• IMPROVING SUBURBAN DESIGN •
Implementing Neotraditional Town Planning in Fishers, Indiana

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Presented here in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Bachelor of Urban Planning and Development
Ball State University
May, 1994

Prepared under the guidance of
Professor Thomas W. Schurch
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IN FISHERS, INDIANA
• ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS •

To my parents, for introducing me to numerous cities and towns on our family road trips;

To the town of Fishers, for providing me with the inspiration for this study,
and especially to the residents who participated in the survey;

and

To Jeff, for his never-ending encouragement and love.
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• INTRODUCTION •

The rationale for this thesis project includes issues of ecology, sociology, and design as they are affected by America's current suburban development patterns. These patterns stemmed from several simultaneous events of the early twentieth century. A rapid increase in automobile ownership, coupled with the creation of the Federal Housing Administration's amortized mortgage, allowed people to live on the edge of town in a brand-new home. Concurrently, the beginnings of zoning regulation strived to make certain that these sub-urbs would be both clean and safe.

Time has shown, however, that all of those automobiles and the roads needed to transport them are polluting the air and soil. The emphasis that traditional suburbs place on the automobile increases its usage, leading to high levels of carbon monoxide emissions and subsequent acid rain and ozone depletion. Further, the roads that are needed to carry these cars have covered 60,000 square miles of the U.S. alone, or about 10 percent of its arable land (Renner 1989). Stormwater runoff from these impervious surfaces is extremely high in toxicity, as it lacks the benefits of natural filtration through the soil. Finally, the continued spread of these roads is consuming the natural landscape, whose trees and grasslands could otherwise help neutralize pollution with their healthy oxygen production.

In addition to these environmental problems, and of more concern to this study, is the social isolation inherent in suburban development. Cars are partially responsible for this, as well, in that they encourage people to take separate paths in isolated, enclosed vehicles. Roads are a physical boundary between peoples' homes and neighborhoods. But it is the zoning laws of early suburbia which have really separated people. The practice of requiring each building to be set back from its property lines creates gaps between buildings which are both visual and psychological. Although these were intended to insulate people from dirt and crime, they in effect insulated them from their own neighbors. These gaps have been called "lost space" (Trancik 1986), and are a threat to a livable community.

Source: Trancik, Finding Lost Space
As a result of these dire ecological and social consequences, Americans now need to reexamine the appropriateness of the suburban environment. Neotraditional town designers have been a major proponent of this. These architects, landscape architects and city planners have offered alternatives to suburban zoning which borrow principles from traditional American small towns, including narrow streets and ample sidewalks, smaller yards, front porches, and centralized town squares. The fact that Neotraditionalism places greater emphasis on the public spaces in a townscape than on individual buildings makes it a worthy solution for the social isolation of suburbia. It also addresses suburbia's ecological problems by focusing on the restriction of the automobile and the creation of higher-density housing.

Neotraditional town designs have been widely acclaimed, but they do leave some questions about their applicability or universal appropriateness. This is partly because, with a few notable exceptions, they have been theoretical prototypes unused or unseen by most Americans.

It is doubtful, however, that the general public would be enamored by Neotraditional town designs. As architectural critic Roger Lewis has said, "Designers may idealize the intermixing of land uses, densities, and socioeconomic classes, but the average consumer probably prefers a detached house in a community of similar houses occupied by similar people" (Lewis 1987). Statistics have also indicated that despite the problems of traditional suburbs, they remain an "...extraordinarily popular form of existence" (Architectural Review, July 1992). From 1970 through 1986, for example, suburbs gained population by 30% nationwide and by 17% in the Midwest. At the same time, central cities nationwide gained population by six percent. But in the Midwest, central cities lost population by ten percent in the same time period. Thus, although nationwide most new growth occurred in the cities or suburbs, in the Midwest the suburbs were the only area to gain (Cutler 1992).
Recently some planning writers have begun to accept that suburbs are not just an inefficient alternative to cities but a whole new way of living (Fishman 1987, Kelly 1989, Garreau 1992). This suggests that America's preference for suburban development types is an issue for designers to work with rather than around. As H.L. Mencken once said, "Democracy is the theory that the common people know what they want, and deserve to get it, good and bad." (in Garreau 1992) Somehow, democracy must also allow suburban residents to have what they want, while still improving the problems of suburbia.

The hypothesis for this study is that a synthesis of Neotraditional solutions with the environmental preferences of suburban residents would produce development standards that would improve upon current suburbs but still be acceptable to the people living there. The research question is: "How can infill development be designed to improve the livability of a suburban community?"

An underlying assumption of the study was that the best way to implement these improved suburban standards is through infill development. Infill is traditionally considered as an urban response to vacant lots in the center city. If infill may also be considered for the vastly underutilized "lost space" of the suburbs, however, it may be an appropriate answer to the social isolation found there. This use of infill could easily be described as retrofitting the existing suburb.

In this project, characteristics of Neotraditional town designs were synthesized with the environmental preferences of residents in the suburb of Fishers, Indiana. The results are a set of written and graphic design criteria to be used by local planning staff, developers, and citizens. These criteria may be applied to sites within the community, demonstrating that the new standards, when used to retrofit existing development, can effectively bridge the gaps within Fishers' townscape.

Source: Katz, The New Urbanism
Introduction

**Terminology**

Many of the terms used in this study have different meanings than their most common ones. The following defines the terms as they are used in this study.

*Suburbs,* for example, vary greatly in size and character. Some inner-suburbs dating from the 1940s and 1950s have as many as 60,000 people and a well-developed townscape. The case study community of Fishers differs significantly from this example in terms of its size (15,000 people) and age. Fishers will be described further in the paper, but it should be considered for now as a product of 1980s development expansion. It has little history to speak of and a highly transient population, which are characteristic of most suburbs.

*Environmental Preferences* are peoples' opinions about their surroundings. The premise of environmental preference theory is that people have distinct feelings about their physical environment which can be evaluated and applied to future decision-making.

It is important to realize that in suburbs development often occurs in a leapfrog fashion. This creates large parcels of undeveloped land within the overall developed area. By infill, this paper refers to future development within those parcels, as well as in any existing public lands and rights-of-way. Again, this definition of infill could be considered a retrofit.

*A townscape* is the interrelation of buildings, streets and open spaces in a community. According to one townscape plan, in a healthy townscape these elements "...work in harmony to convey the image of a town environment which excites and encourages human activity. The message a townscape conveys should be one of the town as a unified place" (Vision, Inc. 1975).

**Case Study: Fishers**

Fishers is located northeast of and adjacent to Indianapolis; it is one of the rapidly growing Midwestern suburbs which has previously been mentioned. Fishers' growth was spawned by its location on I-69, a major interstate highway which allows rapid access between Fishers and Indianapolis. This easy commute has resulted in Fishers' growth from 2,008 people in 1980 to about 15,000 in July, 1993.

The majority of the growth has been in residential subdivisions, although some commercial development has followed suit. Most of it has taken the form of sprawl. As a result, traffic conditions have worsened immensely, and 116th Street, the major east-west thoroughfare, will soon be reconstructed.
Yet a more pressing problem is the lack of social interaction between the many new residents. The current facilities of the town provide little opportunity for social activities, and the need for more entertainment and cultural activities was expressed by residents in a 1990 survey (HTNB 1990).

Fishers has tried to meet this need with at least two different development plans. One is a Town Center Development Plan (HTNB 1992), which seeks to reinforce the center of the old farming community which Fishers once was. A second is the Parks and Recreation Master Plan (Phlum, Klausmeir & Gehrum 1992), which provides for neighborhood parks and trails using development impact fees. Thus, it is clear that Fishers has been somewhat progressive in their handling of recent growth.

On the other hand, the community is very conservative with respect to its residential housing market. The median income in Fishers is far higher than in most Indiana communities, and the homes there are similarly high priced. Most are of the single-family detached variety. There are currently two apartment complexes in Fishers, and proposals for a third were met very unfavorably by local residents. Many claimed that they did not want “the kind of people who live in apartments” living in their community. Thus, despite the request for interaction, Fishers residents are doing their best to stay private.

Because of these factors which it has in common with many suburbs, Fishers seems a likely place to retrofit for improved livability. It also has several political factors which make implementation of new design criteria a possibility. The Fishers Strategy Brief (1990) stated that the Town leaders hoped to increase “neighborhood vitality” and “emotional ties to the locality”. Planning, Zoning and Urban Design issues were ranked first in priority for the town, and the plan suggested a strategy of “an overall urban design that pays attention to appearance, trees and natural features, mobility and access to civic amenities such as recreational activities”. These are all goals which coincide with Neotraditionalism.

**Scope of the Study**

This study, like many others, is limited by certain assumptions and methods that were nonetheless necessary to make it possible. The following section outlines those assumptions and limitations.

The first, rather large, assumption is that Neotraditional town designs can actually solve the ills of suburbia, and that they are therefore worthy of use in some form. In actuality, Neotraditional town designs vary greatly in how well they address ecological and social problems. The study assumes, however, that they are a worthy model and should be further examined.
Introduction

A second assumption of the study is that existing Neotraditional design prototypes would not be accepted by Fishers residents. This is based partially on the fact that many people obviously like Fishers the way it is, as evidenced by the number of people who continue to move there. It is also based on observed attitudes such as that quoted previously: that single family detached homes, sparsely situated, are the proper place to live. The study uses environmental preference surveys to determine more accurately what Fishers residents prefer.

Because the study uses a single case study methodology, its results may be skewed by the specific characteristics of the case study community. In other words, by their age, education and income level, Fishers residents may vary from national averages. However, the methodology may be applied easily to other communities, in that it strives to find a synthesis between Neotraditional design standards and the desires of the individual community.

Finally, the Visual Preference Survey which will be utilized, although recommended by Kaplan (1989) and used extensively by Neotraditionalist Anton Nelessen, is sometimes criticized for "leading" the participant. In an attempt to confirm the legitimacy of the Visual Preference Survey results, the study also makes use of a written survey which is easier to objectify.

Practical Outcome

The practical purpose of the study is simply the creation of design guidelines for Fishers. This will help to meet the goals of Fishers’ Strategic Plan to focus on urban design issues and the sense of community. It will provide local officials and planners with evidence of what Fishers residents really want their community to be. And, by encouraging their participation in the process, it will increase the public's awareness of environmental design.

