



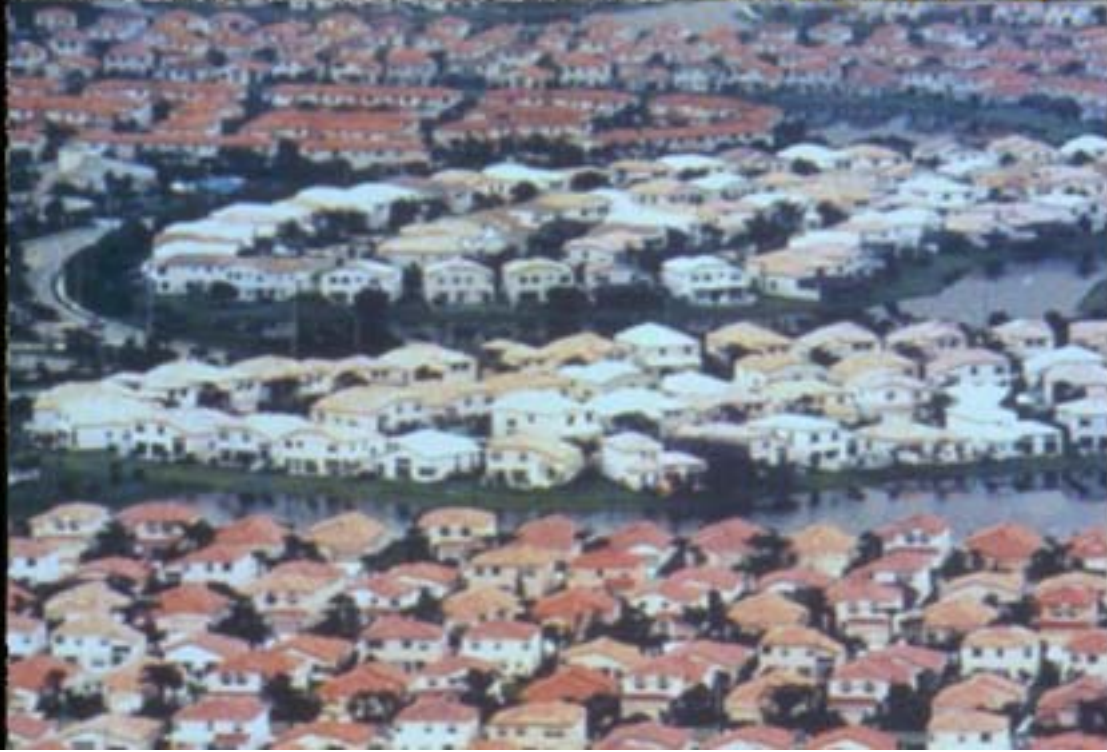
Sustainable Neighborhood Planning For The Region

*“A Series Dedicated to Education &
Dialogue for Planning in the Treasure
Coast Region”*

TREASURE COAST REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

This is the first of a series of presentations that will be shown throughout the year. TCRPC members make planning decisions once a month during TCRPC meetings. Elected officials make planning decisions every day. TCRPC staff makes planning decisions every day, and local governments often call the TCRPC to discuss planning. The TCRPC's policies and planning are viewed as being very progressive in the State of Florida.

The Countryside is “Filling Up”



The countryside is filling up. Whether it is five-acre ranchettes or thirty units per acre, the density makes no difference because the Region spreads like jelly on toast. Entitlement is the reason the Region is spreading and filling. Every square foot of land in the Region has entitlement.

It Is NOT about Growth vs. No Growth



It is about HOW we grow

The issue is not whether or not the Region will grow but how it will grow.

It Is NOT about Growth vs. No Growth



It is about SPRAWL

or

TRADITIONAL & SUSTAINABLE
patterns of development

Local governments must decide if its growth will be sprawl or a more sustainable type of development.

Physical Elements Of Healthy Towns, Villages and Neighborhoods

1. Neighborhood Size
2. Center and Edge
3. Network of Walkable Streets
4. Public Open Space
5. Special Sites for Civic Purposes
6. Good Mixture of Buildings and Uses
7. Proper Building Placement and Heights
8. Appropriate Building Types
9. Proper Parking Placement

The orientation series will present nine elements of the *Strategic Regional Policy Plan* over the next year: neighborhood size, center and edge, network of walkable streets, public open space, special sites for civic purposes, good mixture of buildings and uses, proper building placement and heights, appropriate building types, and proper parking placement.

Traditional Form



Sprawl



- They are both thoroughly planned
- They are both marketable
- They both provide daily needs and activities

The **CHOICE** is not between two planning theories;

The **CHOICE** is which pattern of growth will provide for the long-term health of the region

This overview will compare two different development patterns—traditional and sprawl. Both patterns are thoroughly planned. Both spend a lot of time thinking about the location and placement of elements, and both are marketable. The excuse that traditional development is not marketable is no longer valid. Traditional developments are marketable. Both development patterns provide for daily activities. Sprawl and traditional developments are not two different planning theories but two choices. Both claim they have centers, defined edges, walkability, open space, civic buildings, and proper building placement. Both claim they address the need for schools and parking. The issue is not whether or not a pattern provides these things. The issue is which development pattern is healthy and sustainable. Sprawl is not healthy or sustainable, and each of these elements is clearly defined.

