Designing community: The application of new urban principles to create authentic communities

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Designing Community:
The Application of New Urban Principles to Create Authentic Communities

by

Margaret Embry

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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Department of Geography
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ABSTRACT

This research is an exploratory investigation of the potential of New Urbanist planning and design principles to create thriving and successful neighborhoods. New Urbanism is an urban design movement started in the early 1980s that promotes the development of walkable, compact, and diverse neighborhoods. It is the objective of this research to shed light on the value of creating a higher quality of life and more time for ourselves and our families. I hypothesize that New Urbanism may pave the way for recapturing commute time for time with family, creating authentic and successful communities, and engaging with neighbors. Furthermore, by utilizing the design principles of New Urbanism, traditional neighborhoods that re-integrate the activities of daily living may be possible. In short, this research is an explanatory and exploratory investigation that examines whether incorporating the design principles of New Urbanism can create walkable and successful communities that promote community-making with urban patterns that facilitate knowing neighbors, communication among neighbors, community activities, and a long term sense of belonging.
This research focuses on three case studies of New Urbanism: a large scale development in Atlanta, Georgia with approximately 3,500 residents, a moderate scale development in Tampa, Florida with approximately 2,000 residents, and a small scale development in Fernandina Beach, Florida with approximately 700 residents. These three case studies provide successful examples of the integration of the design principles of New Urbanism. New Urbanism can be used as the stimulus for the types of neighborhoods Americans has been missing since World War II. At each of these sites, observations were made of the ways in which the design of the development has fostered community and created walkable and livable neighborhoods.
Chapter One: Introduction and Background

Introduction

This research is an exploratory investigation of the potential of New Urbanist planning and design principles to create thriving and successful neighborhoods. New Urbanism is an urban design movement started in the early 1980s that promotes the development of walkable, compact, and diverse neighborhoods. It is the objective of this research to shed light on the value of creating a higher quality of life and more time for ourselves and our families. I hypothesize that New Urbanism may pave the way for recapturing commute time for time with family, creating authentic and successful communities, and engaging with neighbors. Furthermore, by utilizing the design principles of New Urbanism, traditional neighborhoods that re-integrate the activities of daily living may be possible. In short, this research is an explanatory and exploratory investigation that examines whether incorporating the design principles of New Urbanism can create walkable and successful communities that promote community-making with urban patterns that facilitate knowing neighbors, communication among neighbors, community activities, and a long term sense of belonging.

This research focuses on three case studies of neighborhoods developed according to New Urbanist planning and design principles: a large scale development in Atlanta,
Georgia, Atlantic Station, with approximately 3,500 residents; a moderate scale
development in Tampa, Florida, West Park Village, with approximately 2,000 residents;
and a small scale development in Fernandina Beach, Florida, Amelia Park, with
approximately 700 residents. These three case studies provide examples of the
integration of the design principles of New Urbanism. New Urbanism can be used as the
stimulus for the types of neighborhoods Americans have been missing since World War
II. At each of these sites, observations were made of the ways in which the design of the
development has fostered community and created walkable and livable neighborhoods.
These case studies are not equivalent or meant to be compared. The main contribution to
this research is the study of Atlantic Station in Atlanta, GA, but two other New Urbanist
developments were observed to further explore how New Urbanist developments function.

The paper begins with a discussion of post-World War II decline of community
and the rise of urban sprawl, followed by an introduction to and discussion of design
principles of New Urbanism and “traditional neighborhood developments.” Critiques of
New Urbanism and the ideas associated with it are reviewed, followed by an introduction
to the three case studies. Research methods and research results follow, with a discussion
of results and limitations, opportunities for future research, and conclusions.

Methods for Research

Quantitative research methods and qualitative research methods (semi-structured
interviews, observations and visual images) were used to understand the success of
Atlantic Station. Qualitative research methods (observations and visual images) were
also used to understand how Amelia Park and West Park Village incorporated the design
principles of New Urbanism. Following is a breakdown of each indicator of success including methods for obtaining data and what is deemed successful.

Indicator of success:

**Crime Rate**

Data from the Atlanta Police Department were used to determine whether the crime rate in the areas surrounding Atlantic Station and within Atlantic Station have changed from 2001 to 2008 as compared to city-wide data. Data from the month of January from each year was used. January was chosen at random. If crime rate has decreased at a higher rate as compared to city-wide data, it will be deemed successful. Surrounding area is defined as Zone 5. The Atlanta Police Department has divided the city into six crime zones and Atlantic Station is located at the northwest corner of Zone 5 (see Figure 4). Crimes within Atlantic Station were also analyzed from December 14, 2008 to February 7, 2009 to determine types of crimes typically occurring. This two month time span was chosen to illustrate the types of crimes occurring in Atlantic Station using the most recent crime data available. The crime rate and types of crimes are compared to Atlanta-wide data also gathered from the Atlanta Police Department from the month of January from 2001 to 2008.

[Figure 1. Atlanta Crime Zones](http://www.atlantapd.org/index.asp?nav=Home)
Transportation

Transportation issues in Atlantic Station were analyzed, including trip generation on the site, alternative transportation offered, and access to public transportation. Data were gathered from Atlantic Station, LLC through annual studies the group has conducted since 2001 called Project XL, a collaborative study with the EPA, as well as the Atlantic Station Access and Mobility Program (ASAP+), a voluntary travel options program serving Atlantic Station. The 2008 Project XL Report includes transportation data from a series of four surveys, ending in October 2008, conducted to assess the site’s conformance with the State Implementation Plan (SIP) Transportation Control Measure (TCM). In February 2009, the data were compiled to create the Atlantic Station Monitoring and Evaluation Update Annual Assessment. Five specific performance measures are evaluated:

- average daily vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per resident;
- average daily VMT per employee working at the site;
- the percent of all combined trips made to, from, and on the site by residents and employees in modes other than single occupancy vehicles (SOV);
- origin and destination data for trips made to, from, and on the site by residents and employees; and,
- average daily travel to, from, and on the site, other than by transit for all purposes combined, including retail trips.

The study also compares the specific Atlantic Station transportation data to regional data.
Success could be looked at in two ways regarding trip generation on site specifically: 1) success could mean less trip generation due to residents shopping and working on site, or 2) success could mean increased trip generation due to visiting consumers. This difference in success could lead to skewed quantitative data in terms of trip generation. In order to resolve this dilemma, it will be considered a success if daily miles traveled by residents and employees of Atlantic Station is less than compared to regional data. Access and sustained use of alternative modes of transportation and public transportation will be deemed a success.

*Level of Satisfaction of the Developer, The Jacoby Group*

An in-person interview was conducted with a member of the Jacoby Group to gain an understanding of Atlantic Station’s development, and of the major objectives of the development group during the planning stages.

The interview was tape recorded and transcribed by hand. The interview tape was reviewed on the same day the interview was performed and transcribed soon after. While interviewing the member of the Jacoby Group, it was important for me to keep in mind positionality and reflexivity. This interview faced an inequality of positions between myself and the respondent because he was a partner in the development and had experienced Atlantic Station from the conceptual stage, whereas I had only read about, researched and experienced Atlantic Station for a brief time in comparison. For this reason, it was important for me to put myself on the same causal plane as a major player of Atlantic Station. I was very transparent with the respondent and offered to share a copy of the transcript from our interview before submitting my final thesis. As expected the member of the Jacoby Group expressed many positive opinions about Atlantic
Station, but I was able to ask enough probing questions to uncover disappointments with the project. Probes used during the development group interview included silent probes, “ah ha” probes, echo probes, and tell me more probes. I tried to facilitate a candid discussion by creating a relaxed atmosphere. I believe I accomplished this by communicating my interests in this research along with experience and education I have had in this field.

Below are interview questions for the Jacoby Group:

1. What were the objectives of Jacoby when planning and developing Atlantic Station?

2. Is it exciting to live in Atlantic Station?

3. Do you feel like Atlantic Station provides an enhanced quality of life for residents as opposed to other neighborhoods in Atlanta?

4. What types of community groups are available for residents?

5. How does Atlantic Station interact with surrounding neighborhoods?

6. Were there objectives to facilitate civic success (i.e. community groups, community events, neighboring)?

7. What types of unexpected surprises have you encountered? Unexpected difficulties?

8. What would you do differently if you were beginning Atlantic Station planning today?

Level of Satisfaction of Atlantic Station Residents

Residents from Atlantic Station were also interviewed in person. The Atlantic Station Civic Association (ASCA) served as my main contact to access resident respondents. Resident interviewed were tape recorded and as with the Jacoby Group interview, recordings were listened to the same day as the interview and transcribed by
hand within the next few days. As with the respondent from the Jacoby Group, reflexivity and positionality played an important role in these four interviews. Again, it was important to be transparent with respondents and offer transcriptions of interviews before the submission of my thesis. I also gave a brief description of my intentions and background on my research. I offered anonymity to each respondent to make the respondent more comfortable. I received a few frank responses to interview questions and in these cases I probed the respondent to understand why he or she felt so strongly. Probes I used included silent probes, “ah ha” probes, echo probes, and tell me more probes. I tried to be a relaxed and unselfconscious interviewer and personalize the discussion by telling the respondent about my experience with “traditional neighborhood developments” and other topics. As shown in the literature, aggressive interviewers tend to elicit more information, so I believe I did my best to be sure to get answers to all of the questions asked. Semi-structured interviews were utilized with all residents. Questions for resident interviews follow below.

Below are questions for Atlantic Station residents:

1. How long have you lived in Atlantic Station?

2. Do you feel you have access to needs of daily living (groceries, supplies, etc)?

3. Do you commute to work? How many miles away? If not, do you work at home or onsite?

4. Do you shop in Atlantic Station regularly? Do you walk to the stores?

5. How often do you walk for a purpose (to the store, etc)?

6. Do you feel safe walking in terms of crime and traffic?

7. Are you involved in any Atlantic Station community groups? Which ones? Which ones are you not a part of and why?
8. Do you feel a sense of belonging in your neighborhood and community?

9. Have you made trusting relationships with your neighbors (i.e. are you comfortable calling them if there is an emergency, are you comfortable borrowing and lending items)?

10. Do you have children who live with you on the site? If so, are they involved in any onsite groups?

11. Do you feel like Atlantic Station provides an enhanced quality of life as opposed to other parts of Atlanta?

12. What unexpected surprises have you encountered while living in Atlantic Station? Unexpected difficulties?

13. What things would you change about Atlantic Station if you could?

14. Is it exciting to live at Atlantic Station?

Observations

Observations are used to determine whether design principles of New Urbanism have been incorporated into the development of Atlantic Station, Amelia Park, and West Park Village. Other observations are used to understand how lively the development is and if people (residents and strangers) are utilizing what these developments have to offer. I was sure to be aware of positionality. Reflexivity was a major consideration; I was as objective in my observations as I could be. I tried not to bring my own assumptions and beliefs into my observations, and I believe I was successful. I used field notes for my observations. After completing my observations, I made notes on my field observations and then wrote my personal feelings about what was uncovered in the observations. In order to provide a systematic approach to discussing the observation findings, I used the design principles of New Urbanism as laid out in Chapter 3 as a guide.
Visual Images

Visual images are also used in the form of pictures to illustrate the physical characteristics of the three developments. The majority of the photographs are used as a supplemental tool to allow the reader to visualize the design and layout of the property. Photographs were taken in residential areas, open areas, and retail areas. This allows the reader to see naturally occurring images and make their own assumptions about the landscape.

Background

Post-World War II Decline of Community

There is evidence that social capital and sense of community have been on the decline since the introduction of post-World War II suburbs of the 1950s. Factors associated with this decline include long commutes to work and even to shopping areas, the increased use of television and the internet, and the pressures of time and money put on families (Leyden 2003). As for a sense of membership and belonging, many people in suburbia are members of “mass-membership organizations” in which the “only act of membership consists of writing a check for dues or perhaps occasionally reading a newsletter…[M]ost are unlikely to encounter any other member” (Putnam 1995, 71). Sprawl also weakens social and civic engagement due to the segregation and homogeneity of neighborhoods and the increasing distance from home to work (Squires 2002).

It has been shown that the “degree of social interaction that takes place among neighbors is a key indicator of the strength of localized communities in urban society” (Guest et al 1999, 92). When studying a contemporary American suburban subdivision,
the dearth of common space or even walkable space that enables social interaction is noticeable. Social interaction becomes a privilege as opposed to a chance encounter, and life is designed to take place within the home or the backyard (Leyden 2003). Fewer and fewer Americans are socializing with their neighbors (Putnam 1995). With the absence of common space within a neighborhood, the sense of community has declined dramatically. These neighborhoods are void of what Ray Oldenburg calls “third places” or “great good places.” These “great good places” are identified as public places on neutral ground where people can gather and interact, such as coffeehouses, cafes, pubs, post offices, and main streets. These places, according to Oldenburg, are the heart of a community’s social vitality and the foundation of a functioning democracy (Oldenburg 1991).

Another factor affecting one’s sense of community in suburban areas is the increase of technology, including television and air conditioning, but chiefly the automobile. In the early twentieth century, the labor movement secured the eight-hour work day for Americans. This mandate gave citizens more time every day to spend in the pursuit of happiness, such as time with family, community involvement, and participation in sports. Since the invention of the automobile and suburbs, part or all of this time outside of work is spent in one’s car. This leaves little time for family and community (Duany et al 2000). It should be mentioned that these ideas are generalizations to which there are notable suburban exceptions.