Local officials may be assured that they have both the right and responsibility to enact design guidelines. The Standard Planning Enabling Act, adopted by Congress in 1928, stated it is the duty of cities and towns to protect the "health, safety, morals and general welfare" of the community. This is of importance to the study for two reasons. The first is that the phrase "general welfare" was reinterpreted by 1954's Berman vs. Parker Supreme Court decision to include the aesthetic and the spiritual as well as the physical or monetary. This paved the way for ordinances controlling signage, historic districts, and design standards. The second comes from the implication that it is the duty of planners to represent the city as one, rather than a collection of individuals. This itself gives credence to design standards, because any argument
that they are inconvenient for the individual must stand up to the test of the general welfare.

The suggestions may also be of use to the citizens of Fishers. In improving their own homes and yards, individuals can try to meet the suggested design criteria. Homeowner’s associations can also try to follow the criteria as they maintain and repair the common areas of the subdivisions. Finally, citizens educated about the possibilities of these criteria can encourage local officials to implement them into legally-binding ordinances.

Furthermore, local developers would be well-served by following the suggestions of the design criteria, since they will be formulated in part by the people’s own preferences. Even in traditional suburbs, developers try to give people qualities they want such as privacy and security. If the people decide they want community, developers should want to provide that as well.

Summary

The preceding chapter has provided an introduction to the problem, defined the terminology which will be used, described the case study community of Fishers, and delineated the scope of the study. In chapter two the problems of suburbia will be discussed at greater length. Chapter three describes Neotraditionalism and outlines its characteristics. Chapter four describes both the process and results of Fishers’ Environmental Preference Studies. In chapter five, the characteristics of Neotraditionalism will be synthesized with the preferences of Fishers’ residents. Chapter six outlines the design criteria for Fishers which are the product of the study. And chapter seven provides concluding remarks on the significance of the criteria for bridging the gaps in Fishers’ townscape.

Appendices include examples and results of the written and visual preference surveys. In addition, a poster included in the pocket of the back cover illustrates the design criteria in the example of a typical site plan.

NOTES

1 "Livability” refers to the general quality of life in a community

2 A possible benefit of the study may, in fact, be the compilation of opinions of Fishers’ residents about Neotraditionalism. They could lend new criteria by which to judge Neotraditionalism as an acceptable solution for suburbia.
Introduction

Content of the Study

1. Introduction
2. Purpose
3. Neotraditionalism
4. Environmental Preferences
5. Synthesis
6. Design Criteria
7. Conclusions

A. Visual Preference Survey
B. Written Surveys
• PURPOSE OF THE STUDY •

This study has several different purposes. First and foremost is to suggest alternatives to our current suburban development patterns. Second is to test the solutions of Neotraditional town designers for their acceptability by suburban residents. Third, and most practically, is to provide design criteria for the Town of Fishers.

This chapter is intended primarily to explain the first purpose. It answers the questions: Why should we find a way to improve our current suburbs? What's wrong with them? To do so the chapter is divided in two major parts. The Historical Development of the Suburbs is discussed because, as the adage goes, those who do not know history are doomed to repeat it. In other words, knowing how the suburbs developed originally provides insight on how to correct their problems. The second half of the chapter discusses the problems themselves.

Chapter Three will later discuss the efforts of Neotraditional designers to correct or improve upon these suburban problems.

Historical Development of the Suburbs

Although the primary focus of the study will be on how and why to improve suburban communities, it is necessary first to discuss how suburbs exist today. The following is a summary of the suburbs' historical development.

For those unfamiliar with urban geography, it is important to understand that settlement patterns are based primarily on access to jobs. During the industrial age, most people worked in factories and, because transportation was scarce and expensive, were forced to live near them too. Conversely, factory owners liked to locate their businesses where there were workers to staff them. Because it was so desirable to both businesses and families, land in these industrialized urban areas was very expensive. Buildings were densely located to maximize the value of the land, sometimes to the point of overcrowding.

This same industrial age was to spawn two profound inventions by Henry Ford. One was the automobile, which would allow people faster and easier access to their jobs. The other was the assembly-line, an efficient method of production which made the automobile affordable. Ironically, these inventions were later to be prime contributors to urban sprawl.

While the Great Depression halted industrial expansion and individual wealth for a time, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt was optimistic about America's future. He created the Works Progress Administration believing that to improve the infrastructure of the country was a good way to put people to work. The WPA built ditches, bridges, and roads throughout most of the Depression. By the time it was over,
Timeline of Suburban Expansion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Invention of the automobile</th>
<th>1928</th>
<th>WWI</th>
<th>creation of FHA mortgages</th>
<th>assembly line production method requires wide-open spaces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard Planning Enabling Act</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>FHA mortgages</td>
<td>FHA mortgage provides low-cost housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WPA Infrastructure</td>
<td>WWI</td>
<td>overtakes</td>
<td>industrial</td>
<td>industrial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act</td>
<td>economy</td>
<td>creates zoning</td>
<td>creates zoning</td>
<td>creates zoning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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access had been given to areas which had previously lacked any desirability for development.

World War II brought more changes to our way of life. Of the soldiers who left to fight in World War II, most had lived in either extremely urban or extremely rural areas. Those who returned to the city found that it was now aging into disrepair. A "baby boom" increased crowding and the increasing use of the automobile created pollution problems. The soldiers returning to the countryside found that their farms weren't as profitable as a job in the big city, owing to a wartime resurgence in industrialism. For both urban and rural residents, some middle ground, a sub-urbia, was desired. Cheap cars, as well as the newly constructed roads, made commuting possible.

Federal acts both before and after the war also contributed to suburbia. In 1928, the Standard Planning Enabling Act had given the authority for cities and towns to enact zoning regulations. Eager to prevent the ills they saw in older, inner-cities, the new suburbs sought to reduce density and to create wide streets which helped traffic move more quickly. After the war, another federal act aimed to encourage investment offered potential homebuyers a low cost amortized mortgage. Since many of their parents had never owned a home, the thought of being able to was worth that cost to the aspiring suburbanite.

Businesses were soon to follow the suburban migration, spawned by two different incentives. The majority of the workforce was by now located in the suburbs. And the assembly-line was found to
take far more space than the dense urban factories had available. Businesses, like people, felt they had to spread out.

It is this spread-out development pattern which is problematic. Albert Appleton, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Environmental Protection, sums up the issues very succinctly. "We in the environmental movement praise the good life in the country. [But] the search for the good life in the country is spreading people higgledy-piggledy over the landscape and chopping up the unspoiled habitat that provides the good country life we extol. Worse, it is destroying the sense of community we should constantly try to promote" (in Hiss1992).
**Problems of the Suburbs**

As stated previously, the suburbs of today are marked by a number of ecological, social, and aesthetic problems. It is the intent of this section to explain that those problems are a direct result of the suburbs' emphasis on the automobile, the use of outmoded zoning, and the attitudes of many private land developers. Descriptions of these problems are presented here in agreement with former Montgomery County, Maryland planning director Richard Tustian, AICP, who said that "...improving an edge city is a matter of making people take the time to recognize the built-in dynamics that make a community more than a collection of buildings" (Hamblen 1992).

There is a circuitous relationship between the automobile and zoning as they effect the suburbs. The automobile is one cause of suburban-type development, as we have already learned. It was the automobile that allowed the suburbs to happen. It is also an effect, however, of zoning. Zoning separates land uses and requires gaps between buildings, resulting in the need for the automobile. Furthermore, today's attitude towards land development also has had devastating effects on the suburbs.

The section will also discuss three specific problems which are of concern to the study. First is that our current suburban development patterns reduce social interaction between members of the community. Second is that they are incompatible with the changing structure of today's families. And third is that they are incompatible with the changing technologies of today's businesses.

It should be noted that not everyone agrees with the suburbs' problems. Garreau, at least, sees edge cities as "works in progress." He notes that Venice, like many suburbs, was an accident motivated by greed & commerce. Over hundreds of years, however, it has evolved beautifully. The information presented below, however, will show that the problems of the suburbs, our new "accidental cities," are important enough to warrant attention now.
The Automobile

Today's suburbs are in peril partially because they rely on the automobile as their primary method of transportation. What is so wrong with the automobile? To each individual member of a society, it offers mobility, comfort and convenience. However, "...the car's utility to the individual motorist stands in sharp contrast to the costs and burdens that society must shoulder to provide an automobile centered transportation system" (Renner 1992).

Traffic congestion, first of all, creates delays that are not only inconvenient but which cost money. Congestion increases commuting time, which means people use more gas, pay for longer periods of childcare, and lose some of their own valuable time. The Federal Highway Administration estimated that between 1985 and 1987 overall traffic delays due to congestion increased by 57% (Lyman 1992). In Southern California, the average travel speed is about 33 mph; it is expected to be 15 mph by the year 2000. The Commission on California State Government Organization and Economy has forecasted traffic congestion will eventually affect the economic prosperity of the state (Renner 1992).

There are, however, even more economic costs associated with the automobile. Renner explains that cars get subsidies in the form of road building and maintenance, accidents and related health care, and tax losses of land paved over for auto use. Because these are services provided by the government, they are paid for by our tax money at a rate of about $2400 per taxpayer per year. If that cost were to be reflected in fuel prices, gasoline would cost $4.50 per gallon (Renner 1992).

One way to reduce this cost is through a nationwide gas tax, with proceeds to be used for auto-related expenses. Recent proposals for such a tax, however, were met by cries of protest from the American public. The most persuasive argument against the tax is that so many Americans depend upon the automobile and its relatively cheap fuel in order to travel to work. Yet it is the automobile that has allowed us to live so far away from where we work.
Purpose of the Study

Another disadvantage to the automobile is that it is fueled by gasoline, a nonrenewable energy source. This has both short-term and long-term implications. In the short term, it means that the United States is dependent on the countries of the Middle East for a great deal of our fuel supply. Since these countries are distant and often hostile, gasoline is subject to frequent price fluctuations. It was the gasoline shortages and subsequent price hikes of the 1970s which first made many people question the proliferation of the automobile. Since that time, the auto industry has tried to "obscure" the issue of gasoline shortages (Renner 1992). Yet Americans only have to think back to 1992's Gulf War to realize the costs of this tenuous relationship.

