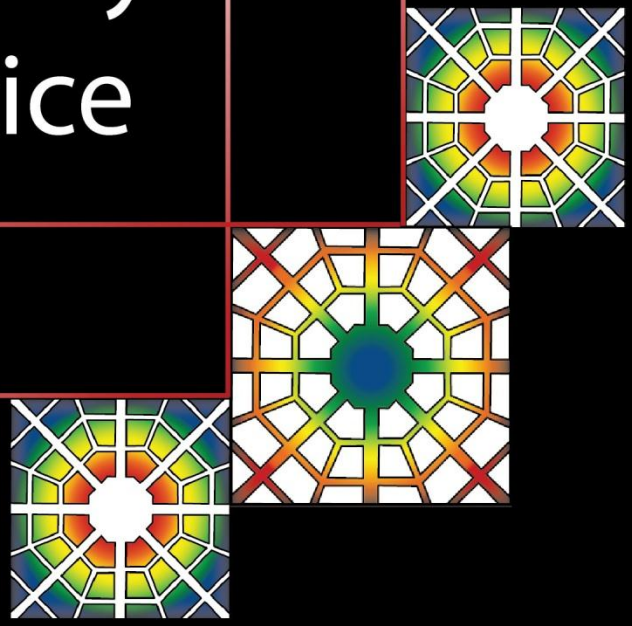
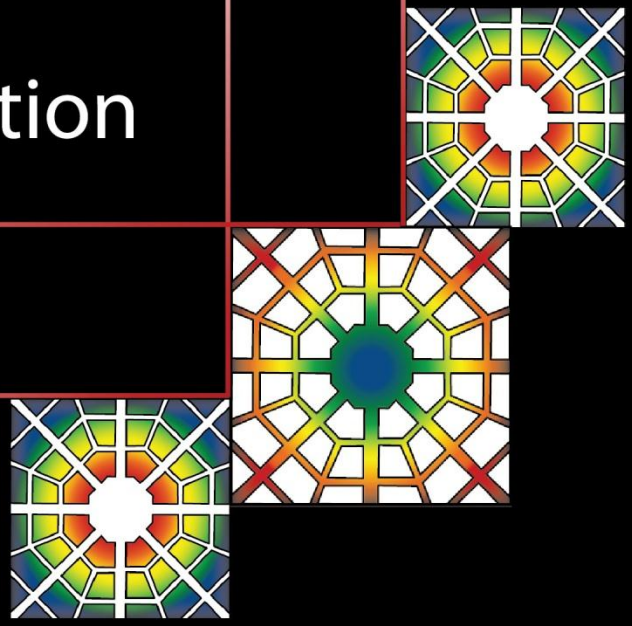
Principles of Community Placemaking in Practice



Steve Grabow

Professor and Community Development Educator
University of Wisconsin-Extension
Jefferson County Office
Co-Leader: Downtown Vitality and Community Placemaking Team

Objectives of the Presentation



Objectives of the Presentation

- Provide background on the need for and evolution of the principles

- Give community development professionals an overview of the 5 functional areas and the 19 principles

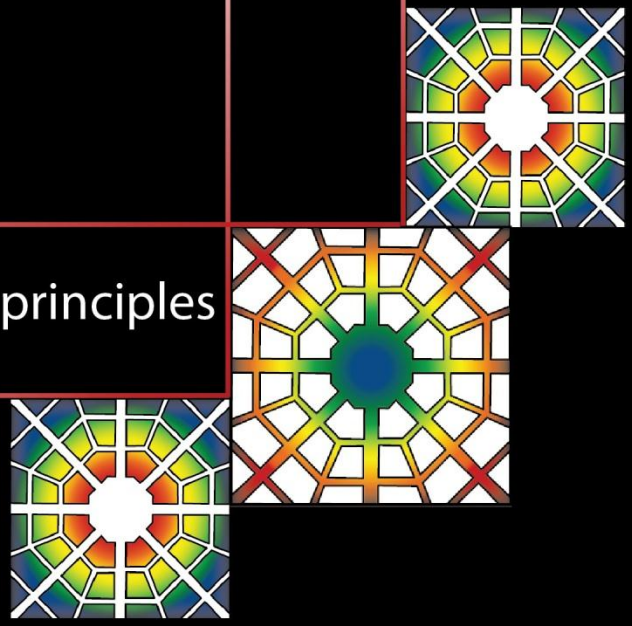
- Illustrate how the principles have been presented in practice

- Give examples of how the principles have been integrated in learning, assessment and visioning/planning applications in Wisconsin

- Help community development professionals understand their role in applying the principles of community placemaking to visioning and planning

Objective 1

Grounding on the need for and evolution of the principles



Objective 1:
Grounding on the need for and evolution of the principles

Situation

• Process Support. The University of Wisconsin-Extension (UWEX) provides extensive educational support in processes associated with comprehensive planning, community planning, community visioning and downtown design.

• Emerging Concepts. Community and downtown design resources are becoming more in demand with concepts of new urbanism, traditional neighborhood design, sustainable development and community placemaking emerging over the past 15 years.

Objective 1:
Grounding on the need for and evolution of the principles

Situation

• Recognized need. There is a need for additional assistance to local officials, designers and aspiring citizen planners so that the accepted principles of quality placemaking or the "characteristics of quality places" can be incorporated into local planning and revitalization efforts.

• Inspiration. Gene Bunnell's book: *Making Places Special: Stories of Real Places Made Better by Planning*---This book identified qualities of special places.

• Research Development. Developed an initial curriculum and educational resources illustrating 19 principles of community placemaking.

• Legitimizers. The principles were further refined by a "Placemaking Imagery Forum" sponsored by the UWEX Downtown Vitality and Community Placemaking Team (DVCP).

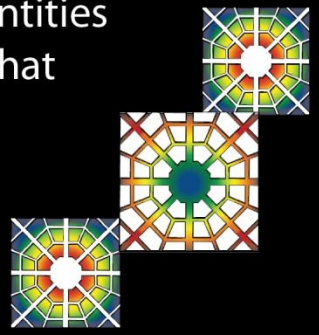
Objective 1:
Grounding on the need for and evolution of the principles

Definitions of and Related to Placemaking

• **Place.** A place is a geographical space that is defined by meanings, sentiments and stories. Places are places (and not just spaces) because they have identity. (Hague, 2005)

• **Place Identity.** Place identity represents the values and meaning we impart on a place based on what others tell us about the place along with our own socialization shaped by age, class, gender, ethnicity, education, etc.. Place identities are formed through milieux of feelings, meanings, experiences, memories and actions that, while ultimately personal, are substantially filtered through socialization. (Hague, 2005)

• **Planning and Placemaking**. We see community planning as being about placemaking; that is to say that a key purpose of planning is to create, reproduce or mould the identities of places through manipulation of the activities, feelings, meanings and fabric that combine into place identity. (Hague, 2005)



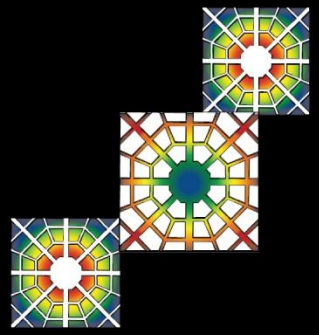
Objective 1:
Grounding on the need for and evolution of the principles

Definitions of and Related to Placemaking, cont...