Urban Sprawl and its effects

Urban sprawl is a phenomenon commonly characterized by unlimited outward extension of development, automobile dependency, low density housing and commercial
development, leapfrog development, fragmentation of land use planning among multiple municipalities, large fiscal disparities among municipalities, segregation of land use types, congestion and environmental damage, and a declining sense of community among residents (Squires 2002). This growth pattern has emerged since World War II and appears by some to be advancing at an increasing pace. In addition to negative impacts on the natural environment and quality of life, this form of growth can have detrimental effects on social capital and emotional health. Suburban sprawl development fosters a lifestyle of social isolation in which one may rarely interact with neighbors because of dis-integrated activities of daily living, automobile dependence, garages that lead directly into one’s house, fenced backyards, and the lack of a front porch. “Freedom itself and the capacity to fully actualize one’s individuality can be harmed in the absence of a place and community in which one’s life is embedded,” as Squires believes (2002, 13).

Researchers such as Teresa Seeman have presented social isolation as a detriment to a person’s quality of life, leading to physical and emotional health problems (1996, 442). These conditions have stimulated increased public and private sector interest in residential development patterns that encourage increased social capital, facilitate community making within the places we live, and increase physical and emotional health in community life.

The advent of urban sprawl and the decline of community after World War II have left the United States with segregated land use types, a seemingly unlimited outward extension of development, social isolation, a loss of sense of community, and a dependency on automobiles. This research explores how New Urbanism could be one solution to this trend of sprawl. New Urbanism is a potentially a way to create walkable
communities that promote community-making with urban patterns that facilitate knowing neighbors, communication among neighbors, community activities, and a long term sense of belonging. It is hypothesized that incorporating the design principles of New Urbanism into new developments, these types of communities could be present again.
The social and physical implications of urban sprawl have stimulated a response to combat such negative outcomes of living and create more successful communities. An important ingredient in this response has been an increase in “traditional neighborhood developments”, which have fostered the New Urbanism movement. “Traditional neighborhood developments” are represented by “mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly communities of varied populations, either standing free as villages, or grouped into towns and villages” (Duany et al 2000, 4). The traditional neighborhood was the fundamental form of settlement in the United States through World War II and continues to be the dominant pattern of living outside of the United States, as it has been throughout recorded history (Duany et al 2000). Principles of “traditional neighborhood developments” promote community-making with urban patterns that facilitate knowing neighbors, communicating with fellow residents, discovery of mutual interests, acting together, trusting each other, and a long term sense of belonging. Diversity is promoted by a variety of housing types and prices as well as essential mixed-use development and urban transect patterns. In order to facilitate knowing one’s neighbors, key components of the design plan include highly interactive streets that promote pedestrian activity; narrow, traffic-calmed streets with sidewalks; street trees for shade and protection from traffic; alleys to separate utility and garage access from sidewalks; and front porches with
sidewalks close to facilitate connection between public and private realms.

Communication and community activities are facilitated by the creation of public spaces, such as parks, coffee shop, and other “great good places,” providing activities for meeting and acting on common interests, electronic connectivity through neighborhood intranet, and a design that promotes chance encounters by pedestrians.

A study done by Hollie Lund in 2002 compared two demographically similar neighborhoods in Portland, Oregon, and found that a safe and interesting walking environment was linked with higher levels of social capital, and a greater sense of community was found in traditional neighborhoods than in contemporary suburbs. She points out the ability to walk for pleasure within one’s community as one contributor to the increased sense of community. Living, working, shopping and playing in the same neighborhood allows residents more time in the place where they live and less time in separated work places, shopping places, and recreation places. Commuting time can be recaptured for time with family and neighbors. The mixed-use, walkable community pattern that incorporates retail, office, and civic uses with residential and recreational uses creates purposeful and interesting destinations for daily activity. When these uses are mixed in a walkable geographic boundary, pedestrian activity improves well-being as it increases the frequency of encounters with fellow residents. The integration of activities of daily living and familiarity among neighbors facilitates long term sense of community and belonging and increased physical and emotional health, precisely what many say the suburbs are lacking (Lund 2002).

Another study completed in 2003 by Dr. Kevin Leyden examined the correlation of the pattern of community design and construction and their affect on the level of
involvement of residents in their communities and with each other. Leyden used the city of Galway in the Republic of Ireland as a case study. The results of this analyses indicated that people living in walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods have higher levels of social capital compared with those living in car-oriented suburbs. Respondents living in walkable neighborhoods were more likely to know their neighbors, participate politically, trust others, and be socially engaged (Leyden 2003). In both of these studies, respondents were self-selected which may lead to statistically invalid results.

Successful Communities

It is important to first understand what people need from a neighborhood: sensory pleasures, to feel safe and secure without fear, personal space, community space (for recreation, socializing, group activities), ability to identify objects and places, diversity, mobility, self-development, surprise, belonging, pride, and beauty (Greene 1992). Goals for urban life identified by Appleyard and Jacobs (1987) include livability, identity and control, access to opportunity, imagination and joy, authenticity and meaning, community and public life, urban self-reliance, and an inclusive environment for all.

The above references to Greene and Appleyard and Jacobs work provide a definition of what ‘successful community’ in this paper is meant to mean. As opposed to communities that inhibit natural interaction among their inhabitants, successful communities are characterized by the interpersonal relationships of residents as well as the infrastructure surrounding the residents. In this research, a successful community is one in which all of the needs and goals described by Greene and Appleyard and Jacobs are met, there is a high level of social capital, and residents are experiencing a sense of community.
Social Capital

Social capital, according to Robert Putnam, refers to “features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (Putnam 1995, 67). Civic engagement and trust are two components of social capital that Putnam emphasizes. Civic engagement is the “degree to which citizens participate in activities that affect the political decision making process at all levels,” such as voting participation (Rohe et al 1998). High levels of social capital are found if individuals trust each other and feel “a mutual sense of obligation” toward one another. This trust creates an environment in which people are comfortable interacting with neighbors and relative strangers because residents expect other to act in accordance with social norms that encourage mutually beneficial interactions (Rohe et al 1998). A variation of the meaning of social capital, according to Jane Jacobs, is that it refers to “cross-cutting social networks which provide a basis for trust, cooperation and perceptions of safety” (Cattell 2004). Individuals who have high levels of social capital tend to volunteer within their community, interact with friends and neighbors more, and be involved politically. Neighborhoods with high levels of social capital usually “respond effectively to the forces of change” which helps to maintain or perhaps enhance the stability of the neighborhood (Rohe et al 1998, 62).

Sense of Community

Sense of community broadly “involves the interrelationship between the individual and the individual’s social structure” (Talen 2000, 174). It is a “feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to
be together” (Chavis et al 1986, 6). Sense of community refers to both the social interaction component of neighboring as well as the psychological sense of community. The social interaction component is similar to having social capital, wherein this component consists of social networks and norms and the emotional connection and support that exists among neighbors. These interactions include social networking as well as activities such as stopping by to visit, borrowing items, and asking for help in an emergency (Talen 2000). These social interactions lead to a psychological sense of community, which differs in context from person to person. In their 1986 writing “Sense of Community: A Definition and Theory,” McMillan and Chavis provided one of the first explanations for a psychological sense of community. They believe sense of community consists of four attributes: 1) membership, 2) influence, 3) integration and fulfillment of needs, and 4) shared emotional connection. Membership refers to the feeling that one belongs because of personal investment in the neighborhood. Influence is the feeling that a person can have a personal effect in the neighborhood and they are open to influences from other residents. Having one’s needs fulfilled and meeting the needs of others creates a strong sense of community. This fulfillment comes from the rewarding experience of being a member in a successful neighborhood. Finally, communicating a shared history, sharing events, and experiencing positive social interaction all lead to a sense of community (Chavis et al 1986). This creates a further emotional connection with neighbors through participation in community events, acknowledging particular residents for good deeds, and the “facilitation of investment in the neighborhood” (Talen 2000). A sense of community is a key factor in creating a successful community.
New Urbansim, as hypothesized, could be a tool to create walkable and successful communities that promote community-making with urban patterns that facilitate knowing neighbors, communication among neighbors, community activities, and a long term sense of belonging. Furthermore, by incorporating the design principles of New Urbanism into new developments, communities can be successful, have a high level of social capital, and allow residents to experience a sense of community. The three concepts, understanding what defines a successful community and the importance of social capital and sense of community, act together to further define “traditional neighborhood developments” and allow them to exist and thrive. Without success, social capital, and a sense of belonging, “traditional neighborhood developments” cease to be productive and viable neighborhoods for residents. For this reason, these three concepts will be used in this research to confirm the above stated hypothesis.
Chapter Three: Design Principles of New Urbanism

Streets and Other Design Features

Streets are an important design feature that contributes to social capital, sense of community and belonging, and an overall successful neighborhood and community. When properly designed, public streets double as urban spaces and provide a place “where people can walk, shop, meet, and generally engage in the diverse array of social and recreational activities that, for many, are what makes urban living enjoyable” (Dumbaugh 2005, 283). In addition to their contribution to resident’s quality of life, streets designed for the pedestrian, coined as livable streets, have been linked to “economic growth and innovation, improvements in air quality, and increased physical fitness and health” (Dumbaugh 2005, 283). These livable streets provide a continuous sidewalk network, are narrow and traffic calmed, and are designed to minimize the negative impacts of automobiles on pedestrians. Some of these design features include street trees and on-street parking that serve as buffers between the pedestrian realm and motor vehicles and provide a spatial definition to the pedestrian right-of-way (Dumbaugh 2005). Other design features that impact the street life and walkability of a development are alleys to separate utility and garage access from sidewalks and front porches with sidewalks close to facilitate connection between public and private realms.

The street is more than the physical structure; it is a place that is formed over time through trust of other people traveling on the sidewalk, as Jane Jacobs believes. The
chance encounters and “casual, public contact” (1961, 56) that sidewalks provide give people a sense of place and belonging as well as public respect and trust. People who experience this type of casual encounter have respect for others on the street and have a feeling of good will towards others (Jacobs 1961). One ingredient to successful sidewalk life is “self-appointed public characters” (Jacobs 1961, 68). These characters can either be anchored public characters, such as a store clerk, roving public characters, such as a pastor or prominent local, or specialized public characters. Another ingredient vital to successful sidewalk life is facilities that act as gathering places, like the local bookstore or corner grocery. These facilities also create a sense of safety on the sidewalk (Jacobs 1961).

A well-used street is more likely to be a safe street than a deserted street. New Urbanist design principles set up streets to be lively, interesting places that can handle residents and strangers alike. A street that is “equipped to handle strangers, and to make a safety asset, in itself, out of the presence of strangers…must have three main qualities” (Jacobs 1961, 35). These qualities include having a clear boundary between public and private space. Another quality includes the notion that there must be “eyes upon the street” (Jacobs 1961, 35). These eyes belong to what Jacobs calls “natural proprietors” (1961, 35) of the street. The buildings on a street able to insure the safety of residents and strangers must face the street. This allows store owners, residents, customers, and others to view the street even when inside a building. The third quality of a safe street is that the street is used fairly continuously. This adds to the number of eyes on the street and also gives those in buildings an interesting reason to watch sidewalks (Jacobs 1961).
With these three qualities, streets within New Urbanism communities become safer than those that are not as pedestrian friendly and interesting.

Other important design considerations include dense residential development along with intensive land use, mixed land-use design (integration of activities near each other), placing buildings so that they define public space between and around them instead of simply sitting in space, and many smaller buildings with compound arrangements and relationships as opposed to a few large buildings. Creating compact neighborhoods (in terms of units and residents) accounts for pedestrian accessibility to certain services and uses that are vital to urban life, such as corner markets, coffee shops, cleaners, etc. These are the “great good places” that make a neighborhood thrive. Mass transit is also dependent upon density and if mass transit is used, there is less reliance on motor vehicles and less demand for parking. If people are living closely, it also increases the energy efficiency of the development because less land is being consumed and there is less need to commute or drive to services (Appleyard 1987).

Again, living, working, and playing in the same neighborhood is important to the success of a neighborhood and to the development of social capital in the area. The mixed uses respond “to the values of publicness and diversity that encourage local community identity” (Appleyard et al 1987, 118). It is the mix of uses along with the density of people and uses that creates a successful neighborhood. With a mixed land-use plan, people are able to conduct activities of daily living without having to get into their car. Uses in the neighborhood range from the “great good places” mentioned above as well as schools, places of worship, and open space (Appleyard et al 1987). People living in a mixed-use neighborhood tend to view their neighborhood as an extension of
their home into public space. This sense of community is built upon familiar objects and shared experiences of daily living (Hargreaves 2004).

The ways in which these structures and residential homes are situated throughout the neighborhood also contribute to the neighborhood’s success and level of social capital and sense of community. Buildings that are built close together and are close to the street (which should be narrow as described above) define a space. These spaces that are surrounded by buildings are more likely to draw people to them and promote social interactions between neighbors and others (Appleyard et al 1987).