In the long-run, there is a risk that the world's oil reserves will run out. Although this could take anywhere from several thousand to several million years to happen, the recent emphasis on global issues has made many Americans aware of the possibility.

Some of these global issues are also associated with the automobile. For example, automobiles emit carbon monoxide, a poisonous gas associated with acid rain and with the greenhouse effect. This kind of air pollution could be alleviated in part by oxygen producing trees and plants, but these are being destroyed rather than created as new roads are built on the landscape and auto emissions pollute the air. And oil and gasoline which have runoff from the impervious surfaces of roads and parking lots is a prime cause of soil pollution.

By its location far away from the city center, by the curvilinear pattern of its roads, and by its proliferation of free and ample parking, the suburb has increased dependence on the automobile and created its subsequent problems. To solve these problems, that dependency must be alleviated.

Zoning

Zoning has been one cause of automobile dependence, by separating land uses and buildings, thereby requiring people to drive from place to place. Yet the automobile has also been a cause of zoning, since our zoning regulations have been developed primarily to serve the needs of our automobile-dependent society. Zoning has negative social and aesthetic effects on the suburbs. It is also both outmoded and inflexible.

For example, most of the zoning regulations planners use today are adapted from those of the post World War II era, and are thus geared more to managing the automobile than people. Increasing traffic flow, providing parking spaces, and ensuring driving safety are their primary concerns. Planner Randall Arendt, for one, believes that these zoning regulations which mandate wide streets and large parking
lots, are the source of suburban sprawl (in Oppenheimer 1992B).

Garreau (1992) has pointed out that most suburbs appear so fragmented it seems they must have developed accidentally. This phenomenon was also described by Barnett in his article *Accidental Cities*. Barnett explains that this fragmentation is actually the result of carefully planned zoning which is no longer working. Suburbs have a high ratio of parking lots to buildings, and large, un走able distances across highways and service roads which simply make it impossible to design any kind of architectural ensemble (Barnett 1992).

Sprawl and fragmentation are problems because they consume vast quantities of land which could otherwise be used more effectively. The figures below contrast the difference between land which is developed according to traditional zoning (left) and a more clustered approach (right). Clearly, current zoning trends which increase sprawl also destroy the suburbs’ aesthetic integrity.

Sprawl also separates people, inadvertently robbing them of the opportunity to meet and make friends with others. Neotraditional town designer Andres Duany, for one, believes that people want to live close to shopping and to other people, and faults zoning for separating the two (in Oppenheimer 1992A).

Zoning regulations are also outmoded in how they respond to growth. For example, subdivisions were once just additions
to a town. Yet now these subdivisions comprise an average of perhaps 100 acres and 150 homesites. In Fishers alone, 13 subdivisions consisting of 1,786 homesites were platted in 1993. Yet according to Barnett (1993), "[zoning] regulations were never meant to be the sole control over development of hundreds or thousands of acres; and they don't work at this scale." By annexing these large subdivisions, each of which are surrounded by the ubiquitous buffer strip, suburbs destroy the opportunity for any continuity in their townscapes. The developments become "pods", disconnected from the rest of the community.

Furthermore, zoning regulations typically do not allow for shared community facilities such as parking lots and access drives. There are environmental and economic advantages to these, such as reduced land use and construction costs, public policy dividends for environmental conservation and improved infrastructure efficiency. But most current suburban development standards do not allow such innovations.

Thus, by accommodating the automobile over people, by separating land uses and buildings, and by its inability to control large developments or shared facilities, zoning creates problems for today's suburbs. To help alleviate those problems, alternative methods of land regulation are needed.

Private Land Development

A lack of shared facilities in the suburbs is not only the fault of zoning; this and other innovations are also constricted by today's attitude towards land development. Just as zoning has favored the needs of the car over those of people, today's developers have favored the private orientation of land and buildings over their public orientation. According to Professor Roger Hollands of Ball State University, this attitude views land as a commodity and not as a resource.

Because land is viewed as a commodity, developments today are created by corporations seeking profit. There are economies of scale in land development, resulting in the large size of today's developments. Because these developments are constructed all at once, and constructed by only a few persons or perhaps one person, the homes within them tend to look alike and the development to have a "theme" feel. This prohibits the development from integrating into the surrounding community.

Indeed, there appears to be little or no realization of the fact that a development is even part of a larger community. This is particularly true in Fishers, as a recent example indicates. Two restaurants were about to locate on lots adjacent to one another, but both found their lots too small to accommodate the parking they needed. The local planning staff suggested that the two
restaurants share parking, as the total number of spaces and driveways could then be reduced. Neither of the restaurant owners would even consider the idea.

Perhaps even if they were willing, though, developers would be unable to consider such innovations. As Lyman points out, banks and other lenders believe innovation is risky, and will not lend money for what they consider to be a "risk" (Lyman 1991). This is just one more example of how the private sector is having an affect on what should be public concerns.

By considering only the private nature of a development, and not its public side, the modern suburban world has "imprisoned us in a narcissistic world of private property" while eliminating any public spaces such as parks, plazas & sidewalks (Calthorpe, in Oppenheimer 1989A). To alleviate this problem, more effort must be made to create public spaces, and landowners and developers must be made to realize their projects are part of a community.

Social Interaction

Zoning makes sure that our homes are separate from our jobs or other needs. To reach them, we must drive in an isolated automobile on our own separate path. And when we get to our destination, it lacks any public spaces. The effect of these trends is clear: today's suburbs provide few opportunities for social interaction.

Why is social interaction necessary? As Gurther Barth points out in his 1981 book City People, the social interaction inherent in cities is what transformed us from a rural population into an industrialized democracy. "Apartement houses helped people learn to live together. Department stores helped them to shop and eat together. Baseball parks taught them the rules both of teamwork and of competition. And vaudeville houses held up a mirror to life, giving people a chance to get together in a relaxed setting and smile at both their achievements and their perplexities" (in Hiss 1992). Barth described social interaction as largely defined by the built environment of traditional cities. Without that environment, how will we learn these lessons about humanity?

The lack of social interaction is today's society has even had physiological effects. Dutch psychologist Bernd Jager observed differences in the facial expressions of individuals from various regions of the U.S., concluding that the bland faces he found in the South and West are resultant of those regions' high degree of auto use. The people simply aren't used to seeing others. In writing about Jager's study, Hillman observed that, "The absence of meeting faces by walking among the crowd withdraws us from our own faces; it also withdraws us from the city as it was originally imagined: a congregating crowd of human faces from all walks of life." (Hillman 1992)
Purpose of the Study

This lack of social interaction is of increasing concern as communications technologies further reduce the amount of time we spend face-to-face. As Garreau pointed out in *Edge City* (1992), our social contacts are no longer bound by location. Children can talk to their playmates on the phone, and the elderly can watch movies on the VCR rather than at the theatre. This lack of human contact, however, was a concern of architect Christopher Alexander as early as 1965. As he pointed out in *The City as a Mechanism for Sustaining Human Contact*, Americans gain their social conscience from the groups of people in which they interact. But the only primary group that Americans have left, he said, is the nuclear family (Alexander 1965).

In 1965, that meant that each of the two adults in a household had contact with one other adult. But with today's single and single-parent households, even that one contact cannot be taken for granted. Many adults today have frequent, intimate contact with no one.

Our current suburban development patterns prevent us from interacting with others. To help increase that interaction, we must create developments that are more like a traditional city or town.

Family Structure

The smaller family size of today not only reduces our social contacts, it is also incompatible with the suburban development patterns prevalent today. Furthermore, the structure of the family has changed. Peter Calthorpe, a Neotraditional architect and planner, believes this is justification for new kinds of cities and towns. "The nuclear family, for whom suburbia was conceived, now represents barely one out of four new households. But we are still building post WWII suburbs as if families were large and had only one breadwinner" (Calthorpe 1988).

The size and shape of the American family is changing in many ways. According to architect Angela Brooks, only 13% of households fit the "working father, nonworking mother, two children" stereotype on which the suburb was based (*Progressive Architecture*, October 1992). The number of women in the workforce increased from 40% in the 1960s to 66% in the 1980s. People marry later, if at all. They also have their children later in life and have fewer of them. Better health care means that the elderly live longer and that they are able to live alone. All of these changes mean smaller families and an increasingly older population (Nasar 1988).

The small families of today need smaller homes than those currently found in the suburbs. Apartments and condomini-
ums would be ideal for these groups, but suburbs still emphasize the single-family detached home.

The sparse development patterns of the suburbs also create problems for children and the elderly, neither of whom can drive. For example, children must be driven to visit playmates or to participate in sports practices. Although this was not a problem when mothers did not work outside the home, it is a problem in today’s age of working mothers and single-parent families. It is for precisely this reason that Neotraditional architects Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk call the suburbs “sexist” (Oppenheimer 1989A).

There are transportation methods which can be used by children and the elderly, but they are rarely found in today’s suburbs. Public transit systems are economically infeasible for suburbs, ironically, because development there is too sparse. And many suburbs do not even have sidewalks on which people could walk or bike.

Even the amenities provided by today’s developers are more suited to adults than children. The popular golf course communities are a prime example of today’s “city designs that contribute to the isolation of families” (The Futurist, 1991).

Finally, the smaller families of today have lower household incomes than families of years past. Only those able to afford a car can even live in the suburbs, since no public transportation is available there. And even then, they may not be able to afford a home there, since only 8% of potential homebuyers can afford a detached, single-family house (Progressive Architecture, October 1992). This has resulted in suburbs becoming enclaves for the rich, rather than for the middle-class for whom they were originally intended.

The suburbs as they exist today are clearly not compatible with today’s changing family structure. The new middle class needs smaller homes, easy access, and affordability.

Future Outlook

The suburbs of today are also incompatible with our changing technologies. As we have mentioned before, telecommunications technologies have decreased our social interaction. But this has perhaps effected businesses even more than families.

Kasarda (in Cutler 1992), is one who says that suburban development patterns are not compatible with the coming “information age.” Information is by nature “space-compact”, so people who process information can work at higher densities than the current suburban design standards allow.