• **Placemaking and Public Places.** Creating a vision around the places that citizens view as important to community life and their daily experience based on community needs and aspirations. (Project for Public Spaces Website.)

• **Definitions of Placemaking.** The process of adding value and meaning to the public realm through community-based revitalization projects rooted in local values, history, culture and natural environment. (Zelinka and Harden, 2005)

Relates to planning endeavors focused on spatial development, urban design and cityform, public realm, streetscapes and related infrastructure, and the general imaging and re-imaging of places. (Szold, 2000)



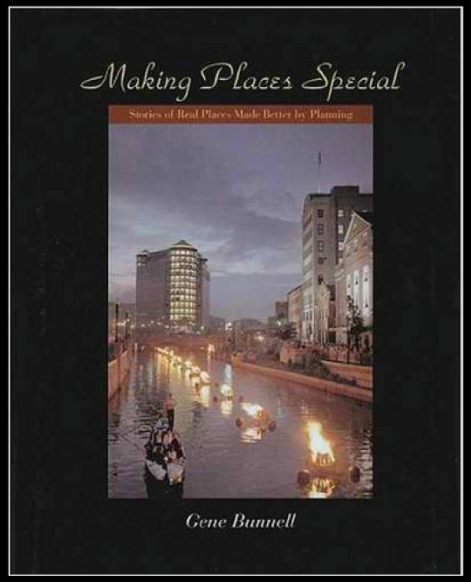
Objective 1:
Grounding on the need for and evolution of the principles

Research and Curriculum Development

• Individual need for this in Jefferson County, Wisconsin. Started work 8 years ago

• Moved from process of planning to content of what are quality places, ie. features of quality places

• Used Gene Bunnell's book and his research to identify the 19 principles. Started assembling graphic imagery to illustrate the principles (people needed to "see" the principle in the real world)



Objective 1:
Grounding on the need for and evolution of the principles

Research and Curriculum Development, cont...

• Became a part of the Downtown Vitality and Community Placemaking (DVCP) Team with a University of Wisconsin-Madison Landscape Architecture professor

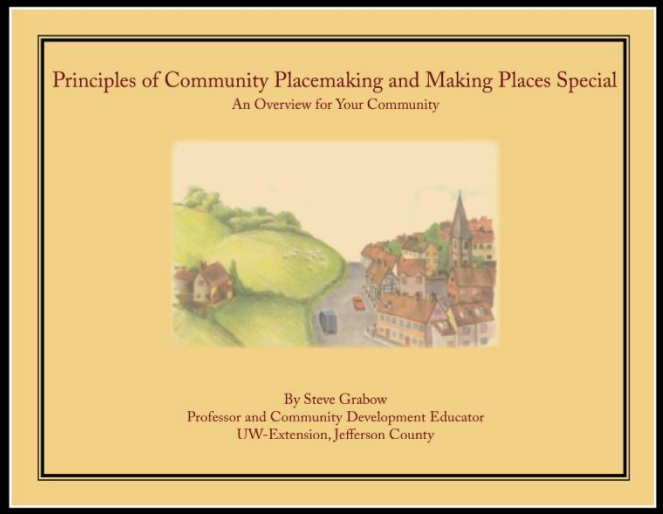
•Successfully held a "graphics image forum" with finest designers in Wisconsin

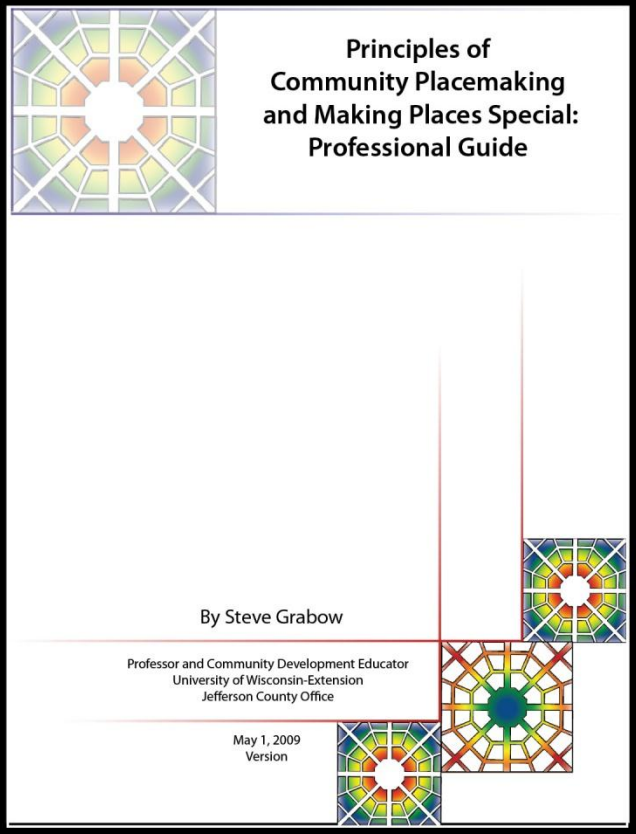
• Used trusted "consultants" to help assemble pool of images (600+) organized by principle

Objective 1:
Grounding on the need for and evolution of the principles

Current Product Line in Curriculum

- Four powerpoint presentations (from short summary to fully detailed)
- Professional Guide
- Image Library (600+ images organized by principle)





Objective 1:
Grounding on the need for and evolution of the principles

Professional Development on the "Principles" in Wisconsin

- Held a 2 day inservice (see agenda)
- Neighborhood walking tour night before

• Learning Objectives:

- learn the 19 principles of community placemaking
- understand the rationale behind each principle
- understand the visual representation
- understand community form
- understand the application of principles
- learn a method of community visioning

- Evaluations from the 15 UW-EX participants were positive

The Downtown Vitality and Community Placemaking Team is pleased to announce

Principles of Community Placemaking

Thursday, May 6th, 2010
Optional walking tour May 5th, 2010
Madison Concourse Hotel, Madison, WI

Join fellow CNRED colleagues as UW-Extension faculty Steve Grabow and Sue Thering lead a program on the principles that contribute to quality places. Hands on afternoon workshops will give you tools for facilitating workshops back in your communities. This program is based on four years of research based curriculum development sponsored by the Downtown Vitality and Community Placemaking Team.

