SMATER Smart Growth

Abstract
New arrangements offer advantages existing cities can’t offer. Be open, ready for a different idea; imagine you have never seen a conventional city. Identify longer-term challenges and solutions so future generations will be prepared. Retrofitting old cities is necessary, but don’t let that be a trap. Look farther ahead, more than fifteen years. Basic issues remain the same. Flexibility can allow features for all people in any climate anywhere. WHATEVER WE BUILD TODAY on the land will either perpetuate old existing handicaps or offer a new kind of inspiration for a century or longer.

I am proposing an entirely new community concept that offers SOLUTIONS FOR ALL OF YOUR SMART GROWTH PRINCIPLES more effectively than any other existing concept. It can be built today. And it solves most environmental, sustainability and climate challenges not specifically on your list. Basically, it rearranges the best architectural features from the past and adds flexibility. For the FIRST TIME IN HISTORY, we have new technology, climate-challenges and better understanding that make an entirely new kind of city possible, actually urgent. It would be sad to pass up such an opportunity. Prototypes need to be built now. This framework design approach with new technology offers combinations of opportunities not possible at any time before now. It addresses livability, equity, policies, health, choice and finance directly with physical solutions. Solutions responding to and expanding upon your list of Principles (http://www.smartgrowth.org/network.php) follow in the text below.

Mix Land Uses
Main Street is the heart; it stirs the middle of the each residential neighborhood with daily activity; it’s the pathway to everything. All that foot traffic generates vitality, making it ideal for shoppers and shop-owners. This gives a real purpose for each front porch, an interesting place to be all the time. Every Home-Site overlooks Main Street and some may have a family-restaurant or at-home office reached by interesting sloped pathways with countryside views.

Take Advantage of Compact Building Design
This small city is basically 12-story buildings connected together to make a single large compact building offering the ultimate in efficiency for everything. This unique arrangement and combination of uses makes a very special type of “Desirable Density” not possible in any other alternative. Backyards, like on a hillside, look over hundreds of acres of open-space while the front porch is on Main Street with vitality and a sense of community. Its compactness makes at-home health-care and transit practical. Other housing seems outdated. Current existing housing types with 1 to 6 stories and streets are still spread out over too much land. Too many of the homes are not convenient enough to use or financially support a transit stop.

Create a Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices
Flexibility, not possible in other housing types, is the truly unique ingredient. It allows choices as needs and budgets change. On every Home-Site can be a single home (small or big) or a 4-plex with no negative effect on neighbors. People coming and going on the walkways increase the social vitality. Cars are on a different level, not cluttering the neighborhood. Empty nesters can downsize without having to move from their favorite neighborhood friends, then rent extra space
for retirement income. All this freedom of choice allows for a naturally evolving social, economic and generational mix as children grow and families age.

Create Walkable Neighborhoods
Everything is within a short walk. There are different routes. Main Street is the most common walkway through and overseen by each neighborhood. It offers freedom for non-driving seniors and increased safety for children. The path along the ridge-top of the city has great views. Beautiful nature paths cut across the open space, past farming or through wooded areas along side a creek.

Foster Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place
It offers the best of suburban and urban life. It has neighborhoods of 100 or more homes surrounding their section of Main Street with their neighborhood café and plaza. The arrangement and shape of the space automatically creates a visual and functionally convenient neighborhood. Twelve stories allow people to recognize friends on Main Street. The smell of coffee and fresh bread could start the morning. Each neighborhood will create and celebrate its unique character. Imagine an interior the size of a great European cathedral combined with a grand concert hall, but open to the sky enjoyed by people doing things, with trees, vines and flowers on front porches.

Preserve Open Space, Farmland, Natural Beauty and Critical Environmental Areas
Our typical high-rise cities obliterate the natural environment and require too much support from long distances. This new type of urban pocket, a high-density small city with a transit stop distributed next to food-producing farmland will function as a self-sustaining symbiotic unit. At suburban density it leaves at least 80% of the land as open space and farming. It increases the quality of life, overlooking the countryside with urban convenience better than typical 1 to 6 story alternatives. If it’s necessary to house future generations, 100-story towers could rise out of this original family-scale village.

Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities
This concept looks like a tree-covered hillside. It will be a good neighbor anywhere. Woven into deteriorating downtowns, it could rejuvenate old cities, bring back natural open spaces while preserving historic structures as focal points. Offering an attractive life style and justifying a transit stop, it could bring new life next to a struggling rural city. A grand park-like pathway and series of stairways from upper floors could be incorporated at one end of an old historic main street. In certain existing cities handsome historic buildings or sections of streets could retain the old character, partially wrapped around by this new type of city.