Communications technologies will also enable more people to work at home, blurring the distinction between residential
and commercial uses which zoning dictates. Possible effects of this trend, as discussed by Alfred Toffler in *The Third Wave* (1980), include the following:

1) A change in one's job will not necessarily require a change in residence. This can lead to greater community stability as people stay in one place longer.

2) As employees are each working from their individual homes, energy demand will be dispersed into levels small enough to be maintained by home generators. This could make renewable sources like solar and wind power economically feasible.

3) With the aid of computers, one person can do the amount of work which would have once required many. As a result, more people will begin to go into business for themselves, becoming entrepreneurs instead of employees. This will decrease our current "big business" society.

4) Instead of forming relationships simply by convenience of common employer, people will be able to choose with whom they maintain relationships. Although there is a possibility this would create more isolation, Toffler believes that computers will leave people more time to create social contacts.

Toffler looks primarily at the benefits of changing technologies, while ignoring their inherent problems. However, one trend is absolutely clear: decentralization will continue. Since the desire for decentralization was one of the original causes of the suburbs, we must realize this means the suburbs growth will continue.

Changing technologies will necessitate changes to our current suburban zoning, to allow for more compact businesses and for home-based businesses. At the same time, changing technologies could mean the continued trend of decentralization and growth of the suburbs. This indicates that any proposed changes should be made soon.

**Summary**

The topic of suburbs is a timely one because, as was previously mentioned, they are growing rapidly nationwide and are the only settlement type which is still growing in the Midwest. There is further indication that, due to increasing communications technologies, this growth will continue. With this in mind, it is important to give the suburbs further examination.

The current suburbs are clearly not ecologically sustainable. The automobile and its related roads and parking lots pollute the air, soil and water. Zoning exacerbates this problem by requiring large roadways and increasing the distance between destinations.

By separating land uses and buildings, zoning also inadvertently separates people. As a result, today's suburban resident has decreased opportunities for social interaction. At the same time, the development industry has fostered a sense of pri-
vacy over community in the suburbs by creating developments that make no attempt to integrate with the existing townscape.

The disperse development patterns created by zoning and private developers are also inconvenient for the growing amount of elderly people and single-parent families in our society, because they reduce access to community amenities.

The almost exclusive use of the single-family home in suburbia is also problematic for these groups and others. Singles, single-parent families, and the elderly would all benefit from smaller, lower maintenance apartments and condominiums. These would also make the suburbs affordable for everyone, an important consideration since average household wages are dropping.

Finally, increasing communications technologies has further reduced the amount of time we interact with one another. This means the increased existence of home-based businesses, which do not fit neatly into suburban zoning classifications. It also means smaller and more compact businesses than those for which our current zoning regulations are designed.

For all of these reasons, it is clear that our current suburban development patterns need to be reexamined. Some who have already done this, and provided alternatives, make up the Neotraditional school of town planning. Neotraditionalism will be described next in Chapter Three.
As a response to the many problems of the suburbs, some of which were outlined in Chapter 2, urban design practitioners called Neotraditionalists have begun to offer solutions or alternatives. Like Post Modern architecture, Neotraditional town planning borrows historical references for use in today's cities. The Neotraditionalists appreciate that many of our forefather's ideas were quite good and need not be cast away as "old-fashioned". The most important of these, perhaps, is that people should live in communities of neighbors and not in subdivisions of isolation.

Ideas from some of the foremost practitioners of Neotraditionalism will be discussed in this chapter. Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk are a team from Miami, whose Seaside, Florida plan has been heralded by sources as wide as Time magazine and Prince Charles. Peter Calthorpe is less widely known in popular culture, but is a respected San Francisco architect and planner. They and others have formed the basis for what Peter Katz calls the "New Urbanism".

There are many reasons for the praise of the New Urbanism. Environmentally, Neotraditional town plans are far more efficient than suburban sprawl. According to the Amicus Journal (1991), residents of cities and towns use less energy and resources and generate far less waste than those of the suburbs. Neotraditional towns are also economically efficient. For example, their small roads which costs less money to build than the larger ones found in suburbia, and leave more room for building homes (Fulton 1991).

Ideally, Neotraditionalism also provides the kind of environments that people like to live in. People clearly do like small towns. In a 1989 Gallup Poll, respondents were asked which type of settlement they would choose to live in. Thirty-four percent answered 'the small town,' while only 24% answered 'the suburbs' (Duany 1992). Ironically, we have previously stated that suburbs are the only settlement type which is still growing.

There are other trends that indicate our readiness for a new small town. For example, "community" has become the sales pitch of suburban subdivisions that are anything but communities. Unlike DP-Z and Calthorpe, Anton Nelessen is a Neotraditionalist who has actually examined what people want in the formulation of his designs. He says what they invariably want is tradition. Nelessen formulated the Visual Preference Survey because he believes it allows people to demonstrate the characteristics which they want in a community, such as smaller, tree-lined streets, and denser buildings. He then uses these elements in his design for the town (Knack 1991).
Neotraditionalism

According to Nelessen, not every element of the traditional town is appealing to people anymore. Some believe that apartments above stores "attract lowlife" and that alleys are dangerous as well. But he also thinks that the Visual Preference Survey can show them that those spaces do not have to be bad (Knack 1991).

Nelessen thinks that his method works better than DP-Z's or Calthorpe's because it is specific to the community in which it is used. The other codes must be modified every time. This allows Nelessen's designs to be tailored for the specific community, which is why he calls the process "design by democracy" (Knack 1991).

In some way, all Neotraditionalists are trying to bring back to towns what people traditionally like about them. As architect Daniel Solomon has said, "Architects can bring a planning language [Neotraditionalism] to urbanizing suburbs that describes some of the ordinary things about towns that people like." (Solomon 1988).

This chapter is intended to translate the planning language of Neotraditionalism into a definable set of elements. Chapter Four will later describe what elements Fishers residents want, as determined by their environmental preference surveys. Then, in Chapter Five, the two sets of elements will be synthesized.

The new small town

Neotraditionalists are trying to create new small towns, and their greatest model is perhaps the New England village. Based on earlier English settlements, the New England village was a densely populated settlement surrounded by common farm fields and then wilderness. The center of the village was a public meeting house centered on a central green space or commons. The village was limited in size by the distance in which one could walk, typically a radius of about one-half mile. Most destinations were located in the center of the city, resulting in a commercial core of about one-quarter mile radius.

Source: Sutro, Reinventing the Village
However, commercial uses did exist elsewhere. As population in the New England village increased, new settlers would begin a satellite village, which would take the form of the first (Sutro 1990).

Neotraditionalists also try to emulate modern villages of the type which still exist on many parts of the eastern seaboard. The modern village is also densely populated in relation to its surrounding undeveloped land. It is primarily residential, but commercial uses do exist with no clear demarcation from the residential areas. The higher density and intermixed land uses of the village encourages its residents to walk to their destinations instead of driving. This pedestrian activity results in frequent, casual contact among the townspeople, which is a major goal of Neotraditionalism (Sutro 1990).

Another model for the new small town, suggested by writer Diane Dulken, is the American college campus. Dulken noted that even when located within a busy city, the university campus remained peaceful and well-liked (Dulken 1992). Her observation is corroborated by Nasar’s environmental preference study. In his two case study communities, campus areas were easily identified and admired (Nasar 1990).

The campus already adheres to the basic principles of a Neotraditional town. It 1) has a variety of functions within reach of pedestrians; 2) offers other transportation methods as well; 3) offers housing for people of various incomes and lifestyles; and 4) restores public life by creating streets and plazas where people can gather comfortably. Furthermore, flexibility is inherent in a university setting, as it should be for a community (Dulken 1992).

The campus model should have instant appeal to people because it is easy to visualize and known to work. Developers have already tried it, in creating the suburban “office park” (Dulken 1992). Garreau (1992) found that many companies have moved from cities to suburbs specifically to build campus-like compounds. It is obvious, therefore, that demand exists for that type of development.

Currently, the suburban office park fails in its interpretation of the campus model. First of all, it provides only for office uses, although some notable exceptions include daycare centers, snack bars, and workout rooms for their employees. The office park is also subject to the same suburban zoning which separates buildings and people elsewhere in the community. One cannot travel between offices without a car, and there is no occasion in which workers of different offices might interact.

These problems could be reversed, however, by the addition of some principles from the campus and from Neotraditionalism. By adding homes for workers and places for them to shop, the park would have
increased vitality and a greater chance for economic success. Existing parking lots could be softened with landscaping. And new buildings could be arranged around existing ones to form outdoor rooms (Dulken 1992).

The model of the new small town proposed by Duany and Plater-Zyberk is best characterized by their plan for Seaside, Florida. Although founded in 1979, Seaside emulates the American small town from 1900 to 1940. Located on the Gulf near the Florida panhandle, it is laid out in a modified grid. The grid is intersected by three diagonal avenues which radiate from the center of the community and towards the beach. Seaside includes a mixture of uses, from a town administration building to an open marketplace. As a result, walking has become its most popular pastime (Dunlop 1989).

This is exactly what DP-Z intended. In planning Seaside, they say, they were guided by two goals: 1) to come up with an intelligent street system; and 2) to get people out on the street (DP-Z 1992).

In contrast to Duany and Plater-Zyberk's nostalgic Seaside development, Peter Calthorpe's Pedestrian Pockets prototype conveys his belief that Americans cannot return completely to the town forms of yesteryear, because several current trends prevent it. First is our preference for the automobile, which he calls "modern America's form-giver". Second is the fact that the large, extended family and the family-owned business have almost disappeared. And third is that individualized custom homes are so rare. A suburban solution must take all of these facts into account, and Calthorpe's decidedly do. They fit into the Neotraditional genre because they were designed under the premise that: "finely integrated, walkable communities with strong identities, built around usable public places, are still possible and economically feasible" (Calthorpe 1991A).

Calthorpe's "Pedestrian Pocket" is a prototype, although several versions of it are being built. The pocket is comparable to a neighborhood, and consists of a mixed-use center of about 1/4 mile radius around a light-rail station. This radius creates a pocket of up to 120 acres, about the size of a typical suburban development project. The
Pedestrian Pocket, however, is bounded by a greenbelt giving it an edge and maintaining it at a consistent size.