Learning Objectives include: learn the 19 principles of community placemaking; understand the rationale behind each principle and why it is important to place; understand the visual representation of each principle and to be aware of good examples of quality places; understand the association of the principles of/to community form (planview perspective); understand the application of principles in a community planning setting; learn a method of community visioning and to understand the professionals' role in applying principles of placemaking to visioning and planning.

Wednesday Evening, May 5th, 2010

Optional Pre-Training Event
Atwood Neighborhood Walking Tour

Join Lou Host-Jablonski, award winning architect and principal at Design Coalition, Inc., as he tours us through the Atwood Neighborhood for a "community development reconnaissance".

The walking tour will feature characteristics of walkable neighborhoods, mixed use development, adaptive reuse and vital public domain places.

Dinner will be on your own at one of the many local Atwood neighborhood restaurants.

We will be providing additional information to you regarding transportation and designated meeting places. Expect a gathering time around 5:00 p.m. Arrangements for a shuttle are being planned.

Thursday, May 6th, 2010

8:30-8:45 a.m. – Registration at Concourse Hotel
8:45-9:00 a.m. - Welcome and overview

Context- Learning the Principles
9:00-10:15 – First Session including dialogue
10:15-10:30 – Break
10:30-11:50 – Second Session including dialogue
11:50-Noon – Reflection on the principles
Noon-1:00 - Lunch Break

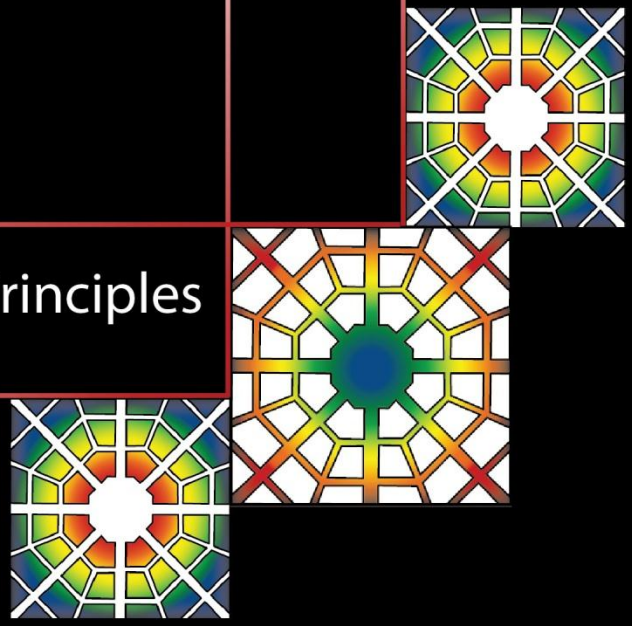
Experiential Learning-Applying the Principles
1:00- 2:20 - Workshop Segment A:
Designing an ideal community
2:20-2:30 - Break
2:30- 3:30 - Workshop Segment B:
Designing a sub area of a community

Applications of Placemaking Principles in your Practice and Wrap-up
3:30- 4:00 - Interactive session

Remember to RSVP by **April 6th, 2010!**

Objective 2

Overview: The 5 Functional Areas and the 19 Principles



Objective 2 Overview:
The 5 Functional Areas and the 19 Principles

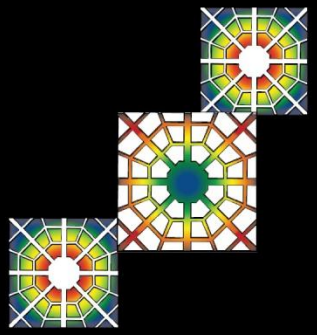
Functional Area I: Effective and Functional Physical Configuration
Principles 1-7

Functional Area II: User-Friendly and Efficient Circulation
Principles 8-9

Functional Area III: Preserved Natural and Cultural Resources and Environment
Principles 10-12

Functional Area IV: Enhanced Local Identity and Sense of Place
Principles 13-14

Functional Area V: Attributes to Instinctively Draw Us to Places
Principles 15-19: Connectivity, Drama and Dignity, Variety and Whimsy, Reflection of Local Values and Sociable Settings



Functional Area I: Physical Configuration

Principle 1

Compact development that doesn't sprawl, enabling urban and rural areas to be clearly differentiated from one another.

A clear strong edge defining city from rural shows Portland, Oregon's growth boundary

Principle 2

Urban places with a strong center, where multiple uses and activities are clustered in fairly close proximity (strong village and city centers).

Main Street in Downtown Watertown

Functional Area I: Physical Configuration

Principle 3

City-centered redevelopment and infill

Downtown Minocqua, Wisconsin's redeveloped Gaslight Square shopping mall

Principle 4

Integration of housing and employment centers and shopping areas, so that communities contain places to live, work and shop, and contain a full range of facilities.

Middleton Hills, Wisconsin incorporates employment and shopping with residential development nearby

Functional Area I: Physical Configuration

Principle 5

Vital, distinctive and varied neighborhoods in close proximity to the urban center.

Sherman Park neighborhood, Milwaukee, boasts unique craftsman style homes

Principle 6

Avoidance of low-density residential development on the urban fringe.

Conceptual plans for the edge of Jefferson, WI with higher density residential

Principle 7

A mixture of housing types that meets the needs of a variety of households with different income levels.

Co-housing at Pacifico in Carrboro, NC

Functional Area II: Circulation

Principle 8

Pedestrian and bicycle friendly environments (pattern of development that supports and encourages sidewalk pedestrian activity and bicycle path travel).

Glacial River Trail in Fort Atkinson allows pedestrians and bicyclists to explore the city

Principle 9

High quality and convenient public transit coordinated with land use and development, and concentrated development along transit corridors and proximity to transit stops.

Milwaukee's Intermodal Station connects travelers through bus and train transportation

Functional Area III: Environment and Culture

Principle 10

Environmental resources, natural amenities, scenic qualities, parks, recreation and open space that are preserved and are consciously integrated into the fabric of the community.

The city of Horicon, WI is the gateway to the Horicon Marsh

Principle 11

Preserved farmland and related open space, wildlife habitats and environmental corridors.