Provide a Variety of Transportation Choices
Transportation was the original purpose for this concept. It has enough housing within a ¼ mile walk to financially support a transit stop. A transitional type of transit will be needed until expensive regional rail is available. It needs to be so convenient and desirable no one will be tempted to use their car. If regular pre-scheduled trips from-&-to this stop are adequately supported, the other end of the trip could be a to-the-door stop and pick-up. Its 2 to 15 passenger vehicles will use existing country roads, some improved with added high-speed lanes. Computers will assign vehicles and seats based on demand. Seats will have requested personal items already
in place like your choice of newspaper, office needs, seat configuration, food or coffee. Cars have a place for as long as needed. They are on the lowest level. Garages are reached in seconds from each home by an elevator shared with 12 homes to a foyer opening to your private garage. When cars are no longer needed, garages could be for storage or light industry. Other similar compact cities will be reached by bike paths past farms about a mile or more in distance.

**Make Development Decisions Predictable, Fair and Cost Effective**
Properties will be selected with long-term plans in mind. When this concept is seen and understood, environmentalists, customers and developers will be able to appreciate its advantages. Government authorities will enjoy participating in a project that removes most objections to developments and reduces conflicts.

Prototypes could be conventionally financed, 96 units with commercial uses on the ground floor and housing above. The primary objective would be to demonstrate and physically be able to experience the space. Building 64 units or even 32 units would help in understanding the basic concept. Most importantly this is a very long-term concept. Built as a City the structural framework is designed to last 1000+ years. Long-term it will reduce future housing cost by 70%. With a master plan, it can be built gradually over many decades. Post-tensioned concrete is one logical system. Once the overall system is established, it will make low-cost prefabricated wall and floor systems practical. They will be as easy to add and change as furniture: simply buy parts at Home Depot and add a room over a weekend.

**Encourage Community and Stakeholder Collaboration in Development Decisions**
It will offer new opportunities and arrangements for financing, policies, and (public or private) ownership. Investment in the framework will be better than money in the bank. It is a permanent structure, and it will never go down in usable value. The potential for community collaboration is part of the design. The public or private framework owner can sell the interior space while still getting income for use of the structure and utilities. Equally important, the interior spaces of each Home-Site are flexible enough to meet the changing needs and budgets of the occupants. Ownership gives them an opportunity for improvement, a source for hope. If they improve its value it increases their potential for the future. Neighborhoods will improve with that same sense of shared hope.

The following paragraphs integrate additional points with a review of some features mentioned above.

This new community is designed as an efficient compact building. It is a 3-dimensional 12-story framework; subdivided into 2-story construction sites for any use from a single family, 4-plex, to school or even light industry. Flexibility allows mixed uses and mixed income levels to meet the changing needs of the community and individual families. Home-sites are totally private, buyers are free to build small, add as needs or budgets change. Empty-nesters don’t need to move to downsize, just use less, and rent the rest for retirement income. Every one is within a short walk of everything, all close enough to support a transit stop.

About 100 homes-sites, each with a front porch, overlook their neighborhood space. This physical arrangement automatically creates a visually and functionally connected neighborhood;
it also improves safety. Their plaza and section of the pedestrian Main Street passes through the center of each neighborhood and links many neighborhoods together, even built gradually to make a city. Main Street is an exceptional foot-traffic shopping-route to everything. Each neighborhood space creates a sense of place, free to express its own cultural character, contributing to understanding the whole city as a community.

At the same density as suburbia it leaves 80% of the land as open space. Like on a hillside in the country, every home-site’s backyard overlooks that open space. Home-sites are stair-stepped; backyards are on the roof of the home below. It has the character of a modern Italian hill town, including sloped pathways to every home. Every backyard has trees, leaves for summer shade fall off for winter sun. Trees hide the entire structure. From the surrounding open space this town looks like a tree-covered hillside. It will be a good neighbor next to any existing rural town or in the center of an old city, over many decades, gradually replacing the primitive patterns of city streets with farming. It’s systematic, logical; it’s not as wild as it sounds. It has the best of both worlds: life overlooking the countryside plus urban excitement and convenience. It will be perfect as the platform for 100-story residential towers, if they are needed.

This new community design concept can adapt to be built anywhere in the world. Once built it has the flexibility to re-adapt as necessary for any climate change.

Cities have never been designed primarily for people; streets for horses or vehicles dominate city plans. This new city is designed primarily for people. I could find only one historic city in the world designed primarily just for people. It must have been planned in advance. Many cities found only-for-people were irregularly random, obviously not planned. First, the Anasazi in Southwestern United States built a semi-circular stair-stepped arrangement of rooftop patios and entrances overlooking their plaza. They did not have animals of burden or vehicles. Its patterns of circulation and utility were arranged and intended to specifically meet the needs of people and create a sense of community. That’s the basis for the name of my new community concept: the “Anasazi-Zellmer Paradigm” or the A-Z Paradigm. This name is also appropriate because this concept has the potential to comprehensively address every aspect of a city from A to Z. It will be an incubator for new technology and every city-related endeavor. To discuss all of its features, flexibility and the applications of new technologies others are already developing will take several books to explore. This is an entirely new kind of city. It has the potential to be fully integrated with nature. The habitats of no other life form on earth destroy nature as completely as our traditional cities. I think it offers new opportunities for everyone involved with smart growth.

This concept needs the exposure to input and critique from people attending your conference. I hope to submit images and a video in response to your online request. Thank you this opportunity to share my work.

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