Pedestrian Pockets work as a system within a region. Each pocket includes the basic necessities of housing, office, retail, daycare, recreation and open space. But since they are all connected by a light-rail, people can travel easily from one Pedestrian Pocket to another. This allows some pockets to specialize in a particular use, such as shopping or entertainment.

The regional interpretation of the Pedestrian Pocket has little bearing on this study, since the study is community-based. However, other aspects of the Pedestrian Pocket are very applicable.

**Grid**

Gridiron streets are probably the most notable feature of the Neotraditionalist's palette, for many different reasons. The grid can give developments a sense of cohesion and allow them to grow in small, incremental steps. It can be rotated to afford views or distorted to fit the site topography. Irregular spaces can be allowed within the grid, as long as its overall form dictates the town's layout. The streets in a grid can vary by width, giving a hierarchy to the space. The grid is also flexible enough to be shifted to accommodate various size parcels. (Fisher 1988).

Source: Katz, *The New Urbanism*
The grid is Duany’s and Plater-Zyberk’s answer to their goal of finding an intelligent street system. DP-Z observed that in traditional downtowns with gridiron streets, the fastest way to travel is by getting off the main streets and onto a side street. This is because traffic is diffused through capillaries, instead of confined to arteries. An unintelligent street system, by contrast, is that of current suburbia. The suburban street system is a hierarchy of pods (subdivisions, shopping centers, office parks) connected only by collectors. This means that no one can go anywhere without driving. The smaller, local streets are rarely used and the collector streets get all of the congestion (Duany 1992).

Calthorpe’s Pedestrian Pocket also makes use of the gridiron, in addition to its light rail system and pedestrian paths. He says this allows individuals the choice of which method to use; without burdening the automobile it alleviates people’s dependency on it.

Some benefits of the grid on which Calthorpe and DP-Z agree include the fact that gridiron streets are cheaper to build and result in shorter trip-distances than typical suburban streets. Calthorpe adds that they also improve access for children, the elderly, and other less-mobile persons (Calthorpe 1988).

Duany and Plater-Zyberk favor grid streets for their straight orientation. They explain that suburban developers build curved streets because Americans like to see the end of their vistas, the same principle that guides commercial developers to build rambling shopping malls. But DP-Z finds several problems with curved streets. One is that curves are disorienting, as evidenced by how difficult it is to find one’s way around a suburb. A second is that the high speeds of suburban streets allow one to focus one’s eye for a fraction of a second. This means we can’t even perceive the intended view. As a result, buildings in the suburbs are designed with out architectural details, because no one would be able to notice them anyway.

Duany and Plater-Zyberk say that there are alternative ways to terminate vistas within the context of a gridiron layout. Earlier generations used the site at the end of the street for their churches, civic buildings, and monuments. Many other methods were published as early as 1909 in Raymond Unwin’s *Town Planning in Practice*. Unfortunately, many of these are deemed unsafe by today’s traffic engineers. But DP-Z argues that fewer accidents occur at these sites because they encourage the motorist to use caution (Duany 1992).
Streets
In addition to straightening out streets, DP-Z also recommends slowing them down. They point out that a typical curve radius in the suburbs is 25-40 feet, allowing motorist to turn while scarcely slowing down. This can make crossing the street frightening for pedestrians.

Calthorpe also recommends the slowing down of streets. In his Pedestrian Pockets, traffic is allowed but is slowed down by virtue of the small street dimensions and by frequent intersections.

Even highways can and should be slowed down, say Duany and Plater-Zyberk. As they enter a town, they can be slowed down into graceful landscaped boulevards. This investment can even pay for itself, since property values along the boulevard are increased and since travelers are more likely to stop at the local shops.

Alleys
Duany and Plater-Zyberk suggest that gridiron streets be supplemented by a system of alleys behind the homes. This has several benefits, all of which lead to getting people out on the streets.

Because cars can enter the property via the alley, there will be no need for a garage on the front of the house. This will make traveling on the street and sidewalk more enjoyable, since pedestrians will be observing houses instead of cars. Utility lines can also be buried in the alleys, avoiding the front yard easement that makes houses sit so far back from the street. Again, this will increase visual interest from the street and sidewalk. Finally, alleys can be the place where people’s trash goes, helping to clean up the street and make it more enjoyable.
Integrated Diversity

Duany and Plater-Zyberk's second goal - to get people out on the streets - is also met by the use of the gridiron. As previously mentioned, modern suburbs are organized by "pods", such as the subdivision, office park, or shopping center. Because of the way they are organized, and because one must drive between them, contact between pods is unlikely and even discouraged. Traditional towns are not so segregated, and neither are Neotraditional town designs.

The grid allows destinations to be placed closer together and people to travel easily from one to another. In addition, most Neotraditionalist require that all streets be lined with sidewalks to encourage pedestrian linkages. Integration is more likely. In this instance, it becomes possible for children to walk to a friend's house after school, or to go get a hamburger, or to the library (Dunlop 1991).

Neotraditionalism separates uses more subtly than suburban zoning. In Neotraditional town plans, for example, all of the buildings on a block may be the same width, so that they look similar from the street. But in depth they may vary, resulting in different-sized buildings alongside one another. This is not allowed in suburban zoning codes. Distinctions are also made with slight height variations, or in architectural details. Because traffic is moving slowly, these subtleties are observable.

Calthorpe also advocates a mixture of land uses because commercial, civic and recreational facilities benefit from proximity to one another. For example, people visiting a park may stop at the nearby deli for picnic sandwiches, or office workers may run errand on their lunch hour if they are close enough. In a Pedestrian Pocket, retail spaces would have offices above them, and office spaces would have housing above them (Calthorpe 1988).
The Pedestrian Pocket also includes a variety of housing types, not for aesthetic reasons as Seaside does, but because they can accommodate a variety of family types. Calthorpe explains, "The goal of this tight mix of housing and open space is not just to provide more appropriate homes for the different users or to offer the convenience of walking, but hopefully to reintegrate the currently separated age and social types of our diverse culture" (Calthorpe 1988).

**Enclosure**

Neotraditionalism aims to create a greater sense of human scale and enclosure than suburban zoning, something which is accomplished, again, through the use of the grid. Buildings along gridiron streets will form a sort of wall, and "Without a wall," says DP-Z, "No space can be defined or demarcated." (Duany 1992).

The sense of enclosure is maintained by a strict height to width ratio (based on a Renaissance-era formula): for every one foot of vertical space, no more that six feet of horizontal space is allowed. Duany and Plater-Zyberk agree that trees can serve as the vertical element of enclosure, allowing homes to set slightly farther back from the street if desired.
Detail

Even within the confines of their gridiron street systems, buildings in a Neotraditional town can still be complex and interesting. Traditional buildings, in fact, tend to have more articulation and more shifts in their orientation than modern buildings, and this is encouraged in the Neotraditional town. And in spite of the grid, these buildings can still respond to the nature of their site. Many use a natural site feature such as a waterfront as an ordering device.

Buildings in Seaside also respond to their site through the use of local materials and building types. For example, the code at Seaside requires metal roofs, because they common throughout the Gulf Coast region. It also requires architectural features such as porches, gable roofs, wood windows, and picket fences, which are frequently found on southern homes.

To ensure that local building types are used, the code only allows about six of them throughout the town. Duany cautions that the code does not, however, mandate the cute little Victorian houses that have become typical of Seaside. He says that these are a result of current trends, and that one could build a modern home within the confines of the code if one wanted to.

Identity

Calthorpe cautions that a new design problem associated with Neotraditionalism is how to establish overall identity for a community while avoiding arbitrary architectural controls. Our suburban solutions must know the difference between tradition and nostalgia. Traditions are what we should aim for. They are "rooted in timeless impulses while being constantly modified by circumstance". They evolve with the time and place. But nostalgia only "seeks the security of past forms without their inherent principles" (Calthorpe 1991B).
Modern Institutions

As Calthorpe has mentioned, one potential problem with Neotraditionalism could be making it work within the context of modern institutions. Several things about our current suburbs cannot be adapted. One is the large scale of its buildings and development projects.

For example, supermarkets and discount stores now require about 60,000 square feet each. This is because today's customers demand one-stop shopping and volume discounts, and the owners of such stores want the market area and high visibility of location on a major arterial. And as we have mentioned, residential development now grows not house-by-house, but by subdivisions of around 150 houses or apartment complexes of at least 100 units. As a result, new developments of perhaps 100 acres, about the size of the classic town center, now occur in one fell swoop and under one "master plan."

Calthorpe's point is that the "master plan" can work better than it does, because currently it often has "theme" feel. Instead, it could integrate the project into the existing community (Calthorpe 1991B). This is also the aim of those planning a Neotraditional retrofit of the Parkway Center district of northern Dallas. Here, the emphasis is on making individual property owners realize that they are part of a district that can be identified, linked and added to coherently (Barnett 1992).

Duany and Plater-Zyberk have been able to include some modern institutions in their designs. Mashpee Commons in Mashpee, Massachusetts is a retrofitted shopping center. The Kentlands, near Gaithersburg, Maryland, also includes a large shopping mall. From the highway it looks like any other mall, but to the town it presents a different face.

Implementing Neotraditionalism does not mean that a town's entire method of land subdivision and regulation needs to be revamped. In fact, one advantage of the Pedestrian Pocket, in particular, is that local officials can initiate it simply by setting up a zoning code as a framework for its size and density. After that, however, the buildings within it can be built by private developers and contractors, allowing greater aesthetic diversity. This is why Calthorpe says that his brand of Neotraditionalism "accommodates modern institutions without sacrificing human scale and memorable places" (Calthorpe 1991A).
Summary

Neotraditionalism clearly offers many alternatives to traditional suburban zoning. In trying to create new small towns, it follows models such as the New England village, the modern village of the eastern seaboard, and the university campus. Elements of these include a fixed size of about one-quarter mile radius, a central green space or commons where people can gather, mixed uses, housing for a variety of family types, and a choice of transportation methods.