Many different buildings and spaces should have complex arrangements and relationships. “Diversity, the possibility of intimacy and confrontation with the unexpected, stimulation, are all more likely with many buildings than with few taking up the same ground area” (Appleyard et al 1987, 119). These smaller buildings should be placed on small parcels which create more public space and the need for more entrances, more windows, and a diversity of design among buildings. Through these multiple small buildings, a more public, diverse, and vibrant neighborhood is created (Appleyard et al 1987).

Finally, the commercial district of a “traditional neighborhood development” should include as many small, independently owned venues as possible. Three major neighborhood commercial streets in three towns in the Boston, MA metropolitan area were studied by Vikas Mehta to determine the specific characteristics that support social interaction on neighborhood commercial streets. All three neighborhood commercial streets combined small independently owned businesses with national chain stores. Mehta found that the “liveliest settings on the street had a very high number of stores that
were one-of-a-kind. Most were independently owned but a few were local small chain stores” (Mehta 2009, 53). The goods and services sold at these stores were mainly for daily use, not specialty items, but the goods and services were provided in a way that was special to that particular store. The results of user interviews show that “people preferred small independently owned and operated businesses, not only for the quality and variety of goods and services and friendly staff but also for their uniqueness and character and the overall ambience they created” (Mehta 2009, 53). Many people found that these smaller businesses were friendlier and treated the business property with more care and personal attention. This, according to respondents, created a street environment that was more interesting and attractive and encouraged lingering and meeting people.

These design principles are the backbone of what makes New Urbanism a potential solution to combating sprawl and creating walkable and successful communities that promote community-making with urban patterns that facilitate knowing neighbors, communication among neighbors, community activities, and a long term sense of belonging, as hypothesized. The physical layout of a development has the potential to have a tremendous impact on the social and economic success of a “traditional neighborhood development.” The design features presented in this chapter will serve as a guide to determine whether the three case studies in this research have incorporated these principles to create a walkable and successful neighborhood.
Chapter Four: Critiques of New Urbanism and Corresponding Rebuttals

Critiques of New Urbanism and “Traditional Neighborhood Developments”

A major critique of New Urbanism is that New Urbanism communities tend to cater to the upper-middle socio-economic class. While there may be a slight mix of incomes, studies show that there is little evidence of racial mixing and segregation by class, race, and ethnicity is perpetuated (Gordon and Richardson 1998). Critics also believe that New Urbanism denies cultural difference, does not allow residents to participate in the creation of their communities, and creates rigid patterns that may not accommodate future residents (Ellis 2002). It is believed that low income families are the ones most in need of community, but community is mainly created for upper middle class families. David Harvey questions whether these upper middle class residents are really choosing community or the image of community. He goes on to say that New Urbanism “builds an image of community and a rhetoric of place-based civic pride and consciousness for those who do not need it, while abandoning those that do to their ‘underclass’ fate” (Harvey 1997, 68-69).

According to many critics, New Urbanism creates communities based on a false nostalgia and utopian ideals, wanting to return to a romanticized small-town life where “children find it more fun to throw autumn leaves in the air than toilet paper your house” (Shibley 1998, 81). To achieve this, developers use an old architectural tradition and incorporate specific design features that include not only buildings, but streets and
neighborhood patterns to affect social behavior and residents’ sense of community. New Urbanists believe that these design elements will recreate a social and civic behavior that has been absent since the advent of urban sprawl and decline of traditional neighborhoods (Gordon and Richardson 1998). Critics believe these design features (e.g. centrally located public buildings, front porches on homes which face pedestrian walkways) are in fact examples of surveillance and repressive control which create a communitarian environment (Ellis 2002). David Harvey explains that community is a historic site of social control and surveillance. “Well-founded communities often exclude, define themselves against others, and erect all sorts of keep-out signs” (Harvey 1997, 69). These historic definitions show community as often being a barrier to, rather than a facilitator of progressive social change. The characteristics that make cities exciting, such as conflicts, the unexpected, and the excitement of exploring the unknown in urban areas, are screened out by New Urbanist design principles (Harvey 1997). There is also no clear evidence of a direct link between design and social behavior; therefore, building a neighborhood does not necessarily mean one is building a community (Biddulph 2000). There is a further concern that New Urbanism might be a shallow representation of community and an unrealistic “Leave it to Beaver” life that is void of the struggle for a diverse and democratic life (Shibley 1998). Some criticize the actual architecture of buildings and homes in New Urbanism communities, claiming it denies “both historical change and individual inspiration” (Ellis 2002).

Another major claim of New Urbanism is that “traditional neighborhood developments” will reduce trip generation because of planning for reduced automobile dependence through public transit, walkable communities, and increased cycling.
Automobiles remain vital, however, because the majority of residents commute to work, many transit projects have not come to fruition, and many people are not willing to walk more than half a mile for any given purpose (Gordon and Richardson 1998). There is commercial use in mixed-use developments, but typically these establishments do not provide for sufficient employment. This creates the trend where residents of “traditional neighborhood developments” commute to work while members of the outside population commute to work within the development, which creates more commuting overall (Gordon and Richardson 1998). Other critics question whether people want to shop at small, local stores rather than malls, big box retailers, and other large-scale clusters. But these latter types of stores are usually out of scale with “traditional neighborhood developments” (Ellis 2002).

Some believe that New Urbanism ignores the social and economic realities of the present time. It is argued that people enjoy having private lives, enjoy being so mobile by automobile, and enjoy creating their own dispersed social networks. Urban space has changed, leaving the principles of New Urbanism outdated (Ellis 2002). The landscape does not show that New Urban communities have been in demand since WWII. It can be assumed that developers would have built these types of communities if demanded. Surveys conducted by Fannie Mae show that people want a single family home with a private yard and dense urban infill projects cannot meet this demand. Many of the claims of New Urbanist communities are also achieved in a wide variety of urban and suburban residential communities, such as a richer life for children and allowing one to age in place (Gordon and Richardson 1998).
New Urbanism advocates claim they are committed to improving city centers and creating urban infill, mainly for two reasons: to make cities a better place to live and preserve farmland. Critics note, however, that many developments are built on greenfields on the edges of cities and infill development has been limited. The farmland preservation concern does not hold merit since urban development contributes to less than five percent of the landmass. In the case of infill projects, New Urbanist communities only accommodate a small percentage of the metropolitan population, leading to no real change in city centers (Gordon and Richardson 1998). Mike Biddulph criticizes New Urbanism for the belief that building neighborhoods (or villages) creates “neighborliness” and that with enough neighborhoods, a city can be transformed into a better place to live. He believes that a group of villages do not make a city and these “urban villages” do not acknowledge the nature of or the real processes that shape the contemporary city. There appears to be little urbanity in New Urbanism (Biddulph 2000).

Social Capital Critique

Several critiques have been levied against Putnam’s idea of social capital. The term social capital has come under scrutiny because of the belief that it blurs analytical distinctions. The term “capital” is usually used in economic discussions, so to apply capital to human interaction seems to obscure the long-standing and historical meaning of the term. As Kulynych and Smith state:

> [T]o characterize civic engagement and the preconditions of democracy as social capital is to foster the view that community involvement and political participation are forms of economic activity, thus blurring important distinctions
and, among other things, undermining the development of all-encompassing, genuine forms of democracy (Kulynych and Smith 2002, 150).

To apply this term to humans can be seen as viewing people as wealth or property, which can be offensive to some.

Putnam calls for citizens to become “social capitalists,” which ultimately leads to communitarianism. It is argued that Putnam’s conceptualization of communitarianism in the United States is limited and perhaps impossible. As pointed out by Vicente Navarro, Putnam’s communitarian argument is lacking significant components, such as a discussion on power, politics, and struggle. He fails to realize that some of the welfare and well-being of communities he commends are the result of years of the political struggle that actually give it meaning. His unawareness of political and power struggles makes “his analysis extremely superficial. It reduces social change to a mere social engineering carried out by enlightened elites (his term) with the participation of social agents in the background” (Navarro 2002, 428).

Sheri Burman challenges Putnam’s idea that a strong civil society ensures democracy. She provides an analysis of the role civil society played in Weimar Germany in her article Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic, which some have nicknamed “Bowling with Hitler” (Carothers 1999). She argues that in the 1920s and 1930s Germany saw a rich civil society with high levels of social capital, but with the weak political institutions that were in place at the time, this rich associational life actually led to the rise of the Nazi party and, therefore, the demise of democracy (Burman 1997). The weak political institutions were not able to respond to the many demands of the citizen organizations, which led the citizen organizations to shift their allegiance to
“nationalist, populist groups, and eventually the Nazi Party” (Carothers 1999, 23). Hitler recognized the strong leadership skills and social ties within these citizen organizations and believed they would be very useful in the political arena. Because of this, “civil society activists formed the backbone of the Nazis’ grassroots propaganda machine” (Burman 1997, 420).

Bob Edwards and Michael Foley argue Putnam underestimates the ability of newer organizations and of political associations, such as social movements and political parties, to foster aspects of civil society and to advance democracy. As the authors point out in their article, *The Paradox of Civil Society*, it seems as though Putnam’s examination of social movements in the United States overlooks important groups, such as national groups and the “grassroots bases of the vast majority of social-movement groups operating nationally” (Edwards et al 1996, 43). They also argue Putnam’s term "networks of civic engagement" glosses over the real conflicts among groups in civil society. These conflicts, in the absence of “specifically political settlements,” may spill over into civil disruption and violence (Edwards et al 1996, 40). They believe that to understand polity, it is imperative to understand the political settlements that ground it, and what effects these settlements have on social forces and civil society, which Putnam does not. In short, the authors’ arguments "suggest the problematic character of both Putnam's definition of civil society and the larger civil society argument itself” (Edwards et al 1996).

Putnam contradicts himself when calling for more social capitalists and his desire for togetherness, but also calls for the “competitiveness that capitalism forces on its adherents” (Navarro 2002, 427). Putnam’s argument is also lacking an explanation of the
purpose of togetherness and participation. Is the organization, participation, and
togetherness of members of a New York City gang, who do everything to keep each other
within the gang milieu, the same as the organization, participation, and togetherness of a
neighborhood civic association? Obviously not, but these are two forms of social capital
according to Putnam’s definition (Navarro 2002, Sorensen and Svendsen 2006). The
shear breadth of the concept of social capital makes it difficult to identify what Putnam is
ultimately striving for. It appears that he is advocating for healthy people and
communities, authentic democracy, and economic success, but Putnam’s definition of the
term only sometimes contributes to these broad goals (Kulynych and Smith 2002). Civic
engagement has actually seen an increase in the twentieth century, unlike what Putnam
claims, with civic engagement increasing even today. Therefore, why is there a concern
of the decline of social capital and civic engagement?

Rebuttals

As seen, there are many critiques of New Urbanism and social capital. In light of
these critiques, New Urbanism remains a popular and sought after tool to create walkable
and successful communities that promote community-making with urban patterns that
facilitate knowing neighbors, communication among neighbors, community activities,
and a long term sense of belonging. The claim that New Urbanism communities tend to
cater to the upper-middle class seems to be based on early suburban projects which were
targeted at a more affluent market. What the critics do not seem to consider are the other
types of New Urbanist development that directly responds to the issue of affordable
housing. There are multiple urban infill projects and the U.S. Department of Housing
and Urban Development’s Hope VI program “explicitly uses new Urbanist principles to
weave public housing into inner-city neighborhoods without the stigmatizing design
features that have characterized such housing for half a century” (Ellis 2002, 279).

New Urbanism advocates have rebutted the claim that New Urbanism creates
communities based on a false nostalgia and utopian ideals, wanting to return to a
romanticized small-town life by stating that the principles of New Urbanism are
applicable at all scales. New Urbanism advocates believe that urban neighborhoods are
just as important as the small town model. New Urbanists do not use the term nostalgia
to describe what they are trying to achieve by incorporating traditional neighborhood
elements, but instead have a respect for these traditional neighborhoods and civic life.
New Urbanism follows, but modernizes “selected historical patterns that are consistent
with life in the world today” (Ellis 2002, 268). In many cases, the critical response to
New Urbanism is weakened by the critics’ failure to suggest an applicable alternative
(Ellis 2002).

The studies done by Hollie Lund and Kevin Leyden (Lund 2002, Leyden 2003)
provide a clear illustration of the role walkable neighborhoods play in creating
neighborhoods that facilitate a long term sense of community and high levels of social
capital. These studies represent the fact that there is a direct link between the design of a
New Urban neighborhood and social behavior. New Urbanists do not claim to build
community, rather they equip a neighborhood with the tools it needs to create community
and hope residents fulfill this goal. In response to the claim that the architecture in New
Urbanism communities denies historical change and individual inspiration, New
Urbanists have reminded critics that traditional local vernaculars are drawn upon in hopes
of creating an authentic, not manufactured sense of place and belonging. Also, New
Urbanism believes that the buildings within a neighborhood are not the most important feature; it is the ensemble of streets, lots, and buildings and the way they fit together. New Urbanism does not hold a particular style of architecture, rather it can make use of all types of architectural styles, based on the context (Ellis 2000).