Preserved farm within the rolling countryside of western Lake Mills, WI

Principle 12

Historic and cultural resources consciously preserved and integrated into contemporary settings.

Milwaukee's historic Third Ward preserves a rich history of warehouse buildings

Functional Area IV: Sense of Place

Principle 13

Strong local character, community identity and a sense of place.

The Julia Belle Swain riverboat calls La Crosse home while conveying the Grand River lifestyle

Principle 14

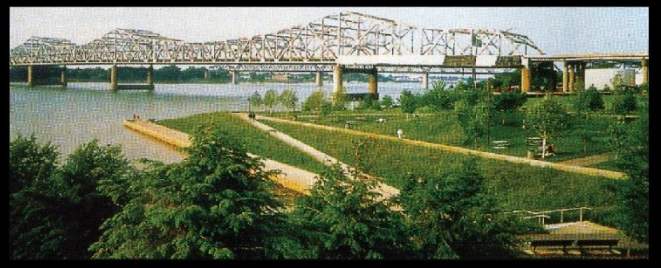
Well designed public buildings and public spaces that strengthen community sense of place, often reinforced and enlivened by works of art and sculpture.

Fort Atkinson Municipal Building with bronze sculptures adorning the entrance

Functional Area V: Attributes that Draw Us

Principle 15

Connectivity: Vehicular, pedestrian and transit connectivity and ease of movement from one part of the community to another.



This scene from La Crosse shows multiple connection routes for pedestrian and other modes of transportation

Principle 16

Drama and Dignity: Landmarks and building façades providing evidence that it is a real place, not just superficial.

Dramatic view of the Wisconsin State Capitol from the Monona Terrace

Principle 17

Variety and Whimsy: As expressed in architectural forms and design details.

The Pineapple Fountain reflects the friendly hospitality of the people of Charleston, SC

Functional Area V: Attributes that Draw Us

Principle 18

Reflection of Local Values: Appropriate architectural styles, materials and vegetation.

Covered bridge south of Fort Atkinson, WI, was built using boards from a nearby obsolete barn

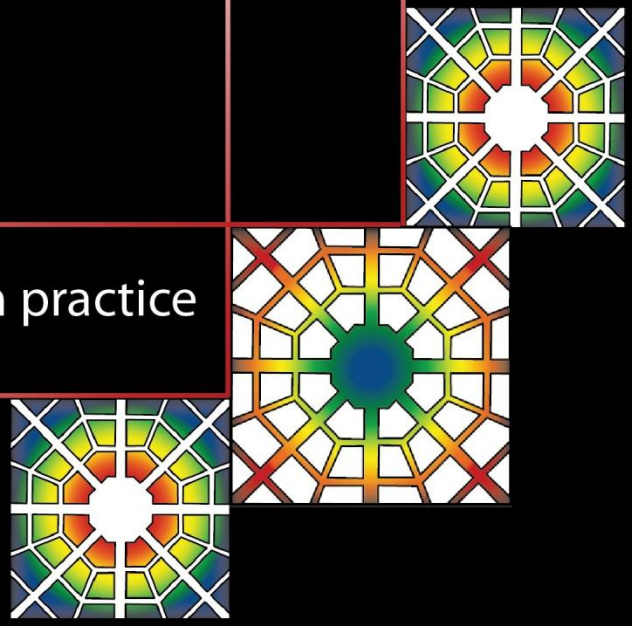
Principle 19

Sociable Settings: Many choices and many things to do, not just consumerism and shopping, not just a workplace or a bedroom community.

Milwaukee's riverfront connects restaurants, shops, festivals and the downtown

Objective 3

How the principles have been presented in practice



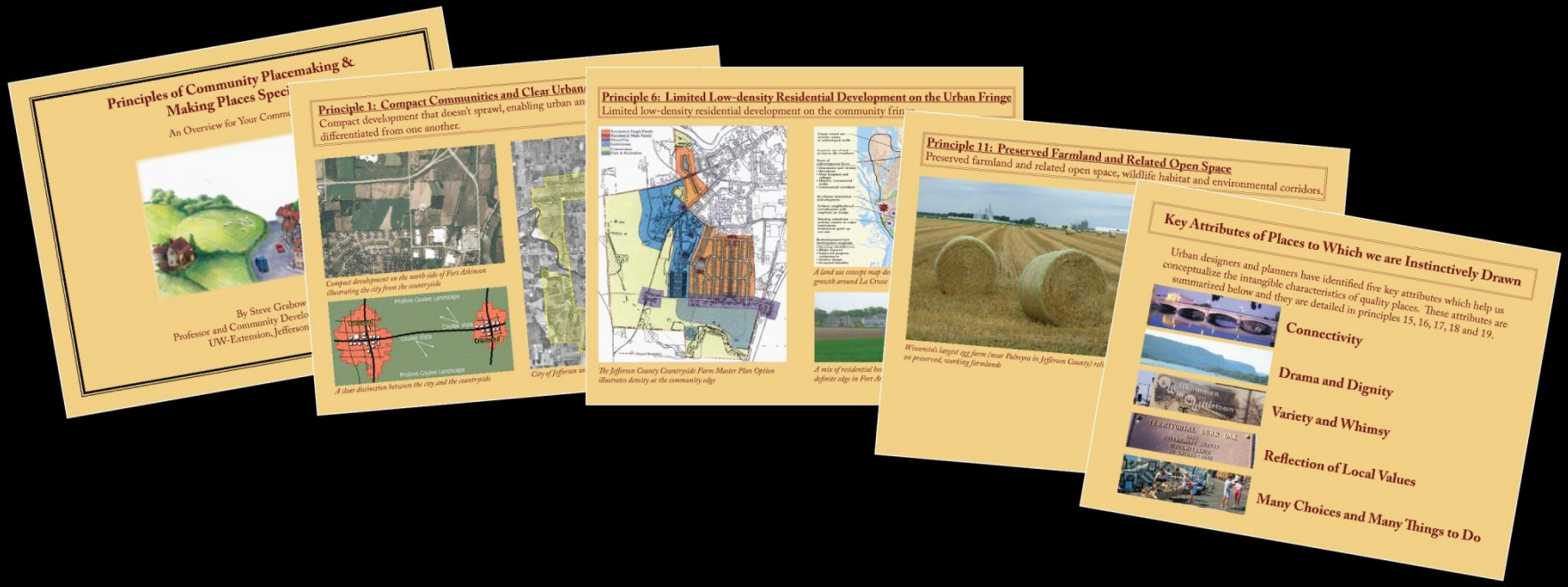
Objective 3:
How the principles have been presented in practice