Several other elements are important in Neotraditional town planning, and are found in the designs of both Calthorpe and DP-Z. Perhaps the most important of these is the gridiron street system. The grid gives a sense of cohesion to a community and decrease trip distances, thereby increasing pedestrianism. The Neotraditionalists specify that the streets and curves in the grid should be more narrow than in typical suburbs. This slows traffic down, making walking safer and letting drivers appreciate the details of the community around them. The streets system should also be supplemented by a system of alleys, in which utilities, trash, and other unattractive necessities be located. This makes walking on the street more pleasant.

The variety of uses and housing choices in a Neotraditional community are intended to more fully integrate the diverse peoples of a community, whom in a traditional suburb might never meet. By placing homes, stores, and businesses close together, the vitality of the community is increased. This is also helpful for children, the elderly, or any group for whom access might be a problem.

Human scale is also important in the Neotraditional town, just as it had been in small town America. A strict height-to-width ratio ensures a sense of enclosure on the street, and buildings have articulation and details to create interest. These details should, however, be common to the region in which the town is located, in order to maintain the sense of authenticity.

Other elements which are implied rather than explicit in Neotraditionalism include a reduction in the size and number of parking lots and building setbacks. These currently detract from the sense of enclosure in our suburbs.

Most of the ideas discussed in this chapter came from Neotraditionalism's foremost practitioners, Peter Calthorpe and the team of Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk. This study, however, will use the methods of Anton Nelessen in formulating Neotraditional design criteria for the Town of Fishers.

Nelessen first surveys a community to find out what they like in a town. These are typically traditional elements, such as
smaller, tree-lined streets and greater density. He then implements these in his design for the town.

To follow this process for Fishers, the environmental preferences of Fishers residents were surveyed. Chapter Four will next describe the process and results of those environmental preference surveys.
The previous chapter has described techniques used by Neotraditional town planners for improving today's suburbs. In order to adapt those techniques for the suburb of Fishers, Indiana, a series of environmental preference studies was conducted. Fishers residents were given a Visual Preference Survey and a written questionnaire to determine which Neotraditional techniques would be appropriate for their community. The following chapter describes the survey process and its results. A complete list of results, as well as samples of the survey questions and VPS images, are provided in Appendices A and B.

**The Survey Groups**

The survey was administered to the residents of two Fishers subdivisions; the Town Council, Plan Commission, and Board of Zoning Appeals; and the students of a sociology class in the local high school. The total number of people surveyed was ninety-five. Although a larger and more random sample may have been generated by a general mailing survey, that alternative proved to be cost prohibitive. In addition, by attending the meetings of these groups the researcher was able to administer the Visual Preference Survey.

Homeowner's Associations are the organizations formed by residents of many suburban subdivisions in order to provide street and landscaping maintenance within the subdivision and to ensure enforcement of the subdivision's covenants. All residents of the subdivision are required to pay dues for this service, and all are members of the Association. Since most Fishers residents live in subdivisions, the Homeowner's Association seemed a good way to reach them.

The two Homeowner's Associations surveyed were selected because they represent different socioeconomic levels and age groups. Ideally, even more groups would have been selected for a greater respondent diversity. Homeowner's Associations, however, typically meet only once each year, and few were scheduled to meet within the study timeframe.

**River Glen**

The first Homeowner's Association surveyed was River Glen. The association includes residents of three different neighborhoods within River Glen subdivision. The first is properly called River Glen, and consists of 206 single-family lots, zoned R5C (high density cluster). Homes in River Glen are built by two different builders, Davis Homes and Thompson Family Builders. The average list price for homes in River Glen, as of February 1994, was $182,971.00.

Within the overall subdivision known as River Glen is another neighborhood known as River Ridge. River Ridge is a neighborhood of 82 single-family lots zoned R2 (lower density residential). This zoning
district carries a minimum lot size of 15,000 square feet. The homes in River Ridge are all custom-built and, as of February 1994, had an average list price of $261,172.00.

River Glen also contains a neighborhood called Barrington Ridge, which is zoned R2 but has an average lot size of about one acre. There are only 13 lots in this neighborhood of which two have been built upon. The homes in Barrington Ridge are custom-built and have an average list price of $699,000.00.

The survey was administered to residents attending the River Glen Homeowner's Association meeting on Thursday, February 10, 1994. A total of 41 persons were surveyed, of which 11 specified that they are residents of River Ridge. The remaining 30 may be residents of any of the three neighborhoods, since they are often referred to unilaterally.

River Glen is located at the northwest corner of 116th Street and Allisonville Road, a major intersection in the community. It is surrounded on its north by lower density residential uses, on its south by higher-density residential uses, on its east by retail/office uses, and on its west by the River Glen Golf Course.

The River Glen Golf Course is located on a flood plain of the White River which, at this point, makes up Fishers' western border. The subdivision of River Glen is characterized by gently rolling slopes down to the floodplain and several mature trees.

The golf course is semi-private, and all River Glen residents have a complimentary membership. A clubhouse contains a pro shop and a bar/grill. Adjacent to this is a private swimming pool and tennis courts.

Berkley Grove

The Berkley Grove Homeowner's Association was surveyed on Tuesday, February 15, 1994. Twenty-five residents responded to the survey. Berkley Grove contains 243 single-family lots zoned R4 (medium density residential). The homes in Berkley Grove were built by Ryland Homes, Trinity Homes, and the Estridge Group. As of February 1994, they had an average list price of $142,756.00.

Berkley Grove is located east of Hague Road between 106th and 116th Streets. It is surrounded on all sides by and connected to similar subdivisions. One adjacent subdivision, Timber Springs, is completely wooded, and some Berkley Grove residents enjoy the benefits of these trees at the back of their own lots.
Town Council, Plan Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals

The survey was mailed to members of the Fishers Town Council, Plan Commission, and BZA along with a memo explaining the study and a pre-stamped response envelope. It was believed that the board members would be more candid on their surveys if they were not around other board members when they filled them out (as would have been the case in a meeting). Of the thirteen surveys mailed, eight were returned. The board members live in many different neighborhoods and represent diverse socioeconomic and age ranges.

Students

In an effort to learn the opinions of young people in the community, the survey was administered to a high school class. A Sociology class taught by Mr. Greg Habegger was selected because 1) Sociology seemed to fit the topic of the study; and 2) the class members were all seniors in high school, and thus more mature than younger classes might be.

Twenty-one students took the survey on Monday, February 14, 1994. The students represent a variety of neighborhoods and socioeconomic backgrounds. Some came from neighborhoods outside the Fishers town limits, but because they rely on Fishers for so many services their opinions are still helpful.

The written survey given to the students varies slightly from that given to the Homeowner's Associations and the Town boards. Questions which differed are so identified in the appendix.

Visual Preference Surveys

A Visual Preference Survey is conducted by projecting slide transparencies which respondents are asked to rate. The technique was developed by Neotraditional planner Anton Nelessen of Princeton, New Jersey. In addition, it has been supported by many other researchers, including Hart (1979), Kaplan (1989), and Stamps (1993).

This particular VPS consisted of thirty-six slides categorized in six groups - neighborhoods, streets, paths, shopping areas, offices, and public buildings. All categories contained images both old and new, with varying degrees of formality, tradition, density, and detail.

Respondents were given an answer form with a blank for each slide. They were instructed to rate the slide on a scale of -10 to 10, with -10 representing the most negative images and 10 the most positive; 0 (zero) was reserved for neutral responses. Respondents were told to rate the image based on their first instinct when seeing it, and by considering whether the image represents something they like and would like to see in their community.
All of the Visual Preference Surveys, with the exception of the student group's, were given in the auditorium of the Fishers Town Hall, following the group's regularly scheduled meeting. This is beneficial not only because it is a neutral location, but because the uniformity helps to ensure that the results were not biased by the location of the respondent. The VPS was given to the student group in their regular classroom at Hamilton Southeastern High School.

Scores for the images were averaged within the three groups and as a whole. A summary of the results is included in this chapter, and the complete results appear in Appendix A.

The results of the Visual Preference Survey, in general, seemed to indicate that Fishers residents favor some aspects of Neotraditionalism. They appear to like new buildings which are traditionally-based; nature, so long as it is controlled; variety and texture of buildings and landscapes; formality in certain circumstances; and an occasional monumental building to stand out from the rest.

New, but Traditional
Fishers residents like buildings which appear to be new, but which are of traditional architectural styles. For example, the authentic brick townhouses in Image 6 received a score of -5.65, but the newer brick townhouses in Image 8 received a .01.

The older townhouses did not have as many trees nearby, and their photo was shot on a cloudy day. But these two facts alone probably do not account for the difference in scores. Both the new and old townhouses, however, were very traditional in style. Both were of red brick and had a variety of building articulation and detail.
In non-residential buildings, Fishers residents still preferred the new over the old. Image 21, which depicts storefronts in a traditional downtown square, was rated -4.02. Image 27, which also consists of an older commercial area, was rated 2.94. That difference could be accounted for in the better maintenance of Image 27. But Images 23 and 25, which depict newer storefronts, received a 5.26 and a 6.32, respectively.

All storefronts were of similar density and visual variety. The different scores seem to lie in the "newness" of Images 23 and 25.

Modernity was even appreciated in streets and paths. The country road in Image 13 received a .55, compared to a 6.60 for the sleek lines of the road in Image 14. The asphalt path in Image 17 looked rather worn; it received a 4.82. But the sleek won out again in the path of Image 18; it received an 8.79.

Some of these differences may be accounted for in upkeep. On the written survey, over 28% of respondents said that good upkeep made a nice neighborhood. But traditional architectural styles did win out in nearly every category. The buildings in
Images 28 to 31 were modern architecturally, but did not look new. Their scores ranged from -2.89 to +2.49. Images 33 and 36 were both obviously new, on the other hand, but traditional in style. They received scores of 5.78 and 4.83.

These results do send a message about the importance of maintenance in Fishers. They also say, however, that Fishers residents prefer traditional architectural styles. And perhaps most importantly, they indicate that Fishers residents will appreciate new development that is traditionally based.

Controlled nature

Fishers residents like spaces which combine the built environment with nature, but in very controlled ways. The edges of these spaces are sharp and well-manicured. Again, this can indicate their appreciation of home and lawn maintenance. However, it also suggests an acceptance of public and semi-public spaces and of the appreciation for edges.