Critics question whether people want to shop at small, local stores rather than malls, big box retailers, and other large-scale clusters. The study done by Vikas Mehta in the Boston metropolitan area directly confirms that people do enjoy shopping at small local stores as opposed to large, national chain stores. In his work, he found that the “liveliest settings on the street had a very high number of stores that were one-of-a-kind. Most were independently owned but a few were local small chain stores” (Mehta 2009, 53). The goods and services sold at these stores were mainly for daily use, not specialty items, but the goods and services were provided in a way that was special to that particular store. The results of user interviews show that “people preferred small independently owned and operated businesses, not only for the quality and variety of goods and services and friendly staff but also for their uniqueness and character and the overall ambience they created” (Mehta 2009, 53). Many people found that these smaller businesses were friendlier and treated the business property with more care and personal attention. This, according to respondents, created a street environment that was more interesting and attractive and encouraged lingering and meeting people.

The claim that New Urbanism ignores the social and economic realities of the present time seems to be a caricature. New Urbanists are very aware of the connection between urban design and demographic, economic, and technological changes, as well as global restructuring, social transformations, and the “dynamics of the land development
process under late capitalism” (Ellis 2002, 268). While New Urbanists are aware of the changes taking place, they are not in a position to change those structural variables single-handedly. New Urbanists can simply understand context and design accordingly (Ellis 2002).

Critics ask why “traditional neighborhood developments” have not been developed more if they provide such beneficial outcomes. They go on to argue that New Urban communities have not been in demand since World War II, because if they had, developers would have certainly built these types of communities. What critics fail to address is that the ubiquitous, conventional suburban subdivision has been heavily subsidized by the U.S. government since World War II, marketed as a symbol of social status, and “endorsed as the only modern alternative by professional land planners, transportation planners, and developers” (Ellis 2002, 270). On the other hand, the supply of New Urbanist developments has been restricted due to developers’ unfamiliarity with “traditional neighborhood development,” obstructive zoning codes, and conservatism of financial institutions (Ellis 2002).

After Putnam’s 1995 article, *Bowling Alone: America’s Declining Social Capital*, was heavily criticized, he wrote a rebuttal in the form of his 2000 book *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. In this book, Putnam explains that the present decline in civic engagement is not representative of the entire twentieth century. Rather, in the first two-thirds of the century civic engagement seemed to increase, but stagnated and declined in the last third. The decline began in the 1960s and accelerated in the 1980s and 1990s. There has been evidence of certain forms of civic engagement increasing, such as workplace socializing, participation in self-help and
support groups, participation in protest demonstrations, and volunteering. The increases seen, however, are generally forms of participation that do not promote face-to-face connections among people. The increases in activities that do promote these types of connections among people are too small to offset the large-scale decline in civic engagement throughout American society (Putnam 2000).

The overall decline in civic engagement can be seen in nearly all social and demographic groups in the United States. There is evidence of this decline among women and men, different racial groups, religions, political parties, social classes, household types, occupational categories, all regions of the country, and in cities and towns of all sizes. Specific generations, however, have seen a difference in decline of civic engagement. It appears that the younger generations, specifically those born after 1945 are much less likely to be civically involved than those born before 1945. About half of the decline in civic engagement has come about because those born before 1945 are passing away and are being replaced by the less civically engaged generations born after 1945 (Putnam 2000).

Putnam documents the ways in which cities with higher levels of civic engagement differ from cities with lower levels. One difference is that areas with higher levels of civic engagement also have higher levels of child welfare, better schools, less crime, healthier people, and better functioning democratic institutions (Putnam 2000).

While the criticisms of New Urbanism and social capital create a convincing argument, I believe that these concepts are still viable and theoretically sound. The principles of the New Urbanism movement and the concept of social capital are still valuable to this research and provide important devices to potentially confirm my
hypothesis that New Urbanism can create walkable and successful communities that promote community-making with urban patterns that facilitate knowing neighbors, communication among neighbors, community activities, and a long term sense of belonging. Furthermore, by incorporating the design principles of New Urbanism into new developments, communities can be successful, have a high level of social capital, and allow residents to experience a sense of community.
Chapter Five: Atlantic Station

The following two chapters provide a look at three case studies of neighborhoods developed according to New Urbanist planning and design principles: a large scale development in Atlanta, Georgia, Atlantic Station, with approximately 3,500 residents; a moderate scale development in Tampa, Florida, West Park Village, with approximately 2,000 residents; and a small scale development in Fernandina Beach, Florida, Amelia Park, with approximately 700 residents. These three case studies provide examples of the integration of the design principles of New Urbanism.

The main contribution to this research is the study Atlantic Station in Atlanta, GA, but two other New Urbanist developments were observed to further explore how New Urbanist developments function. At each of these sites, observations were made of the ways in which the design of the development has fostered community and created walkable and livable neighborhoods. At Atlantic Station quantitative research and developer and resident interviews were performed to gain further insight into how the neighborhood functions. Background on each case study is provided, as well as methods of research used, followed by the results of this research. These case studies are not equivalent or meant to be compared.

Background

Atlantic Station, in Atlanta, Georgia, is a leading example of a brownfield redevelopment that has utilized the principles of “traditional neighborhood
developments” to create what appears to be a vibrant mixed-use community. Atlantic Station was chosen as the subject of this research because it has been under development for almost ten years and has reached a level of maturity that can create viable and valid research evidence. The land on which Atlantic Station is situated was once the 138-acre Atlantic Steel Mill, but is now the largest urban brownfield redevelopment in the United States and serves as a national model for New Urbanism (Atlantic Station website).

Please see Figure 2 for a photograph of Atlantic Steel Mill.

Figure 2. Atlantic Steel Mill

http://www.epa.gov/region4/opm/nepa/atlanticsteel.html

The Jacoby Group initiated plans to redevelop the site in 1997. The property was under contract in 1997 and bought on the last day of 1999 by the Jacoby Group. It took a year to deconstruct the buildings and the following year was spent on remediating the land in conjunction with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Infrastructure development began the next year. The Jacoby Group was founded by Jim Jacoby in 1975
and focuses mainly on mixed-use developments, geocommunities, and greenspace preservation as well as ventures in healthcare research, environmental and alternative waste-to-energy technology, and new educational tools. Aside from Atlantic Station, the Jacoby Group has also developed Kona Kai Ola on the Kona side of the Big Island in Hawaii, is currently revitalizing Marineland near St. Augustine, FL, and plans to redevelop Hapeville Assembly Plant into the mixed-use development Aerotropolis in Hapeville, GA (Jacoby Group website). The goal of the developer when developing Atlantic Station was to recapture about 138 acres that had long been in industrial use in the heart of Atlanta. [T]o create a place that creates jobs, opportunities for people to live in a sustainable master plan that allows them to not use their car nearly as much as you’d have to…anywhere else in Atlanta and to have a sustainable community (Jacoby Group interview).

Atlantic Station is currently owned by AIG Global Real Estate Investment Corporation, a subsidiary of AIG Investments. Currently, forty to forty-five percent of the master plan has been constructed. Once the project is complete, $2 billion in new construction will be represented in three areas: 1) The District, 2) The Commons, and 3) The Village. These areas combined will provide:

• Six million square feet of class A office space
• 3,000 - 5,000 residential units (for-sale and for-rent)
• Two million square feet of retail and entertainment space, including restaurants and a movie theatre
• 1,000 hotel rooms
• 11 acres of public parks (Atlantic Station 2008)

The District serves as the town center with retail, office space, restaurants, entertainment venues, green space, and residential units (loft apartments above retail, single family detached homes, townhomes, and a new high-rise condo building opening in late 2009). There is metered street parking as well as an underground parking garage. See Figure 3 for a photograph of The District and Table 1 for a list of retailers, entertainment venues, restaurants and services within The District.

Figure 3. The District
Table 1. Retailers, Entertainment, Restaurants, and Services within The District

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retailers</th>
<th>Entertainment</th>
<th>Restaurants</th>
<th>Services</th>
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<td>American Eagle Outfitters</td>
<td>Bodies*</td>
<td>Atlantic Grill</td>
<td>19th Street Dental</td>
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<td>Ann Taylor</td>
<td>Cirque du Soleil*</td>
<td>Boneheads</td>
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<td>Ann Taylor Loft</td>
<td>Dark*</td>
<td>California Pizza Kitchen</td>
<td>ASAP+ Commuter Café</td>
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<td>AT&amp;T</td>
<td>Regal Cinemas 16</td>
<td>Cold Stone Creamery</td>
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<td>Banana Republic</td>
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<td>Bath &amp; Body Works</td>
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<td>Chaplin's</td>
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<td>City Sports</td>
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* denotes entertainment within The District during the observation period
Atlantic Station website
The Commons is the residential hub of the development. It includes residential units that encircle a two-acre lake and a large greenspace with an amphitheatre design to accommodate small outdoor events. The area also contains preserved structures from the former Atlantic Steel Mill (steel presses, a 60-foot smoke stack, etc.) to provide historic reminders. Please see Figure 4 for a picture of The Commons.

Figure 4. The Commons

The Village includes apartments and lofts, occupied by residents with mixed incomes and ages, and an IKEA store. Please see Figure 5 for a photograph of The Village.

Figure 5. The Village
Atlantic Station is well connected to surrounding neighborhoods and the 17th Street Bridge has been added to increase connectivity in Midtown Atlanta (Atlantic Station 1-3). See Figures 6-8 below to clarify location of Atlantic Station, property layout, residential property at Atlantic Station.

Figure 6. Atlantic Station Location Map

[Map Image]

http://www.intownelite.com/Atlantic_Station_Condos/page_2134583.html

Figure 7. Atlantic Station Property Map

[Map Image]

http://www.atlanticstation.com/site.php
This research uses qualitative and quantitative data to determine Atlantic Station’s success as a New Urbanist development. The indicators of success used include crime rate data, transportation statistics, level of satisfaction of developer, and level of satisfaction of residents. Crime rate was chosen because the literature shows that New Urbanism communities foster a sense of community and social capital which increases social trust among neighbors (Talen 2000, Rohe et al 1998) and these communities also have vibrant, interesting streets (Jacobs 1961). As Jane Jacobs states and is true in New Urbanism communities, a street that is equipped to handle strangers, has a clear boundary between the private and public realm, has many eyes upon the street, and is used fairly constantly tends to be safer (Jacobs 1961). Transportation statistics were chosen as an indicator of success because, again, as shown in the literature New Urbanism aims to
create communities in which you can live, work, shop, and play in the same place. These walkable, pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods tend to reduce the dependence on vehicles (Appleyard et al. 1987). Specific transportation indicators are listed in the methodology section. Interviews with the Jacoby Group and Atlantic Station residents were conducted to understand the motivation behind the development of Atlantic Station, as well as how this idea has translated into real-life living. Before interviews were performed, a day and a half was spent in Atlantic Station to create unbiased impressions and observations. After the interviews, first impressions were compared with the impressions given by the development group and different residents. Observations were used to understand whether the design principles laid out in the literature on New Urbanism have been utilized in the development of Atlantic Station. Visual images were used to allow the reader a first-hand look at the design and layout of Atlantic Station.

There are currently 3,500 people living at Atlantic Station, about 5,000 people working at Atlantic Station, and about 100,000 people visiting Atlantic Station every week. No study has been performed on Atlantic Station concerning the social success of the development.

Brownfields

Brownfields, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), are “real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant” (EPA website). Brownfield redevelopment provides many benefits to the specific city, county, state, and environment where the brownfield project is located. A most obvious benefit is the remediation of a polluted site which improves the surrounding environment and
groundwater in some cases. Most brownfields are located in or near the city center, so the redevelopment of these properties can attract urban infill by improved aesthetics, proximity to jobs, access to cultural activities, and tax incentives. With concerns about urban sprawl rising in many cities, their central locations provide an attractive alternative to suburban and ex-urban development in outlying areas, thus decreasing the demand for greenspace development. Brownfields are often large parcels of land situated near existing infrastructure and transportation routes so on the need for public investment for the project is decreased as opposed to a greenfield development (PolicyLink website). Many times jobs are created on the brownfield site for which there is a large labor pool in the surrounding areas. With a successful redevelopment project, the market value of surrounding areas usually increases, especially if the areas are low-income. If the residents of the surrounding communities choose to not stay in the neighborhood, they are often willing to sell their property on the open market and see a higher return than if the redevelopment had not taken place (Duany et al 2000).

Methodology

Quantitative research methods were used along with qualitative research methods (semi-structured interviews, observations and visual images) to understand the success of Atlantic Station. Following is a breakdown of each indicator of success including methods for obtaining data and what is deemed successful.

Indicator of success:

Crime Rate

Data from the Atlanta Police Department were used to determine whether the crime rate in the areas surrounding Atlantic Station and within Atlantic Station have
changed from 2001 to 2008 as compared to city-wide data. Data from the month of January from each year was used. January was chosen at random. If crime rate has decreased as compared to city-wide data, it will be deemed successful. Surrounding area is defined as Zone 5. The Atlanta Police Department has divided the city into six crime zones and Atlantic Station is located at the northwest corner of Zone 5 (see Figure 1 in Chapter 1). Crimes within Atlantic Station were also analyzed from December 14, 2008 to February 7, 2009 to determine types of crimes typically occurring. This two month time span was chosen to illustrate the types of crimes occurring in Atlantic Station using the most recent crime data available. The crime rate and types of crimes are compared to Atlanta-wide data also gathered from the Atlanta Police Department from the month of January from 2001 to 2008.