Use of Resources

•Four powerpoints have been developed from short and simple---to more detailed and extensive examples

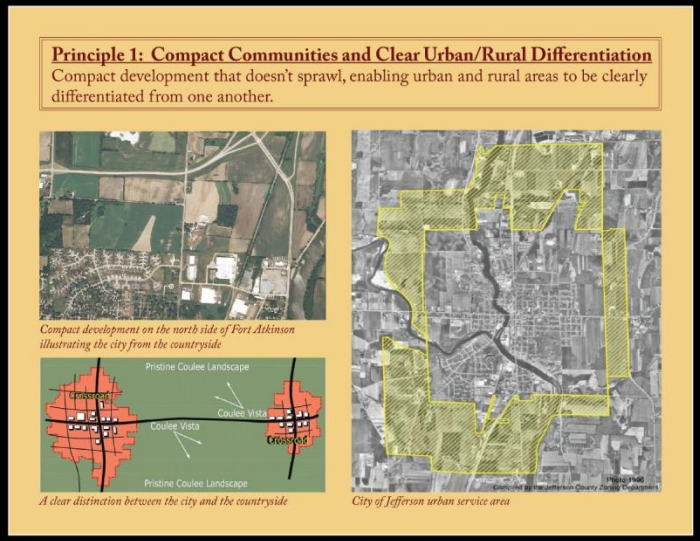
• Varying amount of detail in presentations

• Different clients= different needs for detail

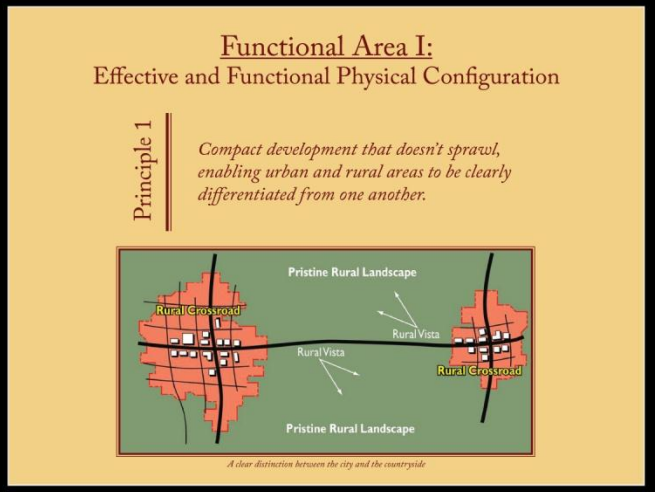


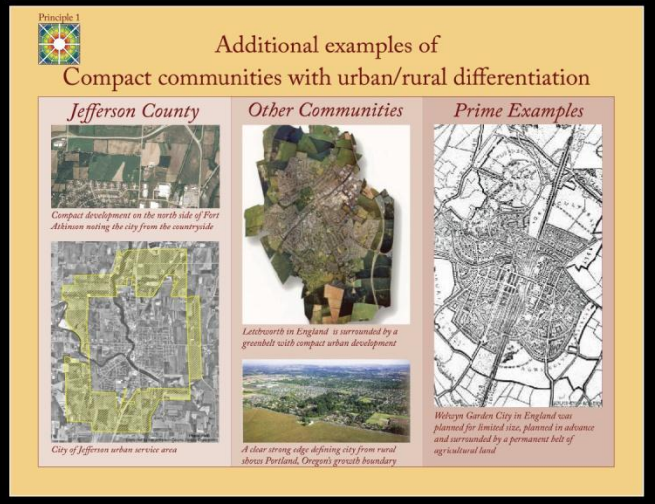
Objective 3:
How the principles have been presented in practice
Principle 1 in Powerpoint versions 1 and 2

Version 1: Brief presentation (1 slide per principle)



Version 2: Extended examples (2 slides per principle)



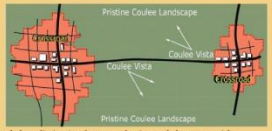


Objective 3:
How the principles have been presented in practice
Principle 1 in Powerpoint versions 3 and 4

Version 3: Hybrid

Principle 1: Compact Communities and Clear Urban/Rural Differentiation
Compact development that doesn't sprawl, enabling urban and rural areas to be clearly differentiated from one another.

Compact development on the north side of Fort Atkinson illustrating the city from the countryside



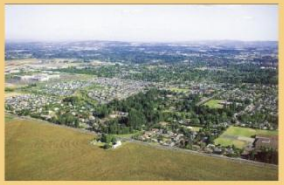
A clear distinction between the city and the countryside

City of Jefferson urban service area

Principle 1

Additional Examples of Compact Communities and Clear Urban/Rural Differentiation

Letchworth in England is surrounded by a greenbelt with compact urban development



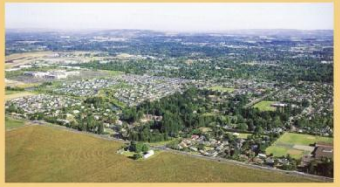
A clear strong edge defining city from rural shows Portland, Oregons growth boundary

Version 4: Customized by client

Functional Area I: Effective and Functional Physical Configuration

Principle 1

Compact development that doesn't sprawl, enabling urban and rural areas to be clearly differentiated from one another.



A clear strong edge defining city from rural shows Portland, Oregon's growth boundary

Principle 2

Urban places with a strong center, where multiple uses and activities are clustered in fairly close proximity (strong village and city centers).

Main Street in Downtown Watertown

Functional Area I: Effective and Functional Physical Configuration

(Insert your own images selected by your community participants for principles 1 and 2)

Principle 1

Principle 2

Objective 3:
How the principles have been presented in practice
Professional guide as a resource and presentation prompt

Functional Area I: Effective and Functional Physical Configuration

Principle 3: City-centered Redevelopment and Infill

City-centered redevelopment and infill.

Value and Importance
Infill development within existing urban areas conserves environmental resources, economic interests and the social fabric. (Urban Design Associates, 2003)

Infill reclaims marginal and abandoned areas. (Urban Design Associates, 2003)

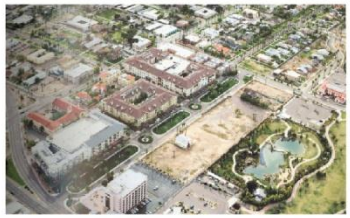
Community Preference
Urban villages and town centers are beginning to appear on urban infill sites and in redevelopment areas including brownfield sites often to serve a nearby workforce or residences. (Bohl, 2002)

The redevelopment of shopping centers and strip commercial areas into main streets, town centers and urban villages has become increasingly common.