Evidence of controlled nature is seen in Images 14 and 23, which were previously discussed. It also appears in Image 24, a courtyard.

The school shown in image 34, with its wide brick walk cutting across an expansive lawn, received a 6.80.

All three pathway slides received high ratings, possibly indicating a willingness to spend time using them. This was later confirmed by the written surveys, in which 78% of respondents said they currently use the paths and sidewalks in their neighborhood, and 74% said they would use more of them, if constructed.

The highest rated image of the entire survey, in fact, was the pathway in Image 18; it received an 8.79. This slide represents the highly controlled nature which Fishers residents appreciate.

In contrast to these instances of controlled nature is the clearly uncontrolled nature of Images 28 and 29. Here, nature has taken over.
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In contrast to these instances of controlled nature is the clearly uncontrolled nature of Images 28 and 29. Here, nature has taken over.
The preference for controlled nature also indicates a preference for planned environments, which is emphasized by the accoutrements present in Image 23. Street lights, benches, awnings, planters, and paving stones are present in this image.

**Variety & Texture**

Related to their preference for controlled nature, and to their appreciation of the clearly planned details of Image 23, Fishers residents also seem to want added texture in their environments. This can be brought about by plantings and landscaping materials and through building materials and details.

Again, this is easily observable in images 23, 24, and 25. It is also suggested by the low scores for the Modernist buildings in Images 28 and 29.
The place for formality

Although Fishers residents seem to like graceful curves with sharp edges there is also a place for straight edges in the community. The condition is that they must be buffered by trees and other landscaping.

The row of traditional homes in Image 2 did receive a moderately high rating of 3.83. Another row of traditional homes, shown in Image 12, received a 6.51. Admittedly, the homes in this image were also more attractive. But the gridiron street with a full tree canopy, shown in Image 15, also got a 6.07. This indicates some acceptance of the formal grid.

Formality is also expressed in the pathways shown in Image 19.

The monumental building

Fishers residents appreciate the occasional "monumental" building as well as they do the "fabric" buildings of a community. This is observable by their rating of 4.83 for the library shown in Image 36. This edifice stands at the back of an expansive lawn and is clearly without human scale or context.

Neotraditional Town Planners have said that this is acceptable, in the appropriate place.

In the written survey, Fishers residents named as their most attractive business the Town Hall and the USA Funds headquarters, which could both be considered monumental.
Multi-family housing

The aspect of Neotraditional Town Design which Fishers residents would seem to have most problems with is its requirement of a variety of housing types. Multi-family housing is simply not desired by Fishers residents, with very few exceptions.

In the written survey, respondents were asked how they would feel if certain types of developments were proposed in Fishers. Possible answers were "Favor", "Oppose", and "Not next to my house, but OK. elsewhere". Although only 8% of the respondents would favor more apartments in Fishers, 19% said that as long as they weren't next to their house, they would be OK. elsewhere. For condominiums or town homes, the figures were 14% and 25%

This would indicate that there is some room for the acceptance of multi-family housing in Fishers, but it is a difficult issue.

The multi-family housing in the Visual Preference Survey rated -.29, -1.88, -5.65, .01, -4.69, and -5.48. The highest rated of these was the new brick townhouses in Image 8, which were previously discussed regarding their traditional building materials and details. It can also be observed that these townhouses are also buffered by trees.
Written Surveys

The written surveys were attached to the answer sheet for the Visual Preference Surveys, with the exception of those of the Town Boards, which were mailed. Following the VPS, the respondents were given as much time as necessary to fill out the survey. A sample of the survey appears in Appendix B. The results of the surveys were coded and tallied using Microsoft Excel for the Macintosh. A summary of these results follows, and a full listing of them also appears in Appendix B.

The written surveys confirmed the results of the Visual Preference Surveys and provided new information. Perhaps the most important of this information was Fishers' overwhelming desire to retain their small town atmosphere.

Although 61% of the survey respondents consider Fishers to be a "suburb," 28% consider it to be a "small town." Fifty-seven percent originally moved to Fishers for its "lifestyle and sense of place". Fifteen percent think that Fishers' small town atmosphere sets it apart from other communities, and 17% hope that atmosphere never changes. These responses revealed the greatest approval for their respective questions.

It would seem that Fishers is a good place to implement Neotraditionalism, then, since Neotraditionalism tries to create small towns.

Identity

As we have discussed, Fishers identity is to some that of a small town. Other than that fact, however, there was little indication of Fishers' specific identity. Yet 70% of the survey respondents believe that Fishers is distinctive enough; only 11% said that it is too much like other communities.

Identity did seem to be important within the individual neighborhoods, based on the character of those which Fishers residents found most attractive. Each of these neighborhoods have definable identities. For example, all of the homes in Timber Springs, which was rated fourth after the River Glen neighborhoods, are characterized by their wooded lots and natural atmosphere. In River Glen, the homes are all of similar architectural character.

Identity did not, however, coincide with similarity. Few of the top-rated neighborhoods were developed by tract builders, which lack both detail and variety in their homes.
Edges

The identification of a community or neighborhood is linked to its distinct edges. We have noted that Fishers has little identity or distinction from other communities. It also lacks edges which can easily be defined.

Survey respondents were asked when they feel they have entered the town, when arriving on each of its major corridors. As the map below illustrates, their opinions rarely coincided with the town’s actual borders. Therefore, perhaps better-defined edges would help to increase Fishers identity.

To define edges around Fishers’ neighborhoods and blocks will probably be a more difficult task. Most neighborhoods, and many blocks, are arranged with large yards abutting the street right-of-way. This is inconsistent with the aim of Neotraditionalism to reduce setbacks, thereby placing buildings on the edge of blocks. In anticipation of this, the survey respondents were asked which areas of their yards were used most often. It was hoped that yard setbacks could be reduced on the basis of this information.

Eighty percent of survey respondents claim to spend their outdoor time in the back yard. Perhaps more surprisingly, 35% claim to utilize their front yards. It is possible then, that some proportion of Fishers’ front yards could have reduced setbacks, thereby emphasizing the edge of their blocks. But rear yards should probably be maintained at their present size.
Centers

According to the Neotraditionalists, even more important than edges are centers. For the Fishers community, its Town Center is obviously of great importance.

Many expressed an interest in preserving and enhancing Fishers' old downtown. Yet only 46% were aware of the Town Center Development Plan, which attempts to do just that.

Where definable centers were present in the neighborhoods, they were also greatly used and appreciated. For example, River Glen's clubhouse was considered by many respondents to be a local gathering place.

Public Spaces

The need for public spaces is closely related to the need for centers on the level of the community and neighborhood.

Fishers residents appear to use and appreciate public spaces, where available. The Town Hall, the Library, and the Community Park were all considered gathering places. Also considered gathering places were local restaurant and shopping areas. Perhaps it is not a coincidence that the majority of survey respondents requested more of these type of facilities.

Over 35% percent said they did not know their neighbors well enough, and this may indicate a desire for further interaction.
Grid

A gridiron street system may be one of the most difficult aspects of Neotraditionalism to implement in the Town of Fishers. The grid is highly touted for helping to disperse traffic, but only 55%, barely a majority, think traffic is a problem in Fishers. This may change as the community continues to grow. But only 11% said traffic was a problem in their neighborhood.

Grid streets are also considered to be more easily understood than curvilinear streets. But only 11% of the survey respondents found Fishers' curvilinear streets to be disorienting.

The only incentive for grid streets in Fishers seems to be the desire of its residents for quick and easy access between home, work, and shopping. These access factors were named by 31% as the reason they chose Fishers, and by 39% as the reason they chose their neighborhoods.

Transit

In the area of transportation, Neotraditionalists are also concerned with providing alternatives to the automobile. This desire was supported, in part, by the respondents to the Fishers survey.

Of the high school students surveyed, 57% said that transportation had been a problem for them at some time, and one older couple said the same thing. Both of these groups could benefit by alternative transportation methods.

Mass transit is not currently feasible in Fishers, but the Town is soon to implement a Circulation Plan as a component of their Parks & Trails Master Plan. This will require sidewalks along all streets and multipurpose paths along designated corridors. Seventy-four percent of the survey respondents said that they support more paths.

Survey respondents were also asked for what purpose they use or would use paths and sidewalks. Seventy-seven percent said for recreation; 54% said for health reasons; and 21% said for transportation. Perhaps the Circulation Plan can increase those numbers.

It is also notable that of the students that were surveyed, 76% have a car that is specifically for their own use. A full 81% drive themselves to their extracurricular activities and to work at their part-time jobs. If destinations were closer together, many of these students could walk or bike instead, thereby decreasing traffic.
Variety

As observed in the Visual Preference Survey, building variety was also appreciated by Fishers residents. Forty-one percent said that the buildings and homes in Fishers look too much alike. And, as mentioned previously, the neighborhoods they preferred consisted of custom homes more frequently than tract homes.

Most telling is the respondent's opinions of the most attractive businesses in Fishers. All were characterized by a greater degree of building variety than normal.

Fishers residents ranked the Marsh grocery and the Marsh headquarters as their most attractive businesses. The grocery itself is characterized by an articulated roofline and a protective canopy. The headquarters building has a number of shifts in its orientation, to respond to its site wedged between I-69 and a wooded area.

Eller House, a local restaurant, was rated the second-most attractive business in Fishers. This is one of the oldest buildings in Fishers, a farmhouse that was remodeled for the restaurant in 1992. It has a two-story bay window and gingerbread trim.

Other "attractive businesses" had human scaled elements and rusticated brickwork.
Summary

The most important finding of the environmental preference surveys was probably the fact that Fishers residents want to keep their small town atmosphere. However, they still seem to want growth and enterprise, as indicated by their preference for new buildings and their obvious disdain for old ones. Therefore, a Neotraditional solution seems well-suited for Fishers, since it will specify that any new development have small town characteristics.

Fishers residents also like lots of landscaping, but they want it to be well-maintained. And it seems that the type they prefer requires high maintenance, as it consists of distinct edges which require pruning.

The desire for more landscaping is probably related to the desire for more texture or variety in Fishers' environment. Fishers residents expressed appreciation for articulated walls and rooflines and for more building details. They did prefer those details and architectural which are traditional to the Midwest. This is important to the Neotraditionalism, since it preserves the authenticity of the town.