One limitation to this indicator is that before Atlantic Station was built, the land was unoccupied, which would lead to a decreased crime rate on the site. One would expect an increase in crimes when Atlantic Station had retailers and residents in it, especially larceny, residential burglary, and non-residential burglary, because there is a new set of opportunities for crimes. In 2001 the land Atlantic Station now sits on was still undergoing remediation, so 2001’s crime statistics will show a crime rate before the development of Atlantic Station, which will resolve this dilemma.

*Transportation*

Transportation issues in Atlantic Station were analyzed, including trip generation on the site, alternative transportation offered, and access to public transportation. Data were gathered from Atlantic Station, LLC through annual studies the group has conducted since 2001 called Project XL, a collaborative study with the EPA, as well as
the Atlantic Station Access and Mobility Program (ASAP+), a voluntary travel options program serving Atlantic Station. The 2008 Project XL Report includes transportation data from a series of four surveys, ending in October 2008, conducted to assess the site’s conformance with the State Implementation Plan (SIP) Transportation Control Measure (TCM). In February 2009, the data were compiled to create the Atlantic Station Monitoring and Evaluation Update Annual Assessment. Five specific performance measures are evaluated:

- average daily vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per resident;
- average daily VMT per employee working at the site;
- the percent of all combined trips made to, from, and on the site by residents and employees in modes other than single occupancy vehicles (SOV);
- origin and destination data for trips made to, from, and on the site by residents and employees; and,
- average daily travel to, from, and on the site, other than by transit for all purposes combined, including retail trips.

The study also compares the specific Atlantic Station transportation data to regional data. ASAP+ serves as Atlantic Station’s Transportation Management Association (TMA) and encourages residence trip reduction and travel mode alternatives to SOV use. The program “integrates parking strategies, transportation information, dedicated storefront space, individualized commuter consultations, incentives and promotional strategies to maximize the number of residents who live, work, and play onsite” (Project XL 2009). Specific programs studied in the 2008 Project XL Report include:
• Log Your Commute: the ASAP+ website allows resident commuters to log how they got to work each day in hope of winning a prize;

• Walk Challenge: residents wore a pedometer and log the number of steps they to each day to win prizes, including a weekend getaway;

• Ridematching: ridematching applications through ASAP+ help employees form carpools and vanpools;

• Outreach events;

• ASAP+ website;

• Commuter Café: a place where employees, residents, and visitors can discover transportation options;

• Bike Share: currently two bike share programs through Carter Management and IKEA which allows members to enjoy free, convenient access to bicycles for use in and around Atlantic Station;

• Bike Valet: free valet service for bikes, in conjunction with Atlanta Bicycle Campaign;

• Environmental Impact; and,

• Atlantic Station Free Shuttle: free shuttle service between the MARTA Arts Center Station and the community with multiple vehicles. There is also an “express” shuttle from the Wachovia Building to the MARTA Arts Center Station. The shuttle is in place due to an EPA requirement through the collaborative annual report, Project XL (Project XL 2009).

Success could be looked at in two ways regarding trip generation on site specifically: 1) success could mean less trip generation due to residents shopping and
working on site, or 2) success could mean increased trip generation due to visiting consumers. This difference in success could lead to skewed quantitative data in terms of trip generation. In order to resolve this dilemma, it will be considered a success if daily miles traveled by residents and employees of Atlantic Station is less than compared to regional data. Access and sustained use of alternative modes of transportation and public transportation will be deemed a success.

*Level of Satisfaction of the Developer, The Jacoby Group*

An in-person interview was conducted with a member of the Jacoby Group to gain an understanding of Atlantic Station’s development, and of the major objectives of the development group during the planning stages.

The interview was tape recorded and transcribed by hand. The interview tape was reviewed on the same day the interview was performed and transcribed soon after. While interviewing the member of the Jacoby Group, it was important for me to keep in mind positionality and reflexivity. This interview faced an inequality of positions between myself and the respondent because he was a partner in the development and had experienced Atlantic Station from the conceptual stage, whereas I had only read about, researched, and experienced Atlantic Station for a brief time in comparison. For this reason, it was important for me to put myself on the same causal plane as a major player of Atlantic Station. I was very transparent with the respondent and offered to share a copy of the transcript from our interview before submitting my final thesis. As expected the member of the Jacoby Group expressed many positive opinions about Atlantic Station, but I was able to ask enough probing questions to uncover disappointments with the project. Probes used during the development group interview included silent probes,
“ah ha” probes, echo probes, and tell me more probes. I tried to facilitate a candid discussion by creating a relaxed atmosphere. I believe I accomplished this by communicating my interests in this research along with experience and education I have had in this field.

Below are interview questions for the Jacoby Group:

1. What were the objectives of Jacoby when planning and developing Atlantic Station?

2. Is it exciting to live in Atlantic Station?

3. Do you feel like Atlantic Station provides an enhanced quality of life for residents as opposed to other neighborhoods in Atlanta?

4. What types of community groups are available for residents?

5. How does Atlantic Station interact with surrounding neighborhoods?

6. Were there objectives to facilitate civic success (i.e. community groups, community events, neighboring)?

7. What types of unexpected surprises have you encountered? Unexpected difficulties?

8. What would you do differently if you were beginning Atlantic Station planning today?

Level of Satisfaction of Atlantic Station Residents

Residents from Atlantic Station were also interviewed in person. The Atlantic Station Civic Association (ASCA) served as my main contact to access resident respondents. Resident interviewed were tape recorded and as with the Jacoby Group interview, recordings were listened to the same day as the interview and transcribed by hand within the next few days. As with the respondent from the Jacoby Group reflexivity and positionality played an important role in these four interviews. Again, it was
important to be transparent with respondents and offer transcriptions of interviews before
the submission of my thesis. I also gave a brief description of my intentions and
background on my research. I offered anonymity to each respondent to make the
respondent more comfortable. I received a few frank responses to interview questions
and in these cases I probed the respondent to understand why he or she felt so strongly.
Probes I used included silent probes, “ah ha” probes, echo probes, and tell me more
probes. I tried to be a relaxed and unselfconscious interviewer and personalize the
discussion by telling the respondent about my experience with “traditional neighborhood
developments” and other topics. As shown in the literature, aggressive interviewers tend
to elicit more information, so I believe I did my best to be sure to get answers to all of the
questions asked. Semi-structured interviews were utilized with all residents. Questions
for resident interviews follow below.

Below are questions for Atlantic Station residents:

1. How long have you lived in Atlantic Station?
2. Do you feel you have access to needs of daily living (groceries, supplies, etc)?
3. Do you commute to work? How many miles away? If not, do you work at home
   or onsite?
4. Do you shop in Atlantic Station regularly? Do you walk to the stores?
5. How often do you walk for a purpose (to the store, etc)?
6. Do you feel safe walking in terms of crime and traffic?
7. Are you involved in any Atlantic Station community groups? Which ones?
   Which ones are you not a part of and why?
8. Do you feel a sense of belonging in your neighborhood and community?
9. Have you made trusting relationships with your neighbors (i.e. are you comfortable calling them if there is an emergency, are you comfortable borrowing and lending items)?

10. Do you have children who live with you on the site? If so, are they involved in any onsite groups?

11. Do you feel like Atlantic Station provides an enhanced quality of life as opposed to other parts of Atlanta?

12. What unexpected surprises have you encountered while living in Atlantic Station? Unexpected difficulties?

13. What things would you change about Atlantic Station if you could?

14. Is it exciting to live at Atlantic Station?

Observations

Observations are used to determine whether design principles of New Urbanism have been incorporated into the development of Atlantic Station. Other observations were made on a Saturday to understand how lively the development is and if people (residents and strangers) are utilizing what Atlantic Station has to offer. I was sure to be aware of positionality. Reflexivity was a major consideration; I was as objective in my observations as I could be. I tried not to bring my own assumptions and beliefs into my observations, and I believe I was successful. I used field notes for my observations. After completing my observations, I made notes on my field observations and then wrote my personal feelings about what was uncovered in the observations. In order to provide a systematic approach to discussing the observation findings, I used the design principles of New Urbanism as laid out in Chapter 3 as a guide.

Visual Images
Visual images are also used in the form of pictures to illustrate the physical characteristics of Atlantic Station. The majority of the photographs are used as a supplemental tool to allow the reader to visualize the design and layout of the property. Photographs were taken in the residential areas, open areas, and retail areas. This allows the reader to see naturally occurring images and make their own assumptions about the landscape.

Data Analysis, Categories, and Codes

Three major themes exist throughout the research: 1) social success, 2) economic success, 3) physical success, with social success being of the most importance in this study. Social success is defined as whether a sense of community has been created among residents and throughout Atlantic Station. Social success, as seen in the literature, is a fundamental goal of New Urbanism. Social success includes whether residents have a sense of community, walkability of the neighborhood, safety, access to needs of daily living, and how exciting the development is to be in. Economic success is a factor because the development is mixed-use, as traditional neighborhoods are designed to be, so there should be signs that people are living in the development and people are shopping and playing (residents and strangers) in the development. Physical success is directly paralleled with the literature. If the development is a successful New Urbanism community, one should see many of the design principles utilized in the layout.

Results

Following are the results from both quantitative and qualitative research to explore the safety and resident and employee vehicle dependence of Atlantic Station as well as explore the design of Atlantic Station to understand how the design principles of
New Urbanism have been incorporated. The results are provided for each separate indicator of success.

**Crime Rate**

Crime rates in the greater Atlanta area seemed to have generally decreased between the years of 2004 and 2007, but 2008 shows an increase in all crimes except homicide and rape. Larceny is, by far, the most prevalent crime in the city, with auto theft coming in at a distant second. Residential burglary, aggravated assault, robbery, and non-residential burglary are fairly ubiquitous crimes in the city. Rapes and homicides are the least common crimes seen. Table 2 and Figure 9 illustrate the number and types of crimes committed in January from 2001 to 2008 city-wide (Atlanta Police Department website).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Homicide</th>
<th>Rape</th>
<th>Robbery</th>
<th>Agg. Assault</th>
<th>Res. Burglary</th>
<th>Non-Res. Burglary</th>
<th>Larceny</th>
<th>Auto Theft</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>2084</td>
<td>587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>2309</td>
<td>646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>438</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>1526</td>
<td>434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>1573</td>
<td>445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>482</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>1564</td>
<td>481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>1904</td>
<td>530</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Atlanta Police Department
Crime rates have generally decreased between the years of 2001 and 2008 in Crime Zone 5. Larceny is historically the most prevalent crime, with auto theft a distant second, both of which have decreased since 2001. Very few rapes and homicides have occurred in Zone 5 and these incidents are occurring less over time. Robbery, aggravated assault, and residential and non-residential burglary are all totaling an average of forty to forty-five incidents per year with general decreases over time. Overall, these statistics are similar to what the greater Atlanta area is witnessing. Table 3 and Figure 10 illustrate the crime statistics from Zone 5 from January 2001 to January 2008 (Atlanta Police Department website).
Table 3. Crimes in January from 2001 to 2008 in Zone 5, Atlanta, GA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Homicide</th>
<th>Rape</th>
<th>Robbery</th>
<th>Agg. Assault</th>
<th>Res. Burglary</th>
<th>Non-Res. Burglary</th>
<th>Larceny</th>
<th>Auto Theft</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>613</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>740</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>609</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>518</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparing city-wide crime data to Zone 5 crime data, similar trends are apparent. To demonstrate how Zone 5 is contributing to overall crime in Atlanta, Table 4 below shows at what percentage Zone 5 is contributing to each particular type of crime. Data from January 2008 was selected to show the most recent trends. If the percentage that Zone 5 is contributing to the overall crimes in Atlanta is over 16.3%, the Zone 5 is accounting for more than its equal share state-wide. This number was found because Atlanta is divided into six zones, each of which should account for 16.3% of crimes to
equal 100% for the city. The data show that Zone 5 is contributing more crimes than its share except for aggravated assault, residential burglary, and auto theft. See Table 4.

Table 4. Percentage Zone 5 is Contributing to Crimes in Atlanta in January 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crime</th>
<th>Zone 5</th>
<th>City-wide</th>
<th>% Zone 5 is contributing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homicide</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agg. Assault</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Res. Burglary</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Res. Burglary</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larceny</td>
<td>518</td>
<td>1904</td>
<td>27.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto Theft</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Atlanta Police Department

Comparing the rate of change in crime from 2001 and 2008 of Atlanta-wide and Zone 5 data show mixed results. Looking at Atlanta-wide data, homicide and rape decreased more as compared to Zone 5. All other crimes decreased more in Zone 5. The only crime that showed significant decrease as compared to city-wide data is auto theft. All other crimes do not show a significant difference. The only crime that did not experience a decrease from 2001 to 2008 is residential burglary. Residential burglary saw an increase in both Atlanta (30% increase) and Zone 5 of Atlanta (16% increase). A negative percentage shows a decrease in that specific crime over time.