Reuse
A livable city needs diversity in design and building types- thus the importance of preservation and reuse not only of notable historic buildings, but of ordinary serviceable buildings. (Barnett, 2003)

Infill riverfront condominiums in Fort Atkinson, WI

Downtown façade renovation in Pewaukee, WI



Once vacant blocks, this area of Downtown Phoenix, AZ now thrives with apartments and parks

Functional Area I: Effective and Functional Physical Configuration

Principle 4: Integration of Housing and Employment

Integration of housing, employment centers and shopping areas, so that communities contain places to live, work and shop, and contain a full range of facilities.

Value and Importance
Design for the human- the community must be a place for people to live, work, play and interact. (Nelessen, 1994)

Town center and main street projects are promoted as "live, work, play" settings that offer relief from the totally automobile-dependent lifestyles of "soccer moms", business commuters and others who feel trapped by suburban sprawl. (Bohl, 2002)

Development should be planned for a job/housing balance, not as bedroom suburbs. (Urban Design Associates, 2003)

Community Preference
Survey research indicates the need for more diverse residential, retail, hotel and office formats. (Bohl, 2002)

Mixed use environments offer an appealing alternative for "the new economy worker" tired of the isolation in office and technology parks. (Bohl, 2002)

Trends
Urban villages are "a blend of old-fashioned neighborhood living and 21st century technology and convenience." (Bohl, 2002)

Home-based businesses are one of the fastest growing segments of commerce and this is fueling and interest in live/work buildings. (Bohl, 2002)

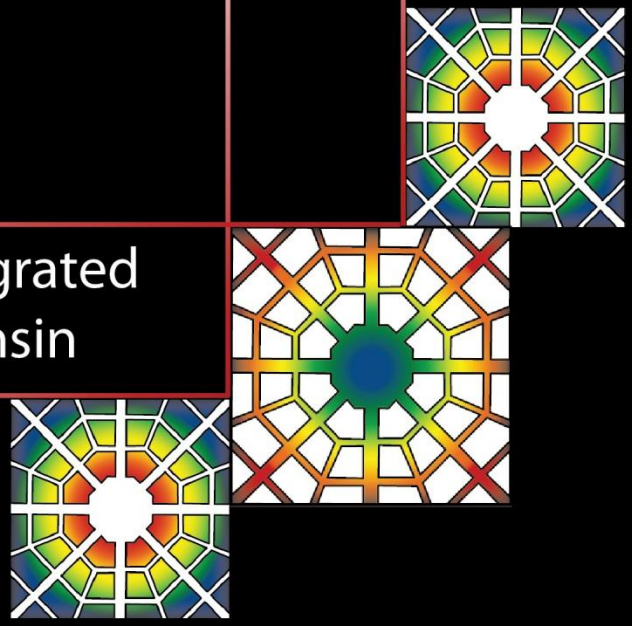
Main Street in Jefferson, WI offers shops and businesses with residential upstairs

This multi-use development in Madison, WI houses offices, retail and upper living quarters

Middleton Hills, WI incorporates employment and shopping in the center with residential nearby

Objective 4

How the principles have been integrated and applied to process in Wisconsin



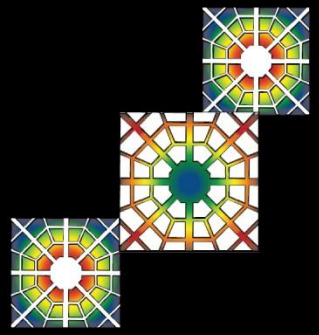
Objective 4: How the principles have been integrated and applied to process in Wisconsin

Context on Integrating Processes

• **Change Processes.** The University of Wisconsin-Extension has been a leader in developing guidebooks and assistance in developing sound protocol for community development, planning and "change" processes (Grabow, Hilliker, Moskal, 2006).

• **Blending Purpose Based Action.** These guidelines suggest the importance of designing processes that integrate community research, community learning, community visioning and comprehensive planning processes (Grabow, October 2004).

• **Integrating Content and Process.** Considerable effort is now being given to the importance of integrating the necessary education about principles of placemaking with sound planning processes.



Objective 4: How the principles have been integrated and applied to process in Wisconsin

•**Jefferson County Processes.** This presentation has been given many times in Jefferson County.

•Given to downtown organizations to launch planning efforts and to inform community groups and planning commissions about to begin a planning or visioning initiative.

•Given to community groups to "inform and inspire the vision" with a high standard of what a community or place could be.

•Adapted as a "worksheet and prompt sheet" for a community tour.

•Used as a tool to help assess the quality of "community visioning work".

Objective 4: How the principles have been integrated and applied to process in Wisconsin

Jefferson County Applications

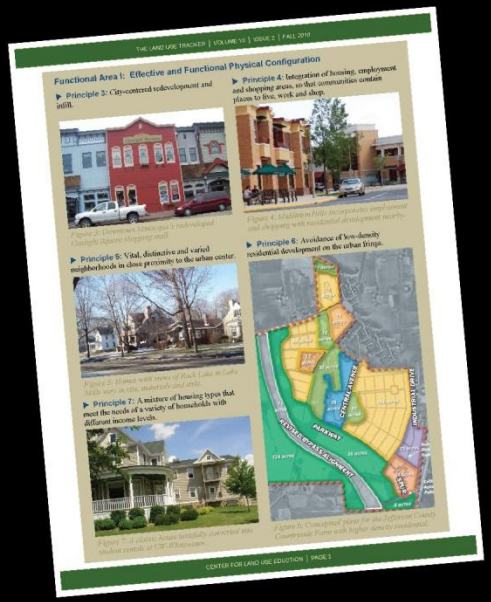
These resources have been widely used and distributed in Jefferson County and with UWEX colleagues.

