

Natural Urbanism

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Vision/Goals

- To design an equitable city where people of all income levels can live together
- To allow anyone to choose how they get around, whether by reliable public transit or by personal automobile
- To incorporate nature and community into the streetscape through the use of public parks and recreation spaces
- To develop a community that all residents are proud to live in through a strong “sense of place”
- To preserve the environment through making sure all daily needs are met within 15 minutes on foot or by bike



Crucial Concepts

Superblocks:

The concept of superblocks (where all but local traffic is banned in an area) has been used in cities like Barcelona to provide dense residential and commercial areas while keeping car traffic to a minimum and prioritizing pedestrians.

The “third place”:

Public parks along with community centered commercial spaces like cafes and pubs will be prioritized to help bring people closer together and serve as an oasis between life at home and at work.



Crucial Concepts



Variety of housing options:

Within each neighborhood, there will be a multitude of housing options. Large families will be able to live in single family homes, while a mix of duplex/triplexes, rowhomes, and some high rise apartment buildings will provide dense housing for others.

Transit Prioritization:

Concepts like signal priority for buses and trams along with clock face scheduling will make it easy for anyone to get around the city without the use of a car, regardless of their familiarity with transit. Walking, biking, and taking transit will be sufficient for all everyday activities.

Design Ideas



Differentiators

Much of the urban development that has taken place since the dawn of the automobile has failed to address the needs of individual people. All too often, especially in North America, cities are designed simply as ways to house more people and more jobs. While this is the basic outline of what a city should do, it is not best practice to continue careless development in this fashion. Instead, cities (like my ideal city) should strive to identify the needs of individual people more than just those of the city as a whole.



Differentiators

First off, a city planned using this ideal method would develop a tighter knit community between people, a severely lacking aspect of many North American cities today. The concept of a “third place” is the idea that people need more places to be happy than just home and work/school. In my ideal city, mixed use developments would make way for ground floor cafes, gyms, and shopping to be used as a “third place” to foster bonds with friends and family.

Additionally, humans naturally crave connection with nature. Many of the “concrete jungles” of today do not provide this to people. In my ideal city, public parks and streets featuring trees and greenery would be made a priority, in order to keep the population happy and comfortable.



Differentiators

Another pillar of my ideal city is the identification of public transit as a key necessity. In modern North America, this service is far too often thought of as “dirty” or “for the poor”. In a perfect city, an interconnected network of buses, trains, trams, and other modes would be even easier than driving for most people and most needs within the city center. This would allow people to go without owning a car, improving environmental impact and eliminating one of many Americans’ largest expenses.

Fewer cars and more sound-blocking trees would transform the current visualization of city life for many, turning the city from a grimy and loud place to a bustling but comfortable one.



Differentiators



Modern cities in North America also fail to identify the need for multiple dense housing types. Many people do not want to live in high rise apartments, but this is not an excuse to simply resort to sprawling single family neighborhoods. Instead, my ideal city would make it a priority to give people a choice on where they want to live. Single family homes and apartments would remain, but row homes, duplexes/triplexes, and bungalow courts would also be made available.

With more housing options more equitably dispersed, neighborhoods would be able to not only house more people, but also people of different income levels, all in more comfort than cities of today.