Table 5. Rate of Change in Crime Between 2001 and 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crime</th>
<th>Atlanta</th>
<th>Zone 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homicide</td>
<td>-79.2%</td>
<td>-50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>-66.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>-16.5%</td>
<td>-26.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agg. Assault</td>
<td>-34.4%</td>
<td>-46.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Res. Burglary</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Res. Burglary</td>
<td>-35.4%</td>
<td>-49.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larceny</td>
<td>-9.6%</td>
<td>-15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto Theft</td>
<td>-9.7%</td>
<td>-48.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Atlanta Police Department
More recent crime statistics (December 14, 2008 through February 7, 2009) within Atlantic Station show that types and frequency of crimes are consistent with the greater Zone 5 area and Atlanta-wide crime data. Larceny is the most prevailing crime, with vehicle larceny next. There were two incidents of residential burglary and one incident of both auto theft and aggravated assault within the given time range. Table 6 and Figure 11 illustrate these crime statistics (Atlanta Police Department website).

Table 6. Recent Crimes at Atlantic Station

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Homicide</th>
<th>Robbery</th>
<th>Agg. Assault</th>
<th>Res. Burglary</th>
<th>Non-Res. Burglary</th>
<th>Larceny</th>
<th>Vehicle Larceny</th>
<th>Auto Theft</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/14/08 - 12/27/08</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/28/08 - 1/10/09</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/11/09 - 1/24/09</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/25/09 - 2/7/09</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Atlanta Police Department

Figure 11. Recent Crimes at Atlantic Station

Transportation

58
Using the transportation data from the 2008 Project XL Report, the five performance measures and the findings specific to Atlantic Station follow:

- Average daily vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per resident of the site: **13.9 miles**
- Average VMT per employee of the site: **11.8 miles**
- Percentage of trips made to, from, and on the site by residents and employees by non-single occupancy vehicles (SOV) modes of travel: **51%**
- Trip destinations:
  - *Trips Made to Site*: 43% of all trips made to the site were made using non-SOV modes.
  - *Trips Made from Site*: 60% of all trips made from the site were made using non-SOV modes.
  - *Trips Made Onsite*: 76% of all trips within the site were made using non-SOV modes.

- Average daily travel to, from, and on the site, other than by transit, for all purposes combined, including retail trips: **40,858** (Project XL 2009).

According to the 2007 regional data, which includes a 20-county modeling domain, the average individual travels 33.7 miles per day. Employed individuals travel an average of 18.85 miles per day and 39% of the trips made by individuals within the 20-county modeling domain are non-SOV trips (Project XL 2009). Please see Table 7 for a summary of Atlantic Station resident and employee transportation data as compared to Atlanta resident and employee transportation data.
Table 7. Resident and Employee Transportation Data for Atlantic Station (AS) and Atlanta (ATL)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AS/ATL VMT</th>
<th>Miles per day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AS Resident VMT</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATL Resident VMT</td>
<td>33.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AS Employee VMT</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATL Employee VMT</td>
<td>18.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AS/ATL non-SOV</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AS non-SOV</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATL non-SOV</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen by the survey results, Atlantic Station residents and employees are traveling less than the average regional resident and using non-SOV modes of travel more. According the 2008 Project XL Report, the site is currently exceeding the year-six performance targets for mode splits and daily VMT per resident and employees. Also, the Average Daily Total Vehicle Trips are well below the threshold (Project XL 2009). It appears that Atlantic Station has been successful at reducing commute times and increasing alternative modes of travel.

*Level of Satisfaction of Developer, The Jacoby Group*

One member of the development group was interviewed. The questions were mainly focused on the planning and design objectives of Atlantic Station, but also questions to understand the developer’s view of residential life at Atlantic Station (the respondent was not a resident of Atlantic Station). The respondent was a white male in his thirties. He has been with the Jacoby Group since 1997.

The main themes that came from this interview were the walkability of Atlantic Station, events that take place within Atlantic Station, and how the development group hopes the retail district will become more family-oriented. The respondent mentioned that walkability of Atlantic Station in the majority of his answers. He believes that this
feature has contributed to the success of the development. He states that because residents are less dependent on their cars and that many have a reduced commute time, it allows more time to be spent with family and friends and makes life in Atlantic Station more exciting.

A major design principle of New Urbanism is to create a walkable community. As shown by the studies performed by Hollie Lund and Kevin Leyden, residents of a walkable, mixed-use neighborhood tend to have higher levels of social capital and a greater sense of community (Lund 2002). These residents are also more likely to know their neighbors, participate politically, trust others, and be socially engaged (Leyden 2003).

In many of his answers, there was a mention of a certain event that has taken place (or was taking place at the time) in Atlantic Station and of popular restaurants in the development. The respondent stated, “[We] always have something going on. So right now we have Cirque de Soleil, and we have Taste of Atlanta, and we have a beach volleyball tournament, and we’ll have a St. Patrick’s Day celebration…” The mention of events and restaurants seemed very intentional and he was sure to make me aware of the positive and exciting things happening at Atlantic Station, much as I had expected. It was interesting to hear that all of the events he mentioned were planned as a city-wide event. There was no mention of Atlantic Station community-specific events.

He never referenced Atlantic Station as whole as a community, but did acknowledge the presence of the many “subset” community groups within specific buildings, such as Homeowners’ Associations. He believes that community groups should be organic and resident controlled. He stated during the interview,
Community groups are not controlled by the developer and that’s really what we want. The sooner that other people take ownership in the brand and address, the better the integrity…and sustainability of that address.

It has been surprising to the development group that Atlantic Station has become a place for Atlantans to go walk or “hang out,” which is “not great for business.” Weekend nights (especially during the summer) at Atlantic Station attract people who want “to see and be seen,” but these people are not the type of clientele desired by the developer it seems. The developer skirted around this issue and did not provide any specific characteristics that make this nightlife crowd undesirable, but he did state, “Ybor City is probably the closest thing to where you’re at [Tampa, FL] and sometimes on the weekend it’s probably a place you don’t want to be.” My assumption is that this crowd is younger and more of a party crowd than the developer had hoped for. The nightlife scene has detracted from Atlantic Station being family friendly. The group is making efforts to make the neighborhood more family friendly and “it’s getting better each year as we kind of tweak what’s going on.”

The group is hopeful that the success Atlantic Station has already seen will allow the neighborhood to grow and evolve over the next ten to fifteen years. They are currently working to complete a residential high-rise building in The District and have further plans for construction to complete the master plan, which is roughly fifty percent built out currently. When this construction is complete, $2 billion in new construction will be represented in the three areas of Atlantic Station. These areas combined will provide:

• Six million square feet of class A office space
• 3,000 - 5,000 residential units (for-sale and for-rent)
• Two million square feet of retail and entertainment space, including restaurants and a movie theatre
• 1,000 hotel rooms
• 11 acres of public parks (Atlantic Station 2008)

Level of Satisfaction of Atlantic Station Residents

Interview subjects were difficult to identify due to reasons beyond my control, but I was able to conduct four resident interviews. It is important to note that the respondents were self-selected and half of them were board members of the Atlantic Station Civic Association (ASCA). Three respondents were white males, and one respondent was a white female. The ages of the respondents ranged from early thirties to mid-fifties, with the female respondent being the youngest. Three of the respondents were married, but only one had a child at the time. Three respondents own a condominium, each in a different building and one male respondent owns a townhome. Each respondent has lived in Atlantic Station for an average of three years.

The major themes presented from the four respondents were the walkability of Atlantic Station, the formation of trusting relationships with neighbors over time, the involvement with specific buildings’ Homeowner’ Associations, and the need to create a more family-oriented retail district. Walkability of Atlantic Station was a major theme throughout each interview. Each respondent viewed the walkability of the neighborhood as a very positive feature, and this feature seemed to create a greater sense of belonging among respondents. Each respondent walks for a purpose within Atlantic Station multiple times a week, usually to visit Publix or Target. Statements made by the
respondents on the walkability of the neighborhood include “we never have to use our car,” “we can walk to shopping, and walk to the gym, and walk to the grocery store,” “I think what sets Atlantic Station apart is being able to get to everything by walking, which…if you’re living in a city [is] what you’re really looking for,” and, “being able to combine errands with walking is nice.”

As mentioned earlier, a major design principle of New Urbanism is to create a walkable community. Residents of a walkable, mixed-use neighborhood tend to have higher levels of social capital and a greater sense of community (Lund 2002) and are also more likely to know their neighbors, participate politically, trust others, and be socially engaged (Leyden 2003).

It seems as though each respondent has created at least one trusting relationship in the neighborhood. Each trusting relationship has been made within the residents specific buildings. The idea that residents are making trusting relationships in the building in which they live strays from what the specific literature on New Urbanism in this paper discusses, such as the article by Donald Appleyard and Allan Jacobs, but the same principle still applies. Appleyard and Jacobs claim that buildings built close together help to define a space (1987). These spaces are more likely to draw people to them and promote social interactions between neighbors (Appleyard et al 1987). These spaces in Atlantic Station happen to be present within each large residential building as opposed to among multiple single-family homes.

It is important to note that New Urbanism is applicable at all scales, from high-density neighborhoods in large cities to small communities in the countryside. An example of a high-density New Urban neighborhood in a large city is Duany Plater-
Zyberk & Company’s Liberty Harbor North project in Jersey City, New Jersey. This development is designed to have sixteen to thirty-two story buildings that have densities ranging from 100 to 160 gross dwellings per acre and two light rail stations. These types of urban neighborhoods are just as important as the small town model, according to New Urbanist theory (Ellis 2002). “New Urbanism has long since moved beyond its first Greenfield projects into a wide range of inner-city infill development at unmistakably high densities” (Ellis 2002, 267). Atlantic Station is an example of such a project. In short, there are many smaller communities within one large community, but residents are experiencing a sense of community just the same. Figure 12 shows low-rise condominium buildings as well as a high-rise condominium building under construction.

Figure 12. Residential buildings

This concept of having many small communities within one large community is also illustrated through the different Homeowners’ Associations (HOA) within Atlantic Station. Each respondent is involved in their buildings’ HOA, but half were unaware of
any other community groups within Atlantic Station. The other half only knew of the Atlantic Station Civic Association.

Through these interviews it is clear to see that residents are experiencing a sense of community and there is also a level of social capital present. Social capital is composed of civic engagement and trust. Civic engagement is the “degree to which citizens participate in activities that affect the political decision making process at all levels” (Rohe et al 1998, 63). Individuals who have high levels of social capital tend to volunteer in their community, interact with friends and neighbors more, and be involved politically (Rohe et al 1998). The four residents interviewed are all civically engaged in their HOA, all have made trusting relationships with neighbors, and are a part of the political decision making process in their buildings. Two respondents are a part of the political decision making process in the entire neighborhood, by having leadership roles in the Atlantic Station Civic Association.

The final theme presented in the four resident interviews was that Atlantic Station needed to create a more family-oriented retail district. The respondents believe the retail district is detracting from allowing residents to feel a true sense of community and belonging. One respondent stated,

[T]hey’re just trying to get the retail area under control and make it more of a family area and not somewhere a bunch of people come to party and cruise and stuff like that, because that takes away from people wanting to be there all the time.

Another respondent stated,
Much of the activity at Atlantic Station comes from outside of Atlantic Station. People come in to do something - in that sense there’s no sense of community at all. We’re living up against all this great stuff, but we don’t interact with it any differently than the people that are coming in.

The respondents believe that if the retail district hosted more family-oriented and cultural community events, that it would give residents a greater chance to get to know other residents from outside of their building and build a greater sense of community. While having a vibrant retail district like Atlantic Station does is part of the idea of being a “traditional neighborhood,” I think residents did not realize Atlantic Station would become such a “hotspot” in Atlanta. While the developer is surely please with the foot traffic in Atlantic Station, it seems residents would prefer a more family friendly area as opposed to the club scene the retail district has seemingly become.

Communication and community activities are facilitated by the creation of public spaces, such as parks, coffee shop, and other “great good places,” providing activities for meeting and acting on common interests. While Atlantic Station seems to have the infrastructure to support the types of events residents are asking for, there are few community-specific events taking place.

Observations

Observations of the design of Atlantic Station revealed the inclusion of many of the design principles discussed in Chapter 3, as well as some major components missing. The design principles of New Urbanism as laid out in Chapter 3 serve as a guide to describe the property. The streets within Atlantic Station provide a continuous sidewalk network. The streets within The District are traffic calmed with stop signs, but are not
particularly narrow. This area is the most walkable in Atlantic Station. However, the street (17th Street) that runs through the middle of Atlantic Station is a major Atlanta road and does not feel particularly safe to walk on or cross. In order to reach the townhomes within The District, you must cross this busy road. In The Commons and The Village there is little on-street parking, and 17th Street is the main road to access these areas by walking. 16th Street, which is south of 17th Street, provides a more hospitable walking environment, but this street is also busy. Aside from retail section of The District, there are little to no design features (street trees, on-street parking) that serve as buffers between the pedestrian realm and motor vehicles, leading to a blurred definition of the pedestrian right-of-way. Figure 13 provides an illustration of the lack of any buffer on 17th Street.

Figure 13. 17th Street
The streets of Atlantic Station do have a clear boundary between public and private space. In the residential areas, this is true because the apartment and condominium building all have gates off of the sidewalk in which you must have a key to enter. The retail area is entirely public, but the office building within this area has a security guard, which creates a privatized public space in which not everyone feels welcome. All building in Atlantic Station face the street which creates “eyes on the street” and the majority of the streets are used fairly continuously by strangers and residents alike.

