The New Community Paradigm: Pedestrian-oriented community intermodal systems within the environments of urbanized and city centers

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INTRODUCTION:

In The New Community Paradigm, buildings touch from one to the next. The dominant urban form would consist of mixed-use buildings positioned on the perimeter of very narrow parking structures. People live, work, and play in the pedestrian-oriented spaces between these urban forms. Automobiles and their passengers arrive from throughout the region on limited-access highways. Roads run to, but not through, these urbanized centers. Traffic-calmed streets and mixed-mode streets help to provide access to transit and to the structured parking that is dispersed along the fringe of the pedestrian-oriented city and town centers.

Cars within these structures are less visible to the pedestrian. Parking lots do not exist. A relatively small number of parking spaces parallel to the traffic-calmed streets are positioned between wider cross-sections of the sidewalk (bulbouts). People filter through transit access corridors, mixed-use pedestrian-oriented parking structures, and the community intermodal system to many destinations. Within car-free mixed-mode streets, they travel on foot, via bicycles, or by small pedestrian-compatible community transit or trams to regional and inter-regional rail or bus stations adjacent pedestrian-oriented streets, corridors, plazas, and courtyards.

Efficient and comfortable linkages via narrow gauge rail or similar parking shuttle vehicles are provided to aviation and shipping facilities and to other modes of transportation. Multi-purpose underground utility conduit systems provide for all current and future smart building needs. Truck and freight rail deliveries are scheduled to avoid busy pedestrian movements and use shared freight docks for neighborhood loading and unloading. Energy is conserved.

The streets, corridors, and all pedestrian areas are full of color, wonderful aromas, fresh food and every kind of refreshment. Pedestrians are drawn forward based upon what they see, hear, smell, taste, and touch. Stores, restaurants, places of employment, and homes open to the pedestrian-oriented streets, corridors, plazas, and courtyards. These outdoor living rooms are framed by beautiful trees, buildings, fountains, and public art. People dance in the streets and other pedestrian areas; they converse with perfect strangers and enjoy the warming sun, cool breeze, and even the rain. Runoff is filtered, water reused, and waste recycled or composted.

Balconies and windows connect building inhabitants with the people in these very attractive public places. No one architect designs more than fifty feet of the exterior wall length for any single city block. Solar and wind power are integrated within the urban form. Roofs and balconies are full of plants and trees.
Places to sit and watch the parade of daily events are located throughout these urban centers. Some areas are shaded, some are sheltered from rain, and some are located in direct sunlight. Sitting in any weather is relaxing and enjoyable. Pedestrian areas are 30 feet or wider to accommodate very large scale pedestrian movements, bicycles, and small trams; these corridor widths allow pedestrians to adjust their routes to suit changing weather conditions. Building features form continuous structural protection from the rain, wind, heat and cold and provide shortcuts from one destination to the next.

Birds sing, children play, and adults engage in economically and socially rewarding exchanges. The entire population walks more than thought possible; consequently, they remain much healthier and energized. People tend to be happy. Work tends to be accomplished with less effort and greater efficiency. Housing is affordable. Worksites can be found near at hand, or they can be easily reached by multi-modal and redundant regional (or inter-regional) transportation systems. Urban city and town centers are safe and secure from all likely threats due to the specific arrangement of buildings, streets, corridors, openings, and parking structures.

In *The New Community Paradigm*, streets are built of decorative stone and brick. Community gardens dot the landscape. People do not miss the asphalt or road construction. More often they fall in love with each other rather than their cars. Fewer of their friends die in car accidents. Once these urban centers are fully developed, the car is a less enjoyable place to sit when compared to the many public places responding to human needs that frame the city streets and plazas.

In coming decades, it will be effortless to adjust daily activities to take advantage of this sustainable and more productive lifestyle. When urban centers are systemically developed to provide for pedestrian-oriented outdoor spaces that are comfortable, safe, useful, and interesting, continued education and economic growth will be second-nature and ordinary. People will simply enjoy life, love their families and friends, and lead productive lives in a more beautiful and supportive environment. *Who would have thought that improving the life in the city could be so simple?*

Figure 1 depicts the very active and diverse pedestrian-oriented street life in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. As shown, the pedestrians, bicyclists, and trams can comfortably and efficiently share a public corridor. Referenced as a mixed-mode street by John Zacharias (*The Amsterdam Experiment in Mixing Pedestrians, Trams and Bicycles*, ITE Journal/August 1999, pp 22-28), such corridors constitute one of the elements of a community intermodal system (CIS) as developed by Tom Gustafson and others. A CIS can be described as a methodology to improve passenger train and transit access so that multimodal trips will substantially increase. When a CIS is applied to improve a transit oriented development (TOD), a CIS-related TOD should incorporate elements of a state of the practice science park in order to stimulate and sustain economic growth in a competitive world marketplace.