1) Neighborhood Size



Traditional Form

- The Neighborhood is a planning unit.
- Has a definite size (the ¼ mile).
- When combined with others, it becomes a town
- When standing free in the landscape, it becomes a village.



Sprawl

- Sprawl is a proximity of isolated "pods" dedicated to single uses
- Pods are inaccessible from each other
- Size is defined by the developers ability to acquire land
- When standing free in the landscape, it is sprawl
- When combined with others, it is just more sprawl

Neighborhoods and towns possess a certain size and scale. In the traditional pattern, the neighborhood is the planning unit. The neighborhood contains all the uses necessary for a sustainable community. When combined with others, the neighborhood becomes a town. If the neighborhood sits alone in the countryside, it is a village. The quarter-mile radius size is historically proven to work. A normal human being will walk a quarter mile to get to a park, bus stop, or location where he or she can go to fulfill their daily needs.

Sprawl's basic unit is a pod. Oftentimes pods are called neighborhoods, but they are not neighborhoods according to the definition of a neighborhood. Pods are a single use such as residential, office, commercial, or education. The amount of land a developer acquires determines the size of the pod. The pod lacks connectivity since it is too large to walk and there is nothing to walk to. When standing free in the countryside, a pod is sprawl. When a pod combines with other pods, it becomes more sprawl.

2) Neighborhood Center



Traditional Form

- Defines the community's identity
- Place for community events and leisure activities
- Provides location for public transit/art
- Adds value to surrounding properties



Sprawl

- Requires labeling for identification
- "Public" centers are on private property
- Engenders community concerns regarding congestion and location
- Degrades road capacity
- Diverts resources from truly public facilities

In the traditional form, the neighborhood center defines the community's identity. Everyone wants to gather at the center. Public art and transit stops are found at the center. The market cannot keep up with the demand, for this is where people want to live.

With sprawl, on the other hand, the center must be labeled so the visitor knows that he or she has arrived at the center. Most land that is claimed to be public is actually private. When the sprawl centers are being constructed, the surrounding community becomes concerned. The community wants to be isolated from the sprawl center because the size and impacts are uncertain and the center may have a detrimental effect on property values. Sprawl centers degrade road capacity since there is only one use in the sprawl center and the center generates an enormous amount of trips. At the same time, sprawl centers preclude the possibility of ever creating authentic public spaces elsewhere in the city.

3) Network of Walkable Streets



Traditional Form	Sprawl
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Network of streets• Alternate routes• Slower speeds, safer streets• Detailed streets (trees, sidewalks and buildings)• Pedestrian friendly environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High proportion of cul-de-sacs• Lack of connectivity• Few collector roads• Roads are wide, unsafe and discouraging of pedestrian activity• Creates a disregard for the public environment

Traditional development calls for connections for both pedestrians and cars. People need the ability to drive and walk to different locations using a variety of routes. Alternate routes result in slower speed and safer roads. The community has the opportunity to detail the streets with trees and sidewalks. The result of all this will be a pedestrian-friendly environment.

Sprawl claims that it provides walkability by building bridges and sidewalks. It uses cul-de-sacs claiming that the market finds it desirable to have a house at the end of a road on a cul-de-sac. Cul-de-sacs create a lack of connectivity. Everyone that lives on the cul-de-sac ends up on a collector road. The collector roads become very wide to accommodate residents from the different sprawl areas. The wide roads are unsafe, discouraging for pedestrian activity, and appear unsightly. The fact that they are unsightly creates a personal disregard for the public environment. The illustration shows how both patterns are experienced at the ground level. The Town of Palm Beach is on the left, and North Central Miami-Dade is on the right.

4) Public Open Space



Traditional Form

- Provided in the form of squares, parks and playgrounds
- Have position of hierarchy and prominence
- Are recognized symbols of pride in the community
- Are designed in detail

Sprawl

- Provided in the form of "buffers", "berms", "common areas" and other ill-defined residual spaces
- Used to segregate (berms, buffers)
- Is generally private

Both patterns of development claim they provide open space. In the traditional pattern, open space is in the form of squares, towns, and playgrounds. Most of these spaces are always open, are public, and have a hierarchy in the city. They are located in the neighborhood or town and give the character, identity, and pride to a community. The open spaces are planned with a lot of detail.

In sprawl, green spaces are used to segregate. They are usually buffers and berms and beautifully landscaped. The sprawl open space is inaccessible to the pedestrian. Oftentimes, the space is residual and privately owned.