Atlantic Station does provide dense residential development, but not in the traditional New Urban layout. The residential development is made up of multiple high-rise condominiums, low-rise apartment buildings, attached townhomes, and very few single family homes. “Traditional neighborhood developments” are typically made up of many smaller buildings with compound arrangements and relationships as opposed to a few large buildings. Atlantic Station is certainly made up of large buildings, with the exception of a handful of single-family homes and two rows of attached townhomes.

Figure 14. Townhomes
The buildings are built close together and are close to the street which helps to define a space that facilitates social interaction between neighbors and others. In the case of the townhomes, there is an alley system that separates utility and garage access from sidewalks. The condominium and apartment buildings offer parking in a parking garage within the building. The few single-family homes that exist within Atlantic Station are situated on the south boundary of the property and feel disconnected from the rest of the development. These homes do have an alley system, but there are no front porches which can lead to a disconnect between the public and private realms. Figure 15 illustrates the inclusion of apartment buildings (far right), low-rise condominium buildings (left), and a high-rise condominium building.

Figure 15. Dense residential development

Atlantic Station has a mixed land use plan in which people are able to conduct activities of daily living without having to get into their car. There are many “great good places” including restaurants, a coffee shop, and a bowling alley, but very few of these establishments are small, independently owned venues. The lack of independently owned venues could create a lacking interesting and attractive street environment which encourages lingering and meeting people (Mehta 2009). It appears that these
establishments are largely visited by non-residents, which could diminish the possibility of casual encounters between neighbors.

Daily observations revealed that The District is a popular destination for Atlanta shoppers. The District offers mainly national chain stores and functions as an outside mall. There is a very high retail occupancy level. There are less than five vacant retail spaces.

During the week, even though it was chilly and cloudy outside, the retail area was relatively busy. People were shopping, going to movies, and eating at restaurants for lunch and dinner. There is a small greenspace in the center of The District which serves as “Central Park.” People use this space sparingly and it is quite small in comparison to the rest of the retail district.

During the weekend, Saturday was extremely busy in the retail district. An unexpected number of people were shopping, especially because it was overcast and drizzling that day. The Exhibition Center, which was hosting “Dialogue in the Dark” and “Bodies, The Exhibit” during the observation period, was also extremely busy with a line forming outside of the entrance for most of the day. Around five o’clock in the afternoon there was an obvious shift in clientele. People who had been shopping during the day began leaving the site and those coming to experience nightlife at Atlantic Station were starting to arrive. Weekend nightlife is also very busy. The restaurants were not completely full, but there were many people there. Many people were at the movies as well as a few bowling and having drinks at bars and restaurants. Figure 16 illustrated the walkability and foot traffic within The District. Please see Appendices B, C, and D for visual images of Atlantic Station.
Figure 16. Saturday shoppers in The District
Chapter Six: Amelia Park and West Park Village

Methodology for Amelia Park and West Park Village

Observations

Observations are used to determine whether design principles of New Urbanism have been incorporated into the development of Amelia Park and West Park Village. Other observations were made to understand how lively the development is and if people (residents and strangers) are utilizing the amenities Amelia Park and West Park Village has to offer. I was sure to be aware of positionality. Reflexivity was a major consideration; I was as objective in my observations as I could be. I tried not to bring my own assumptions and beliefs into my observations, and I believe I was successful. I used field notes for my observations. After completing my observations, I made notes on my field observations and then wrote my personal feelings about what was uncovered in the observations. In order to provide a systematic approach to discussing the observation findings, I used the design principles of New Urbanism as laid out in Chapter 3 as a guide.

Visual Images

Visual images are also used in the form of pictures to illustrate the physical characteristics of Amelia Park and West Park Village. The majority of the photographs are used as a supplemental tool to allow the reader to visualize the design and layout of the property. Photographs were taken in the residential areas, open areas, and retail areas.
This allows the reader to see naturally occurring images and make their own assumptions about the landscape.

Data Analysis, Categories, and Codes

Three major themes exist throughout the research: 1) social success, 2) economic success, 3) physical success, with social success being of the most importance in this study. Social success, as seen in the literature, is a fundamental goal of New Urbanism. Social success includes walkability of the neighborhood, safety, access to needs of daily living, and how exciting the development is to be in. Economic success is a factor because the development is mixed-use, as traditional neighborhoods are designed to be, so there should be signs that people are living in the development and people are shopping and playing (residents and strangers) in the development. Physical success is directly paralleled with the literature in Chapter 3. If the development is a successful New Urbanism community, one should see many of the design principles utilized in the layout.

Amelia Park

Background

Amelia Park, located in the city of Fernandina Beach on Amelia Island, FL, is a 110-acre “traditional neighborhood development.” It was designed by town planners Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk and founded by HomeTown Neighborhoods

1 Joel Embry, the developer of Amelia Park, is my father and I have seen this development progress from the conceptual stages to where it is today. This fact presented many benefits: I am familiar with the development, I understand the motivation behind the development, I have a deep understanding of the goals of the developer, and I had easy access to data. Drawbacks to using Amelia Park as a case study include a risk of lack of objectivity and favoritism. I have tried to overcome these drawbacks by using the same methods in my observations as in the other two case studies to produce fair and comparable results, being transparent with my father about negative results from my observation, and being as objective as possible. I believe I was able to be objective and keep my personal feelings out of my results and discussion.
in 1998 (please see Table 2 for a complete timeline). It is permitted for 421 dwelling
units in a variety of single-family and multi-family styles. The Amelia Park master plan
was constructed in ten construction units within two phases. These two phases are
separated by Park Avenue, the central road within Amelia Park. The construction units
were typically twenty to forty dwelling units and were mixed to offer a diversity of living
styles in each unit. Phase 1, Unit 2 was an exception with a concentration on the town
square and town center uses. Phase 2, Unit 10 was an exception in its size, with
approximately eighty dwelling units. The cost of the land and land development in
Amelia Park was $14 million and homes and buildings cost a total of $70 million,
totaling $84 million to date. Currently 320 homes exist within the development, with
approximately 700 residents. There remain seventy residential lots to be constructed, as
well as the majority of the town center. These areas will be developed when the
adjoining 18 ½ acres are developed, as shown in Table 8. The date of this continued
development remains unknown (Embry interview).

Table 8. Amelia Park Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Land acquisition, urban design charrette and regulatory approval (PUD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Master plan modification, PUD amendment and ground breaking for Unit 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Model homes open and marketing of single family homes and townhouses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>First Garden District lots constructed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-2002</td>
<td>Mixed-type phases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Julie Sanford engaged as Town Architect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coastal District architectural charrette with Steve Mouzon and New Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Guild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Acquisition of adjoining 18.5 acres</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Fernandina Beach Planning and Zoning Department was not seeking a plan
for a mixed-use development at the time the proposed master plan for Amelia Park was
submitted. The office was not well informed and was skeptical of the plan, but were
accommodating with a basic education of the principles. Hometown Neighborhoods educated the planning office with a visual preference comparison. A slideshow comparison of contemporary subdivisions in Fernandina Beach versus the Fernandina Beach historic district was shown. The comparison of conditions underlying variances with the existing land development code were explained by example in the slideshow. Variances were achieved by comparing the proposed plan of Amelia Park to the existing conditions in the historic district in Fernandina Beach.

The Amelia Park Town Center will accommodate 70,000 square feet of retail space with office, residential, and lodging permitted above. The McArthur Family YMCA, meeting facilities, Holy Trinity Anglican Church, and the Amelia Island Montessori School are located in the neighborhood. The town center currently hosts The Travel Agency, Serenity Hair Color & Design, and nine professional offices. Lakes, parks, and play fields are located throughout, including a unique Garden District providing pedestrian connectivity through natural garden walks. The Garden District provides neighborhoods of residences, which front a native landscape established before the development of Amelia Park. Garden District blocks were designed to take advantage of existing and mature landscape, preserving and enhancing the natural habitat and providing a pedestrian network that weaves its way through the entire neighborhood. The Garden District includes homes fronting this landscape so that their architecture becomes part of the public realm (Amelia Park Brochure n.d.). Please see Appendix E for pictures of the Garden District. Amelia Park also has mail stations where residents retrieve their mail as opposed to having mail delivered to residence doors. This provides a place where neighbors can meet and experience the chance encounters Jane Jacobs
speaks of (1961). All dwelling units lie within a 5-minute walk of Amelia Park’s civic sites, retail stores, services and recreation facilities, giving residents pedestrian accessibility to all activities of daily living via the Garden District (Amelia Park Brochure n.d.).

The objectives of Amelia Park, as laid out by the developer and president of HomeTown Neighborhoods, Joel Embry, were to create a neighborhood where residents could age in place, create a live-work-play neighborhood, offer price accessibility, offer superior value, and provide a model for a coherent local growth pattern. Aging in place provides a community that’s walkable, an inter-generational mix of residents, in-home support and health care, accessible services within or near neighborhood, a continuum of housing types, and ease of connectivity with neighbors. Providing a live-work-play neighborhood includes creating a mix of residential, retail, office, and civic uses, advanced communications infrastructure, regulatory approval of home businesses, a neighborhood work center, and support for telecommuters. In order for there to be price accessibility there is a mix of housing types and prices, a broad range of pricing options, mid-market pricing, and is competitive with conventional subdivisions. Superior value means that there is a superior urban environment within Amelia Park, there is consistent quality design and construction, and that there is a customer satisfaction goal of all creators. Finally, having Amelia Park stand as a model for a coherent local growth pattern it must reflect local historic neighborhoods, be a compact development, be walkable and mixed-use, have narrow, interconnected streets, and provide a neighborhood civic life (Amelia Park Objectives n.d.).
The motivation of the developer to plan and develop Amelia Park was to build a product that satisfied the needs of residents at a higher level, to provide the opportunity of a higher quality of life, and to hopefully create an authentic sense of community. Another motivation of the developer was to increase the market share for Amelia Park versus the competitors’ conventional subdivisions which were comparable to the six subdivisions the developer had developed prior to undertaking a “traditional neighborhood development” (Embry interview).

Amelia Park was chosen as a case study for this research because it has been under construction for over ten years and has many residents, it is located in the center of Fernandina Beach, FL, and it is a “traditional neighborhood development”. Observations and visual images are used to understand and analyze whether Amelia Park has utilized the design principle of New Urbanism as laid out in the literature.

Figure 17. Location of Amelia Park on Amelia Island, FL

http://www.visitameliapark.com/directions.shtml
Figure 18. Amelia Park location in Fernandina Beach, FL

Provided by Joel Embry

Figure 19. Amelia Park Master Plan

Amelia Park Brochure
Results

Observations

Observations of Amelia Park uncovered the utilization of many of the design principles discussed in Chapter 3, with the exception of one major component. The streets of Amelia Park provide a continuous sidewalk network. Every street is narrow and traffic calmed, mainly through the use of islands and curves. Every street includes street trees and on-street parking, which serves as a buffer between the pedestrian realm and motor vehicles and provides a spatial definition to the pedestrian right-of-way.

Figure 20. Traffic calming and buffers

The streets have a clear boundary between public and private space due to houses close to the street and the inclusion of front porches on the majority of homes. All buildings on the street face the street, which provides “eyes on the street” (Jacobs 1961). The streets are not used continuously as the majority of the retail area, or town center, has not been developed and there are not a large number of residents as compared to the other two case studies observed.
There is dense residential development with the inclusion of single-family homes, attached townhomes, live-work homes, and apartments (many of the apartments have yet to be developed as they will be situated above retail locations). Buildings are placed so that they define public space between and around them instead of simply sitting in space and many smaller buildings with compound arrangements and relationships exist as opposed to few large buildings. No building on the property exceeds two stories. All buildings within Amelia Park, including retail buildings and residential buildings, are built close together and close to the street to define a space that is more likely to draw people to them and promote social interactions between neighbors and others. There is a diversity of housing type throughout much of the development and all housing types are mixed, i.e. townhomes are adjacent to single-family homes.

Figure 21. Single-family homes
Throughout the development there are alleys to separate utility and garage access and all single-family homes have front porches with sidewalks close to facilitate connection between public and private realms. There are not many “great good places” as of today because the retail area has yet to be developed. It is the hope of the developer that one day such places will exist in Amelia Park (Embry interview). There is a hair salon, but that is the extent of a place that could be considered a “great good place.”

Amelia Park is planned with a mixed land use. As of now, residents are not able to conduct all activities of daily living with having to get into their car. Residents do have access to the McArthur Family YMCA, a place of worship, a salon, and a travel
agency. There are plans for the Amelia Island Montessori School to be built in Amelia Park in the near future. Again, the retail district of Amelia Park is largely undeveloped, but the establishments that are there are all small, independently owned venues.

One interesting difference between Amelia Park and Atlantic Station and West Park Village is the inclusion of the Garden District. This area provides a meandering walkway through a natural landscape with homes fronting the walkway. There are six blocks that make up the Garden District, two with larger two-story single-family homes, two with modest single-level cottages, and two with townhomes.

