

# City Design And Zoning

David Zokaites

July 8, 2025

# Major Design Issues

- Housing shortage
- Not enough affordable starter homes
- Voters want solutions
- Builders want maximum financial returns
- Homeowners want to protect their investment and neighborhoods
- Hard to get around without a car
- High cost of road infrastructure

# New Urbanism Movement

- Modern city design movement
- Started in 1980's USA
- Seeks to redesign city growth
- Incorporates some ancient design principles
- Expected to be more profitable per acre due to diverse use and higher density

# New Urbanism Goals

- Friendlier, more livable cities
- Encourage health and exercise
- Reduce car reliance
- City squares for mingling & social health
- Pedestrian-friendly design
- Reduce road expenses
- Affordable housing

# Ancient City Design

- Organic, incremental development
- Minimal setbacks
- Most transportation was via walking
- Various land uses mixed together

# 1950's Design

- Big monoculture districts
- Car-centric transportation design
- Whites wanted out of noisy cities
- Big suburban houses on big lots
- Kept poor black people out
- Every adult needs a car
- Drive everywhere

# Problems Of Modern Design

- Dense urban core subsidizes suburban sprawl
- Long commuting time via car
- Isolates people from neighbors
- Never enough highways and fast roads
- Expensive road construction and maintenance
- Housing shortage
- Entire neighborhood declines as one unit

# Some New Urbanism Ideas

- Dramatically reduce parking minimums
- Much less setback, minimal side yard
- Varied lot and house sizes intermixed
- Tiny homes are OK
- Backyard homes are encouraged
- Small apartment buildings can have 1 stairway instead of 2. See <https://coloradosun.com/2025/05/14/single-stair-apartments-bill-signed-colorado/>

# More Ideas

- Incremental densification, varied infill types
- Juxtapose various land uses
- Small apartment buildings next to houses
- People in mobile home parks should own their own land
- Narrower, less costly streets
- Allow more home-based businesses – liberty, prosperity, economic growth

# Still More Ideas

- Pedestrian underpasses and bridges
- Dedicated bike lanes separated by barriers
- Large lighted underground bike roundabouts for major intersections
- Build bike highways near auto highways

# Current Transit Priorities

- Huge road construction and maintenance budgets
- Car and airplane transit are massively subsidized
- Other transit modes are afterthoughts
- Shift focus toward public transit, bikes, pedestrians

# Design For Winter Biking

- Oulu, Finland 60 miles south of Arctic Circle
- 12% of winter journeys are on bike
- 50% of school trips on bike
- Bike routes cleared before roads
- Even little snowfalls are cleared
- Many underpasses, bikeway lights
- See <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20231220-why-oulu-finland-is-the-winter-cycling-capital-of-the-world>

# Implementation

- Change city zoning regulations
- Encourage grid layout for streets in new developments to enable walkability
- Increase density on main streets
- Main streets become more like downtown
- Build conventional housing on residential streets
- Some areas stay conventional neighborhoods

# Acknowledgements

- Some ideas from Jordan Deffenbaugh and Strong Towns Sioux Falls
- Other ideas from Frank Zokaites, developer

# Enjoy City Life