5) Special Sites For Civic Buildings



Traditional Form

- Often located on or facing squares, or terminating vistas
- Landmark that defines character
- Easy access by car or foot
- Increases surrounding property values
- Located by design



Sprawl

- Large setbacks
- Highly articulated buildings
- Lack of spatial definition
- Lack of sense of place
- Located by zoning (not integrated)

In traditional development, civic buildings are located in front of squares, in the centers of squares, and terminating vistas. Pedestrians and cars can access the buildings, and the buildings usually increase surrounding property values. The most important element to traditional civic buildings is that they are located by design. There is a conscientious choice for the location and how it will be incorporated into the community.

On the other hand, with sprawl development, the bigger the building the bigger the set back is. The larger setback creates the need to articulate the building so that a driver can see it from the road. It is a self-fulfilling prophecy—because the building is so far away, it lacks spatial definition. Since the building has become so complicated, the community lacks civic pride, and the building lacks a sense of place. Most importantly, these buildings are located by zoning not by common sense.

6) Good Mix of Buildings & Uses



Traditional Form

- Buildings are diverse in function
- Buildings are compatible in size
- Building footprints are similar
- Importance to details
- Buildings define the public space
- Easy access by car or foot
- 5000 year tradition

Sprawl

- Large setbacks
- "Box" buildings
- Vehicular traffic controls scale and space
- Lack of connectivity except by car
- Pedestrians not welcome
- 50 year tradition

The illustration on the left shows how smaller buildings with different functions can be located next to larger buildings. However, they are all compatible in size, and their footprints are similar. Since the buildings are smaller, there is an opportunity to give importance to detail. People can see the detail because the buildings are small enough for people to notice. Pedestrians and cars easily access the smaller buildings.

Sprawl creates big boxes and the need for large setbacks. Big box can be for residential, commercial, office space, and retail. The setback removes the big box building from the pedestrian environment so there is little need for detail. Most big boxes are built to last twenty-five to thirty years. For example, when Wal-Mart moves, it is not going to renovate the building. It will move to a new location. This scenario is happening with the Wal-Mart in the City of Stuart. The big box creates a lack of interconnectivity, and pedestrians are not welcome in this environment.

7) Balanced Range Of Housing Price Points



Traditional Form

- Integration of building types
- Wide range of affordability within close proximity
- Base for an authentic community
- Integration


Sprawl

- Segregation by income
- Segregation by building type
- Segregation by ownership
- Segregation by age
- Segregation

Traditional development calls for a balanced range of housing price points or “attainable housing” within neighborhoods. Single-family homes sit next to small apartment buildings. The housing types are integrated and do not clash. A young couple can rent next to a family with four children. Mixing the different types, levels, and scopes of a society creates an authentic community.

With sprawl, the key word is segregation. Sprawl segregates by any characteristic such as income, ownership, age, dog owner, and/or children.

8) Disciplining Of Building Types



Traditional Form

- Logically distributed throughout the neighborhood
- Like scale & like massing
- Buildings have fronts and backs
- Buildings define streets and public spaces
- Creates memorable places

Sprawl

- Illogically scattered across the landscape
- Big buildings frequently face small buildings
- No clear distinction between front and back
- Buildings disregard streets and public spaces
- Creates hostile auto-dominated environments

In traditional developments, buildings use similar space and scale. Large buildings face large buildings. Buildings define the streets and public spaces. This is the only way memorable places can be created.

In sprawl developments, building size and location does not matter as long as the number of units fit. Big buildings frequently face small buildings. Walls are built to separate the two differently sized buildings, but the walls do not solve the spatial problem. Furthermore, there is no distinction between the front and rear of a building. The end results of this type of development are buildings surrounded by parking lots and a hostile, auto-dominated environment.

9) Proper Parking Placement



Traditional Form

- On-street parking
- Off-street parking is shielded
- Adequate parking is provided in close proximity
- Parking requirements are established on a district-wide basis
- Shared parking possibilities



Sprawl

- No on-street parking
- Parking is the predominant feature
- Large surface lots are detrimental to property values
- Unsupervised and unsafe
- Parking requirements are on a lot by lot basis
- No shared parking possibilities

Traditional development calls for on-street parking. Parking requirements are generally established on a district-wide basis, and there are shared parking possibilities. Off-street parking is often shielded and provided in close proximity to every building and not concentrated in one part of an area.

In sprawl, there is no on-street parking since everything is a parking lot except the street. Parking becomes the predominate feature. Large surface lots are detrimental to property values. Sprawl parking lots are generally unsupervised and unsafe not because of crime but because the pedestrian is always exposed in the cars' environment. There are no shared parking possibilities. Each lot provides its own parking.



The Region is in transition. The TCRPC will face decisions like the decision that resulted in this image. It is nicknamed “wedgy.” Imagine this development pattern repeated over and over. It is up to the TCRPC how the Region will grow. The traditional form of development has been around for five thousand years. It is not a new urbanist invention but a proven way of development.