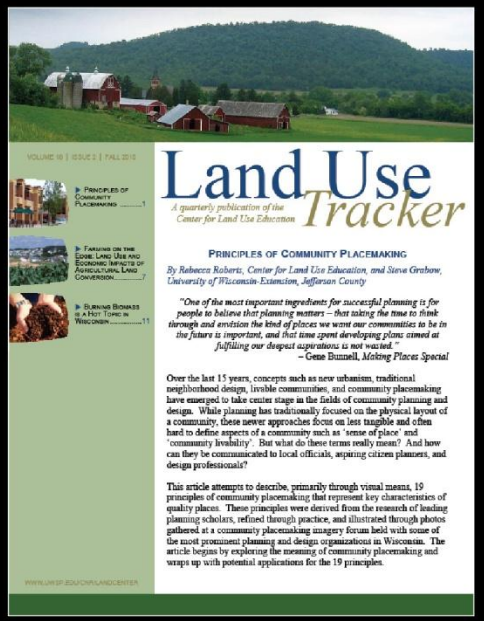
- Downtown/Main Street Groups-2
- Towns-5
- Villages-1
- Cities-5
- County-1
- UWEX Colleagues-3

Objective 4: How the principles have been integrated and applied to process in Wisconsin

Applications outside of Jefferson County since the inservice

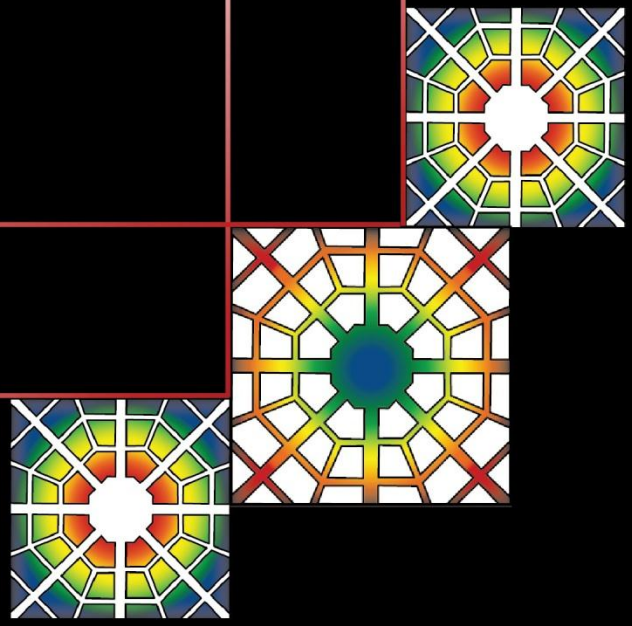
- Used to assist neighborhood planning
- Used in downtown and economic development newsletters
- Land Use Tracker Newsletter- circulation of 1,000 professionals





Objective 5

Role of the Professional



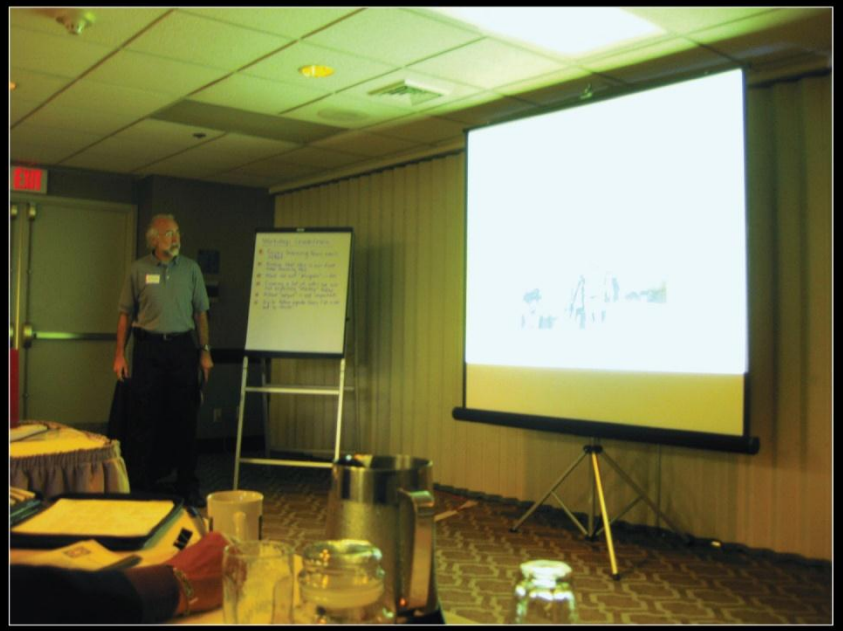
Objective 5: Role of the Professional

•Educator as a presenter of content
-Prior to various follow up activities

•Educator of content/resource
-Newsletters (Land Use Tracker)

•Facilitator of visioning/planning
-Prompt for follow up processes

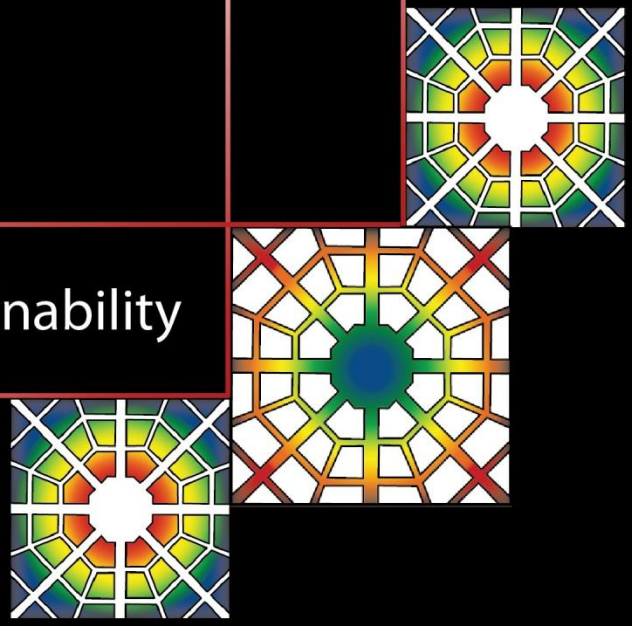
•Researcher/assessment leader



•Capacity Builder
-Develop knowledge base and skills of aspiring citizen planners

Wrap Up Thoughts

Context, Caveats and Linkage to Sustainability



Wrap up thoughts: Context, Caveats and Linkage to Sustainability

• **Additional Notions.** The Professional Guide concludes with some additional context, caveats or cautionary notes about these placemaking principles, and a discussion about these principles relative to notions of sustainability.

• **The Big Idea About Sustainable and Liveable Places.** An argument can be made that the ultimate outcome or long-term vision for a high quality of life in the future is both sustainable and livable places; sustainable and livable places should reflect a balance among environmental, economic, equity and livability values. (Godschalk, 2004)

• **Common Criteria- Sustainability and Placemaking Principles.** There is extensive overlap between the desirable characteristics or criteria for sustainable cities (i.e. sustainable community design) and the principles of community placemaking offered in this document. (Carmona, 2001, adapted by Grabow)

• **The Aspiring Citizen Planner.** The University of Wisconsin-Extension is directing considerable efforts toward "gearing-up" aspiring citizen planners along with the professional design and development community to make places special.

Bibliography and References

Barnett, Jonathan. *Redesigning Cities: Principles, Practice and Implementation.* American Planning Association Planners Press, 2003.

