required to obtain a given public good, the ideal of equal access is roughly synonymous with the notion of spatial equity: that everyone should have to travel a similar distance to benefit from a public resource. Another way to conceptualize this is that an equitable distribution of public services and facilities necessarily implies that the public is free to use those services. Freedom of use, in turn, requires accessibility. If certain groups lack access, their freedom of use is obviously impaired. Note that this same lack of access to privately held goods and services is also detrimental to the idea of sustaining the common good.

There is a clear, direct link between New Urbanism and the goal of accessibility. This link is provided through three interrelated principles: compactness, mix of housing units, and improvements in transportation. In terms of the first principle, residential environments organized around the "5-minute walk" promote accessibility to public goods, services, and facilities because such goods are more likely to be within reach of those who do not have a car. It is understood that the effect of distance greatly increases for those who do not own a car. Children, the elderly who can no longer drive, and the poor who cannot afford to own a car are much more affected by distance than those with ready access to a car. Greater accessibility for these groups creates greater equity in resource distribution overall. Compactness also makes public transit more feasible, and public transit has an effect on accessibility, especially for those who do not drive.

Second, accessibility is promoted through the physical design principle of mixed use. By creating a balanced mix of uses (e.g., housing, shopping, work, recreation) within the same neighborhood, accessibility to these uses is necessarily improved. Minimizing distances between daily activities greatly improves the ability of those without cars to participate in these activities.

A subset of the mixed-use category is the mixing of housing unit types within the same neighborhood. Specifically, mixing a range of housing sizes and price levels within the same neighborhood is a basic principle of the New Urbanist design ideal, promoted through such mechanisms as backyard cottages and apartments above shops. The Charter recognizes that to foster social equity, it is necessary to promote socioeconomic diversity in the living arrangements of the population. The equitability of access to resources is therefore directly connected to social diversity.

In terms of social equity, diversifying the population through a mix of housing units has two benefits: First, it is one of the only ways that planners can have an effect on limiting concentrations of poverty. Conversely, the idea of segregating the population has resulted in separate and unequal disparities. Second, it strengthens the ability to distribute resources in a geographically equitable way. Lack of socioeconomic diversity—that is, socioeconomic homogeneity—exacerbates the problem of trying to be fair in providing geographically based services such as schools, since disadvantaged clientele become concentrated into one homogeneously disadvantaged area. If diversity in housing type is not encouraged, the result is certain homogeneity, a situation that runs counter to the social goal of equity.

Finally, equity is linked to physical planning by designing paths of movement that everyone can use. This is embodied in the New Urbanist principle of ensuring that streets are engineered to provide not only for automobiles, but equally for pedestrians and bicycles. The social goal embodied by this principle is, again, the need to encourage access for the entire population, regardless of the ability to drive.

Can New Urbanism promote the common good?

The common good emphasizes the well-being of the collective society. It downplays personal rights and self-interest and instead promotes communal interests. Most of the principles of New Urbanism have this focus.

Two subcategories can be identified: First, many of the common good principles are related to preserving existing resources. This is pursued in a number of different ways, but the larger social goal of promoting collective rather than private interest is common to each principle. More obvious notions include the protection of the environment, the preservation of farmland, historic preservation, and the need to provide public transit while at the same time decreasing automobile use.

The second type of principle related to the common good has to do with promoting place-based identity. This is the idea that a local place should be able to sustain some way of defining itself, that it is a valid social goal (common good) to promote the existence of places that have identity and therefore meaning for their inhabitants. For example, if a neighborhood has a definite identity, then the idea of commonality within that place becomes possible. This place-based commonality is vital because such an identity promotes a sense of sharing and of belonging to that place, which in turn reinforces commitment and caring about place. Sharing and belonging, leading to commitment and caring, are reinforced by creating place or neighborhood identity. This is part of the common good.

While the first category of the common good—protection of resources— is made up of principles at the regional scale, the idea of place-based identity is promoted through principles at the neighborhood and block scale. For example, the idea that neighborhoods should have a center and an edge is meant to contribute to their identity by providing a clear demarcation of boundaries. If there are spatial boundaries, then there is a better way of defining what a neighborhood is, which contributes to establishing its identity and meaning. Without spatial boundaries, it is much more difficult to assign an identity to a given area.

It is interesting that the social goals embedded in the principles in the third section of the Charter—Block, Street, and Building—are primarily about the common good. This is the most detailed level of the Charter, and there is thus a distinct focus on the more traditional issues of urban design. For example, there are discussions about how buildings are meant to form enclosed space, a lesson from Camillo Sitte (1889), and a discussion about the need to acknowledge established building traditions instead of focusing on design innovation.

Related to this is the notion that strong emphasis should be placed on the location and design of public spaces and buildings. (This contributes not only to neighborhood identity but to identity at a larger scale as well.) Public gathering spaces contribute to place identity in a very palpable way. Centrally located public spaces that have been consciously designed and placed to benefit local residents contribute to

establishing place identity; that is, in fact, their main purpose. Ad hoc focal points and quasi-public spaces do a much less effective job because they are not designed to establish place identity.

