Character Towns: Positioning Small Cities and Towns for the New Economy

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- We educate, advocate and negotiate to protect Florida’s high quality of life.
- Our bipartisan board of directors includes advocates and experts from across the state.
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- Timely Florida-specific updates on critical issues facing Florida’s communities
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Presenters
Bill Kercher, AICP, LEED® AP

- Nearly 50 years as an urban and regional planner in Florida
- First as a public planner for county, regional and federal agencies
- Followed by thirty-five years with Glatting Jackson Kercher Anglin, Inc., as a community planning consultant for private developers, institutions and public agencies.
- Since 2011 has focused exclusively on the issues and opportunities offered by small cities and towns through his planning practice, wkckplanning and his website, www.CharacterTowns.org.
Character Towns: Positioning Small Cities and Towns for the New Economy

Bob Kercher, AICP, LEED® AP
Positioning Small Cities and Towns for the New Economy
FRAME #1: THOUGHT PROCESS

Vision

Action

Strategy
Friendly and inviting; civil and sociable.

A society:
• proud of its hometown,
• protective of its heritage,
• committed to its wellbeing.

An interesting, pleasant and prosperous place for visitors, residents and businesses.
STRATEGY: CIVIC ENTREPRENEURISM

Leverage Everything
ACTION: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Actions to Position for the New Economy

- Create an Attractive Place to Live
- Build an Entrepreneurial Environment
- Partner and Collaborate
FRAME #2: FOUNDATION

FIVE BIG IDEAS
SUSTAINABLE URBANISM

Equity Mechanism
(balance & collaboration)

Physical

Social

Economic

People
- Health
- Safety
- Education
- Associations of People
- Families
- Businesses
- Governments
- NGO’s

Economic Development
- Jobs
- Family Incomes
- City Finances
- Taxes
- Fees

Global
- Air
- Water
- Land

Local
- Urban
  - Built
  - Natural
- Rural
SUSTAINABLE URBANISM

Equity Mechanism (balance & collaboration)

- Physical Development Plan
- Economic and Finance Plan
- Social Infrastructure Plan
SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN
Social Infrastructure Plan: TOOLS

- Enactment of Programs
- Use of Partnerships
- Promote and Support Community Organizations
- Leverage Physical Facilities and Economic Base
- Community Pride Built on Authenticity
Physical Development Plan: ELEMENTS

- Great **Neighborhoods**
- Vibrant **Downtowns** and
- Productive **Corridors**
- Superior **Schools**
- Urban **Open Space**
- Urban **Infrastructure**
- Respected Historic and Natural **Resources**
- Connected Community Public **Venues**
GREAT NEIGHBORHOODS

- HOAs, PTAs
- Housing Types and Prices
- Parks
- Shopping
- Schools
- Streets
VIBRANT DOWNTOWNS
“MAIN STREET” ASSETS

• A Full Range of Uses and Activities
• Pleasant Streets
• Programs and Organizations
• Active Local Developers
DEVELOPMENT CORRIDOR
“PULSING”

Source: Ten Principles for Reinventing America’s Suburban Strips, Urban Land Institute, 2001
Michael D. Beyard and Michael Pawlukiewicz
DEVELOPMENT CORRIDOR PRINCIPLES

1. Ignite Leadership and Nurture Partnership
2. Anticipate Evolution
3. Know the Market
4. Prune Back Retail-Zoned Land
5. Establish Pulse Nodes of Development
6. Tame the Traffic
7. Create the Place
8. Diversify the Character
9. Eradicate the Ugliness

Source: Ten Principles for Reinventing America’s Suburban Strips, Urban Land Institute, 2001
Michael D. Beyard and Michael Pawlukiewicz
Donovan Rypkema:

“Historic buildings are the physical expression of memory, and it is memory that makes places significant.”
URBAN OPEN SPACE: BE HOLISTIC
URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE
ECONOMIC and FINANCE PLAN

JOBS AND INCOME - PRIVATE

TAXES AND FEES - PUBLIC
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- Retain Small Businesses
- Encourage Start-ups
- Foster Entrepreneurial Attitudes and Infrastructure
- Recruit High Value Jobs
- Provide Workforce Development
- Find a Role for Every Organization
- Promote Regional and Global Connections
- Promote Infill And Redevelopment w/Incentives
Businesses need:
• Business friendly atmosphere
• Broadband internet
• Access to international airports
• Trainable workforce
• Related businesses, clustering
• Liberal home occupation regulations

Visitors want:
• Interesting restaurants and shops
• Authentic festivals, museums and entertainment
• Comfortable accommodations
BE GLOBAL
THE CITY’S FINANCE MODEL

- Annual **Budget**
- Five Year **Capital Improvement Plan**
- Thirty-Fifty Year Finance Plan
  - Vision-Based
  - Comprehensive
  - Long-Range

- **Sources and Uses of Funds**
A public garden is a memorable personal place.
A simple small stage provides an intimate venue for community meetings and local performances.

A concert in the park.

Enjoy the market.

Public art; a testament to community values.
TAVARES
KISSIMMEE
KISSIMMEE
KISSIMMEE
COCOA VILLAGE
COCOA VILLAGE
DELAND
DELAND
WINTER HAVEN
WINTER HAVEN
CLERMONT
WINTER GARDEN
WINTER GARDEN
Character Towns: So what now?

1. Commit to a *Vision* of “character”.
2. Protect and enhance character where it exists.
3. Create character where it is absent.
4. Leverage all available assets.
5. Give it time.
TRUST THE PROCESS

Community-Based Vision

Vision-Driven Strategy

Strategy-Directed Action Plans
VISION AND LEADERSHIP MATTER!
Bill Kercher
City Planning Consultant
Editor, www.CharacterTowns.org
Author, Character Towns, Positioning Small Cities and Towns for the New Economy
Orlando, FL
T 407.342.3330
bill.kercher@wckplanning.com
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