Barnett, Jonathan, "Smart Growth in a Changing World". *Planning: The Magazine of the American Planning Association,* March 2007: 29.

Beatley, Timothy. *Green Urbanism: Learning from European Communities*. Washington D.C.: Island Press, 2000.

Bohl, Charles C. *Placemaking: Developing Town Centers, Main Streets, and Urban Villages.* Washington D.C.: ULI-Urban Land Institute, 2002.

Bunnell, Gene. *Making Places Special: Stories of Real Places Made Better by Planning.* Chicago: American Planning Association Planners Press, 2002.

Carmona, Matthew. "Sustainable Urban Design". In Layard, Antonia; Davoudi, Simin and Batty, Susan (Editors). *Planning for a Sustainable Future*. London, Spon Press, 2001.

Costa, Fernando. "Comment: An Ambitious Movement and its Prospects for Success." *JAPA, Journal of the American Planning Association*, Autumn, 2005: 378-380.

Davoudi, Simin and Layard, Antionia. "Sustainable Development and Planning: An Overview." In Layard, Antonia; Davoudi, Simin and Batty, Susan (Editors). *Planning for a Sustainable Future*. London: Spon Press, 2001

Downs, Anthony. "Smart Growth: Why We Discuss It More Than We Do It". *JAPA, Journal of the American Planning Association*, Autumn, 2005: 367-378.

Ewell, Maryo Gard; Warlum, Michael F. *The Arts in the Small Community*. Washington D.C.: Americans for the Arts, 2006.

Ford, Larry R. *America's New Downtowns: Revitalization or Reinvention?* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003.

Garvin, Alexander; Berens, Gayle. *Urban Parks and Open Space*. Washington D.C.: ULI-Urban Land Institute, 1997.

Girling, Cynthia L.; Helphand, Kenneth I. *Yard, Street, Park.* New York: John Wiley & Sons

Bibliography and References

Godschalk, David R. "Land Use Planning Challenges: Coping with Conflicts in Visions of Sustainable Development and Livable Communities. *JAPA, Journal of the American Planning Association*, Winter, 2004: 5-14

Grabow, Steven H. "Principles of Community Placemaking and Making Places Special: Professional Guide", 2009. http://jefferson.uwex.edu/files/2010/09/Professional_Guide_5_8_09_000.pdf

Grabow, Steven H. "Overview of Plans for the Jefferson County Countryside Farm: In the Context of Quality Place Characteristics", 2004. http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cty/jefferson/cnred/cnred.html

Grabow, Steven H. "Exploring the Visioning Process", Governor's Conference on Downtown Revitalization, October 5, 2004. http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cty/jefferson/cnred/cnred.html

Grabow, Steven H.; Hilliker, Mark; and Moskal, Joseph. *Comprehensive Planning and Citizen Participation*. University of Wisconsin-Extension (G3810). Madison: Board of Regents of the University of the University of Wisconsin, 2006.

Grabow, Steven H.; Thering, Susan; Wilson, Daniel. "Placemaking Imagery Forum". Downtown Vitality and Community Placemaking Team of the University of Wisconsin-Extension, February 1, 2006.

Hague, Cliff. "Identity, Sustainability and Settlement Patterns". In Hague, Cliff and Jenkins, Paul (Editors). *Place Identity, Participation and Planning*. London: Routledge, 2005.

Hall, Peter. *Cities of Tomorrow.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000.

Lewis, Jr., Philip H. *Tomorrow By Design: A Regional Design Process for Sustainablity.* New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1996.

Nelessen, Anton Clarence. *Visions for a New American Dream.* Chicago: American Planning Association Planners Press, 1994.

Project for Public Spaces. "Placemaking for Communities". http://www.pps.org

Rees, William. "Scale, Complexity and the Conundrum of Sustainability". In Kenny, Michael and Meadowcraft, James., Editors. *Planning Sustainability.* London: Routledge, 1999.

Bibliography and References

Sucher, David. *City Comforts: How to Build an Urban Village.* Seattle: City Comforts Press, 1995.

Smith, Kennedy; Joncas, Kate; Parish, Bill. *Revitalizing Downtowns: The Professional's Guide to the Main Street Approach.* Washington D.C.: National Main Street Center, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1996.

Szold, Terry S. "Merging Place-Making and Process in Local Practice". In Rodwin, Lloyd; Sanyal, Bishwapriya. *The Profession of City Planning*. New Brunswick: Center for Urban Policy Research, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 2000.

Tibbalds, Francis. *Making People-Friendly Towns.* London: Spon Press, 1992.

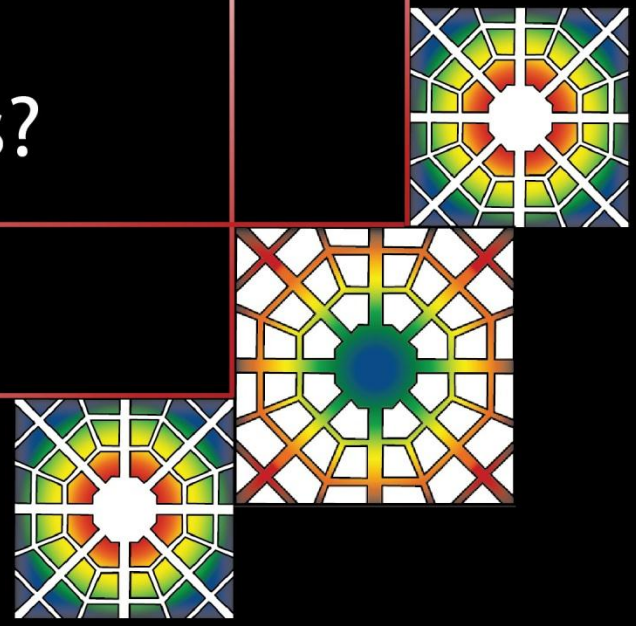
Urban Design Associates; Ray Gindroz, Principal Author. *Urban Design Handbook.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2003.

Zelinka, Al; Harden, Susan Jackson. *Placemaking on a Budget: Improving Small Towns, Neighborhoods, and Downtowns Without Spending a Lot of Money*. American Planning Association, Planning Advisory Service Report Number 536, 2005.

Steve Grabow

Professor, Community Development Educator
University of Wisconsin-Extension
Jefferson County Office
864 Collins Road, Jefferson, WI 53549

Email: steve.grabow@ces.uwex.edu
Phone: (920) 674-7295
Website: www.uwex.edu/ces/cty/jefferson

Becky Mehringer, DVCP Project Assistant

Questions & Reflections?