Social goals and the planning process

The evaluation of Charter principles, summarized in table 1, focused specifically on the link between physical design and social goals. However, there is an alternative way in which New Urbanism promotes social goals, and, since this approach is also reflected in the Charter, acknowledging this dimension is important. This is the idea of the planning process, that is, the process through which the public formulates, interprets, and responds to various planning proposals. The difficulty in terms of attempting to link New Urbanism to social goals via the planning process is that it can exist independent of specific physical planning ideals. In this way, it is difficult to claim that New Urbanism as a specific normative paradigm holds any particular advantage over other physical planning proposals.

One of the most common ways in which social goals are linked to the planning process is through participatory design. In particular, public participation in the design process—through charrettes, for example—is one way to build community, based on the idea that social interaction (during the design process) leads to a stronger, affective type of community. New Urbanism is committed to making physical improvements a public matter, emphasizing participatory design and publicly rather than privately produced plans as an approach that is likely to increase social interaction and collaboration. New Urbanism's focus on the public realm also means that the whole town planning process is concerned with public rather than private matters. Participatory design of a public space is much more likely to occur than participatory design of a privately owned space, such as a shopping mall. In short, participatory processes in New Urbanism, defined in terms of enhancing social interaction and building consensus, form a significant part of the community-building efforts of New Urbanism.

In some ways, it may in fact be easier to link New Urbanist processes to social goals rather than physical design ideals. For example, the social goal of community has been linked to neighborhood social control (Chavis and Wandersman 1990) and public ownership of neighborhood facilities (Atlas and Dreier 1993). It could be argued that the strong emphasis on design quality, the high importance attached to building codes, and the emphasis on providing local neighborhood facilities are ways in which control and sense of ownership are encouraged, thereby affecting community. A focus on process also means that it might be

possible to expand the range of applicable social goals, for example, broadening the goal of social equity to include equality of civic engagement, in addition to equality of access to resources. This could be accomplished through the participatory process of New Urbanism.

Conclusion

New Urbanists recognize that physical planning ideals have a deeper meaning and significance than just interesting architecture and good site design. Because of this, some have observed that what is new about New Urbanism is the idea that social and environmental problems need to be resolved in tandem (Barnett 2000). The fact that social goals are readily linked to principles of the *Charter of the New Urbanism* speaks to this observation.

This article discussed the results of an evaluation of the link between design principles and social goals in the context of New Urbanism. The method incorporated a broadened definition of the more conventional meaning of social goals typically used in planning, that is, moving away from the notion of social services planning. It used instead an expanded view of social goals in planning, consisting of community, social equity, and the common good. The number of Charter principles that applied to each type of social goal indicated that the social goals of New Urbanism are most concerned with the common good, followed by social equity and then community.

New Urbanism, although based on strong historical precedent, has had a relatively short existence. The type of evaluation used here should be viewed as a starting point. Focusing on stated objectives constitutes a basis for a future, more important analytical task: evaluating the effectuation of social goals. Yet for there to be an effective assessment of whether New Urbanist developments are meeting their social objectives, there must be a clear understanding of what those social objectives are.

Since New Urbanism has established an explicit link between design and different types of social goals, its ability to achieve these goals through its designs hinges on the degree to which these three ideals are subject to change: Are there situations in which community, social equity, and promotion of the common good are not or should not be held up as distinct goals? This is an issue that needs to be explored in the future, but for now, the social goals that form an important part of New Urbanist doctrine are open to continued evaluation.

Assuming that the social goals of community, social equity, and the common good are unwavering, a key question is whether the design principles of New Urbanism are alone in their ability to engender them. Could the link between design and the social goals proposed here hold true for any other type of urban pattern, such as a conventional suburban development? It has already been acknowledged that the link between the planning process and a social goal is accomplished within the context of many different types of physical planning proposals. However, it is difficult to conceive of how suburban development, which lacks the necessary design requirements of mixed housing types, mixed uses, pedestrian access, compactness, and public space, could hope to accomplish the social goals of equity and the common good discussed here.

Too often planners have focused on the economic and environmental consequences of urban form, steering away from social consequences and goals. (This idea was put forth by Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk 2000.) Perhaps this is due to the difficulty with which urban form and notions like the common good can be linked. Yet the link between design and social goals may not be less straightforward than environmental and economic considerations. There is widespread debate, for example, about the economic consequences of sprawl. This merely underscores the idea that the impact of design on social goals should be an ongoing investigation. Ultimately, the primary concern should be understanding how, when, and through what manner of physical planning proposal we contribute to the effectuation of social goals.

It is possible that the idea of achieving social goals like community, social equity, and the common good will be rejected as liberal fallacy. Attempting to attach normative town planning principles to these social goals will be regarded as doubly problematic. But it should also be recognized that clear articulation of normative planning ideals in relation to specific social goals makes it possible to enter into a meaningful debate about the optimal urban form and its role in procuring these goals. It is hoped that this debate will not stay unprofitably focused on the legitimacy of linking physical design to social goals, but rather will progress to a discussion in which the effects of particular New Urbanist principles are scrutinized in greater, socially relevant detail.

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