Fishers residents also seem to desire formality and the monumental buildings in some locations. The Neotraditionalists agrees with this concept, as long as such formality is appropriately placed.

Finally, Fishers residents seem to enjoy public spaces that merge the indoors and outdoors, such as courtyards, landscaped parking areas, and canopied porches. They also like, and spend much time in, semi-public spaces such as clubs, restaurants, parks and libraries.

One concept of Neotraditionalism which Fishers did not seem receptive to was that of multi-family housing. Only about 12% of Fishers' survey respondents favored multi-family housing. They were, however, more accepting of multi-family homes that are of brick construction, have a great deal of building articulation and detail, are softened by landscaping, and are very carefully located.
Chapter two discussed at length the problems of the suburbs. Finding alternatives to the existing suburban development patterns that cause those problems is the underlying purpose of this study. The Neotraditional school of town planning has already thought of some of these alternatives, and their work was discussed in Chapter three. To discern whether and how their alternatives could be adapted for use in the town of Fishers, environmental preference surveys were conducted of Fishers residents. This process and its results were described in Chapter four.

Now, Chapter five will attempt to synthesize the data from Neotraditionalism (Chapter three) with the data from Fishers residents (Chapter four), in order to address the problems of the suburbs (Chapter two).

This chapter is organized according to the elements found in a Neotraditional town, as adapted from the list provided in Katz’s *The New Urbanism* (1993). Within each section are comments, statistics, and quotes selected from the data on Neotraditionalism and the Fishers environmental preference surveys. These are presented side-by-side for easier comparison. The same organizational list of elements will later be adapted for Chapter six to define the design criteria for the Town of Fishers.

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**Chapter Five Topics.**

- Community
- Districts
- Special Districts
- Transit
- Neighborhoods
- Size
- Mixed Use
- Public Spaces
- Center
- Edges
- Street Network
- Grid
- Streets
- Corridors
- Alleys
- Blocks
  - Size, Shape, & Configuration
  - Parking
  - Edges
- Buildings
  - Density
  - Type
  - Scale & Orientation
  - Detail
### Neotraditional Town Planning

**Districts.**
- Neotraditionists define districts based not on their use, but by the density and scale which are appropriate there.
- The density and scale of each district should be predetermined.
- Within each district, a variety of uses are possible.
- Parking criteria should be established on a district-wide basis, instead of by individual building.

**Special Districts.**
- Special Districts are areas that have a specific use instead of the many mixed uses of a neighborhood. Examples include civic, entertainment, or tourist districts. May also be used for large scale manufacturing uses which should be secluded from homes.
- Should have clear boundaries for the purposes of special organizations (a district council, for example) or special financing (such as Tax Increment Financing).
- There should be public meeting places within districts, just as within neighborhoods.

### Fishers

- Current zoning districts attempt to define density and scale through setbacks and height limits; this could easily be modified to fit the Neotraditional model.
- Currently, zoning districts are segregated by use.
- A minimum number of parking spaces are currently required for each building.

- Fishers Town Center District is one, although it encourages mixed-use. Many Fishers business parks could be considered districts, but lack public spaces or architectural unity. The town's Thomas A. Weaver Memorial Municipal Complex is one. The Conner Prairie area could be one.
- TCD does, others could

- Special Districts allow for predictability and security, which are important for Fishers residents.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neotraditionalism</th>
<th>Fishers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transit:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• a variety of transit methods should be provided, ultimately reducing dependence on the automobile</td>
<td>• Fishers’ Circulation Plan will provide for multi-purpose paths along many major roadways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• the town is located on a railway leading directly to Indianapolis. In the future, this could be converted to a light-rail line.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Neotraditional Town Planning | Fishers
---|---
**Size:**
- has a fixed area of 1/4 mile radius = 120 square acres
- approximate size of suburban subdivisions

**Mixed Use:**
- gathers people within easy reach of daily needs
- makes alternative transportation more feasible
- is especially good for children and the elderly
- a mixture of housing types serves a variety of population groups

- many Fishers residents chose their neighborhood for its location/access.
- 74% of Fishers residents desire more pathways. Only 21% currently use pathways for transportation purposes, but this could be increased (See "Street Network: Grid")
- 57% of kids surveyed, and one older couple, said that transportation had been a problem for them
- only about 12% support multi-family housing. It is more acceptable if it is new, has a great deal of building articulation and detail, is softened by landscaping, and is carefully located.
- 13% of survey respondents support mixed-use. Must emphasize Katz quote to increase this amount.

*"...modern American workplace is not a bad neighbor to homes and shops."* (Katz 1993)
Neotraditional Town Planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Spaces</th>
<th>Fishers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• &quot;...encourage casual meetings which form the bonds of community.&quot; (Sutro 1990)</td>
<td>• Fishers residents rely on casual meetings. Consider gathering places to be restaurants, Marsh grocery, and other shopping areas. Requested more restaurants, groceries and shops, possibly indicating the desire for more opportunities for the casual meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• breathe life into a community, neighborhood, or block</td>
<td>• like open spaces such as parks and courtyards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• can be defined by landscaping, as in tree-lined malls</td>
<td>• like landscaping, particularly in such a controlled setting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Synthesis
Neighborhoods

Neotraditional Town Planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Center.</th>
<th>Fishers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• is a public space such as a square, green, important intersection, meeting hall, daycare center, or church</td>
<td>• developers in Fishers currently include some features like these, particularly via Park Impact Fee credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• focuses the identity of the neighborhood</td>
<td>• Fishers residents like well-defined, predictable neighborhoods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• is more important than edges</td>
<td>• need more thoughtful placement of centers in Fishers neighborhoods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• should be located near the geographic center of the neighborhood unless geography compels otherwise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Edges.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>similar to current situation, especially at River Glen subdivision</th>
<th>• existing golf courses are problematic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• retail should be located at the edge of neighborhoods to blend with the retail edges of other neighborhoods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• large recreational open spaces should be located at the edges of the neighborhood so as not to create gaps in the townscape</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• high traffic corridors should also be located at the edges of a neighborhood. When lined with trees these become parkways that further define the neighborhood and street.</td>
<td>• follows current standards for collectors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Fishers residents like well-defined, predictable neighborhoods</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Neotraditional Town Planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grid.</th>
<th>Fishers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• gives development a sense of cohesion</td>
<td>• currently lacks cohesion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• reduces traffic by providing a variety of paths to a given location</td>
<td>• currently lacks variety in traffic paths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• &quot;diffuses traffic through capillaries instead of confining it to arteries&quot; (DP-Z 1992)</td>
<td>• Fishers residents like keeping traffic away from their neighborhood. Current system works for them: traffic is not a problem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| • allows street network and neighborhood to grow in small, incremental steps | • flexibility is appreciated by local developers                        |
| • is flexible enough to create various size parcels                  | • only 5% said straight streets would be less disorienting              |
| • straight streets are less disorienting that curved streets         |                                                                       |
| • can provide terminus for views of public places                   | • Fishers residents wanted easy access                                 |
| • shortens routes between destinations                              | • Fishers residents wanted more paths. Shorter distances might encourage them to use those paths for transportation purposes |
| • improves walkability by decreasing distances between intersections |                                                                       |

| • streets within the grid can vary by width to create a hierarchy    |                                                                       |
| • can be rotated to afford view, distorted to fit topography, as long as overall pattern remains a grid |                                                                       |
**Neotraditional Town Planning**

- are a public space; they are a communal room and passage
- should not be exclusively vehicular or pedestrian oriented, they should be both
  - the street right-of-way should be proportional to the height of adjacent buildings (3 feet horizontal: 1 foot vertical)
  - shifts in scale along a street may be transitioned with landscaping
  - curve radii should be minimized to slow traffic at intersections, allowing pedestrians easier passage
  - on-street parking should be allowed; this increases street vitality and acts as a buffer between sidewalk and street
  - streets should be designed for slower speeds than they are currently. Slower traffic is safer and allows the driver a chance to perceive details in the buildings around him.

**Fishers**

- Some of the streets preferred by Fishers residents were very public in nature; for example, River Glen Boulevard and Ellipse Parkway
  - ordinance requires sidewalks along all streets
  - Fishers residents like landscaping. Also like subtle transitions
  - currently allowed in most residential areas and in Town Center
  - buildings currently lack detail because it wouldn't be noticed anyway. Fishers residents desire more building detail.
## Neotraditional Town Planning

### Corridors
- can be natural or manmade; they are characterized by their visual continuity
- are defined by adjacent neighborhoods/districts; are the entrance to them
- are civic in nature
- require regional coordination

### Alleys
- reduce traffic on main roads and increase safety
- allow garages to be located behind the houses; streetscape no longer dominated by the automobile
- utility lines may be buried in alleys, reducing the large front yard utility easement and bringing the home closer to the street
- garbage and recyclables can be placed in the alley, thereby improving the streetscape

## Fishers

- Fishers residents were asked to identify Fishers' most attractive streets. Most were major corridors - Allisonville Road, 116th Street, Hague Road, Lantern Road
- Fishers residents seemed to prefer more pastoral corridors
- Fishers Road Impact Fee program allows for the town some choice in the development of roads around the town

- increases infrastructure costs, both monetary and environmental
- currently, garages are nearly always on the front of the house
- in Fishers, most utilities are already buried in rear yard
- could create problem with trash being kept permanently in alley
Neotraditional Town Planning

**Size, Shape & Configuration.**
- the overall street grid allows flexibility in block size, shape, & configuration; blocks may be added or subtracted from the grid as needed
- have an optimal size of 250 - 600 feet per side
- can be any shape
- within a block a variety of lot depths may be accommodated, allowing for a range of different building types. Blocks should be platted in anticipation of this flexibility. Lots should, however, have a maximum width to control mass.

**Parking Lots.**
- should be located on interior of block, away from edges
- parking lots should be landscaped to form public gardens
- the number of parking spaces should be defined by district instead of building or use; this should be geared towards providing a certain level of service, not simply a number of spaces

**Fishers**
- local developers will need to be convinced that this is flexible
- about the same size as blocks in Fishers are currently
- current subdivisions have identically sized lots
- Fishers loves trees
- would require big changes from current system