Figure 24. Garden District

Observations were made on a cool and overcast Tuesday at eleven o’clock in the morning. My observations began at the YMCA where there were many people using the facility. Walking from the YMCA through the neighborhood it was very quiet. During my observations I saw four people walking, one person biking, and four people jogging. It may have been so quiet because it was a weekday or because Amelia Park has so few residents as compared to Atlantic Station and West Park Village. During a walk through one of the Garden Districts, a couple was having an early lunch on their porch and I stopped to talk with them. They were interested in what I was doing and what my
research was about. In the retail district it was extremely quiet, due to the fact that there are so few establishments. The park in the town center was empty except for the lawn maintenance crew that was doing work. There was a sign on the green that was promoting a jazz festival that had occurred the weekend before on the green. Traffic was fairly quiet throughout the development except for Park Avenue, the main thoroughfare, which serves as a cut-through between Citrona Drive and 14th Street and also is the road leading to the YMCA. I am unable to comment on the level of social capital and sense of community found in the neighborhood because I was unable to talk to residents of Amelia Park due to time restraints. Please see Appendix E for more visual images of Amelia Park.

West Park Village in Westchase

Background

Westchase, located fourteen miles northwest of Tampa, FL, is a 2,000-acre planned community that includes seventeen neighborhoods, or “villages” founded in 1991, when the plan was approved by the Hillsborough County Planning and Zoning Commission, as a PUD (Planned Unit Development) (Westchase Community Association website). Within these seventeen villages there is an 18-hole golf course, trails for walking and jogging and sidewalks for biking and skating, two parks and two swim and tennis centers, and West Park Village, which serves as the town center (Terrabrook website). West Park Village serves as the case study site within Westchase.

West Park Village is a 185-acre, 10.7-square-mile “traditional neighborhood development” that includes about 500 single-family homes, villas, and townhomes, over 600 apartments, and 41,000 square feet of retail space with 60 luxury apartments above
Terrabrook, a Dallas-based development company and Westchase’s master developer, developed the residential and retail area of West Park Village and Gables Residential Trust Company developed the rental community (Bokun 1999). The residential section of West Park Village opened in February 2000 and the retail area opened in November 2001 and hosts thirty-two businesses (Stark 2000 and Pease 2001). The rental community was completed in 2003.

Figure 25. Westchase Location Map

http://www.terrabrook.com/properties/community_map.asp?id=034
Observations of West Park Village revealed a development planned fairly close to design principles of New Urbanism as discussed in Chapter 3. The streets of West Park Village provide a continuous sidewalk network. The only traffic calming feature is the narrow roadways. There are street trees and on-street parking that serve as buffers between the pedestrian realm and motor vehicles and provide a spatial definition to the pedestrian right-of-way. Several drivers take advantage of on-street parking, which can cause a back-up in traffic as witnessed the day of observations.
There is a clear boundary between public and private space. In the residential area, the sidewalk provides this boundary. All of the space in the retail area is public, with the exception of apartments above retail locations. All buildings in West Park Village face the street, which allows for “eyes” to be upon the street (Jacobs 1961). The streets seem to be used fairly continuously, especially in the retail district.

West Park Village provides dense residential development and utilizes a mixed land-use design. There is a diversity of types of homes, including single-family homes, attached townhomes, and apartments. Buildings are placed so that they define the public space between and around them instead of simply sitting in space. There are many greenspaces between and around buildings.

Figure 27. Street view

Figure 28. Townhomes along Village Plaza

Figure 29. Single-family home
The development does include low-rise apartment buildings, but it is able to accomplish the feel of many smaller buildings with compound arrangements and relationships as opposed to a few large buildings. No building is higher than three stories. All buildings in the development are built close together and are close to the street which helps define the space in which the building sits.

Figure 30. Apartment building

Within the mixed land-use plan, there are several “great good places,” such as a coffee shop, a bagel shop, and several restaurants within the retail district. Many of these establishments are small and independently owned. The coffee shop is a national chain store, but the majority of shops and restaurants are locally owned. Residents are able to conduct activities of daily living without having to get into their car, except for grocery shopping. There is no market or grocer within West Park Village.
Figure 31. Retail district

Observations were made on a sunny and warm Saturday at eleven thirty in the morning. The retail district was very busy, with many people sitting outside enjoying coffee or an early lunch. I saw children playing in the water feature in the Village Plaza, as well as two people swimming in the pool provided for apartment dwellers. There is quite a bit of greenspace in the retail district as well as the residential district. In the retail district townhomes and apartments surround the Village Plaza and in the residential district there is a block of homes which all face a greenspace. I am unable to comment on the level of social capital and sense of community found in the neighborhood because I was unable to talk to residents of West Park Village due to time restraints.

The residential district was very busy with cars and pedestrians. This is due in part to the community garage sale that was occurring during my observations. There is an alley system that connects to most of the townhomes and single-family homes. Parking for apartments is within the building. Some single-family homes had personal garages in the back of the house, but connected to a front driveway. There was also a section of homes that had garages in the front of the house. Each street has on-street parking and drivers tend to fully take advantage of this feature. There were so many cars
parked on the street that traffic was backed up and moving quite slowly. The entrance into the retail district was also very backed up with vehicles. Parking for the retail district includes on-street parking and parking lots in the back of stores. Figures 32 and 33 show single-family garage options. Please see Appendix F for more visual images of West Park Village.

Figure 32. Garage in back of home

Figure 33. Garage in front of home
Chapter Seven: Discussion

Atlantic Station

Crime Rate

The data show that the decrease in crime in Zone 5 is consistent with city-wide trends, but does not show that Atlantic Station is necessarily a safer place to live as opposed to other neighborhoods in Atlanta. The year 2001 serves as a baseline for crimes in the Zone 5 because the area was under construction at the time and there were no retail venues or residents. In short, there were not many opportunities for crimes to occur. In 2002, when the first residents and shops were present in Atlantic Station, each crime increased except for homicide and residential burglary, which decreased, and rape, which remained constant. It is interesting to see a decrease in residential burglaries, but this could be due to the fact that Zone 5 encompasses adjacent neighborhoods as well. The larceny and vehicle larceny incidents occurring at Atlantic Station are mainly confined to the retail district, which can be expected at any major shopping area.

Comparing city-wide data to Zone 5 data shows that the most prevalent types of crimes as well as the general decrease of all crimes are consistent between the two. In other words, Zone 5 is experiencing crime trends that are being seen throughout the city of Atlanta. Zone 5 contributes no more than 27.2% of any crime to the greater Atlanta area. Zone 5 contributes 27.2% of larceny incidents in all of Atlanta. This could be due to the fact that Atlantic Station has a popular and large retail district.
Jane Jacobs’ notion of “eyes on the street” (1961) seems to play a part in Atlantic Station, but not fully. Jacobs argues that in order to create a safe street, three qualities must exist on a specific street: 1) have a clear boundary between public and private space; 2) have “eyes upon the street”; and, (3) the street should be used fairly continuously (Jacobs 1961). While the streets of Atlantic Station seem to possess each of these qualities, it is interesting to see Zone 5 contribute more than its share of total Atlanta crimes in five crime categories (homicide, rape, robbery, non-residential burglary, and larceny). As mentioned above, these numbers, especially in the case of non-residential burglary and larceny, could be due to the large number of retailers in the area. Within larceny, vehicle larceny is included. Parking for the retail district of Atlantic Station is underground with little to no security, so this may be a factor in the high number of larceny events in the area, specifically vehicle larceny. The number of vehicle larceny events within Atlantic Station appears to contribute to a quarter of all larceny events.

Looking specifically at the crime data within Atlantic Station between December 14, 2008 and February 2, 2009, it appears that this data is consistent with the trends seen in Zone 5 and the greater Atlanta area. In this small span of time, larceny was by far the most prevalent. Residential burglary was the second most prevalent crime, with aggravated assault and auto theft tying for third.

Overall, Zone 5 crime data and Atlantic Station specific data are typically consistent with city-wide data. Because of this consistency, Atlantic Station has not been proven to be a safer place to live and play as opposed to other parts of Atlanta.

*Transportation*
Atlantic Station residents and employees appear to travel less vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and utilize non-single occupancy vehicles (SOV) more often than the average Atlanta resident and employee. Residents of Atlantic Station travel an average of 19.8 miles less than residents of Atlanta as a whole. Employees of Atlantic Station travel an average of 7.05 miles less than employees in the greater Atlanta area. Atlantic Station residents and employees are also using non-SOV modes of travel 12% more than other Atlantans.

As indicated by Appleyard et al in the discussion of New Urbanism and “traditional neighborhood developments,” New Urbanism aims to create communities in which you can live, work, shop, and play in the same place. These walkable, pedestrian friendly neighborhoods tend to reduce the dependence on vehicles (Appleyard et al 1987). The data show that the placement and design of Atlantic Station, as well as access to alternative modes of travel are decreasing the dependence resident and employees of Atlantic Station have on their personal vehicles, as well as single occupancy vehicles altogether. This indicator has shown success in reducing resident and employee commute times and increasing the use of alternative modes of transportation within Atlantic Station.

**Level of Satisfaction of Developer and Atlantic Station Residents**

The respondent from the development group as well as the resident respondents all believe that the walkability of Atlantic Station is one of the most successful features of the development. I believe that is the main contributor to residents’ sense of belonging. As discussed in the observations section below, I felt vulnerable to cars and traffic when walking down 17th Street and half of the respondents also mentioned the large amount of
traffic that can make the walk to the retail district more challenging. Atlantic Station has created the infrastructure to make the neighborhood walkable, and it seems as though residents view the walkability as a key component to their quality of life.

It is interesting to hear respondents describe the community within their buildings, but only one respondent spoke of having a sense of community outside of their building. The respondent who does feel a sense of community outside of their building is also a board member of the Atlantic Station Civic Association. The general belief of New Urbanism is that it is a tool to create the small town experience, but as pointed out in the results of the resident interviews, New Urbanism can be applied to neighborhoods of all scales. Even with the absence of single-family homes and the typical look of a New Urbanist neighborhood with front porches lining the street, residents are still able to experience a sense of community. While residents will not experience casual encounters while they work on their lawn or sit on their front porch, they are able to experience these casual encounters within their dense residential buildings (Duany et al 2000).

As explained in the results section, there seems to be a level of social capital within specific residential buildings. Each respondent is involved in a community group within their building. As Putnam claims, social capital refers to “features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (Putnam 1995). I believe that each respondent is involved in a social organization that does facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit by being a part of their building’s HOA. Members of the HOA work together to ensure requests and comments from residents of the building are heard and considered.
I believe if the residents request for more community activities was fulfilled, an enriched sense of community and sense of community identity would be seen (Duany et al 2000). While there are many events that take place for all Atlantans to enjoy, I think the neighborhood would benefit from events meant for the residents of Atlantic Station. While the developer quite obviously is pleased with the success of the retail district and the high turnout of city-wide events, I think it would be beneficial for the community if the developer and management group also included community-specific events. I do not believe that the development and management group needs to decrease the amount of city-wide events taking place by any means, just simply add events that involve the community specifically. It is interesting and encouraging the note that the respondent from the development group also hopes to have more community-specific events.

It was interesting to see the parallel of themes between the respondent from the member of the development group and the resident respondents. I believe that the developer of Atlantic Station, as well as most New Urbanist developers, created a “traditional neighborhood development” and provided an array of tools to in hopes of residents creating an authentic community. Authentic community is the fruition of knowing neighbors, communicating among neighbors, involvement in community activities, and a long term sense of belonging. “Traditional neighborhood developments” create the urban patterns that foster this community making. The tools developers use include the design features spoken of in Chapter 3, basically the infrastructure, but residents themselves are the ones who are able to create authentic community – the developer does not have this power. As opposed to contemporary subdivisions, New Urbanist developers, such as the Jacoby Group, make a conscious decision to provide
these tools to create a traditional neighborhood and they hope residents continue on to create authentic community within the “traditional neighborhood development.”

**Observations**

Looking specifically at the design of Atlantic Station as compared to the discussion of the design principles of New Urbanism as laid out in Chapter 3, it is clear that Atlantic Station is lacking some key principles that could potentially make this development more in line with the principles of New Urbanism. While Atlantic Station has a continuous sidewalk network, the entire development is not particularly walkable and does not minimize the negative impacts of automobiles on pedestrians. The retail district is comfortable to walk in, but The Commons and The Village has a large amount of traffic. While walking down 17th Street myself, I felt quite vulnerable to the large amount of traffic and the lack of any buffer to create a spatial definition to the pedestrian right-of-way. It felt much like walking down a busy road in Atlanta, which it is. The retail district is equipped with crossing guards that ensure vehicles stop for pedestrians. It would be a much more walkable neighborhood if pedestrians felt this safe throughout Atlantic Station. Not that crossing guards are needed, but if the streets outside of The District were narrow and traffic calmed. In terms of crime, the streets of Atlantic Station do feel safe. All of the buildings face the street giving a sense of “eyes on the street” (Jacobs 1961). I never felt nervous while walking through Atlantic Station.

Atlantic Station is made up of many large buildings with many of them seemingly sitting in space instead of placed in a way that defines public space between and around them. As shown by Appleyard et al (1987), an important design principle of New Urbanism is that there should be many smaller buildings with compound arrangements
and relationships as opposed to a few large buildings, especially in residential areas. The majority of the residential development is high-rise condominium buildings, low-rise apartment buildings, two rows of townhomes, and lofts and apartments above retail. Even though there are only a handful of single-family homes and Atlantic Station is made up of many large buildings, residents seem to still experience a sense of community, just in a different way than traditionally thought. Instead of having chance encounters with neighbors as they sit on their front porch, these encounters occur while entering the building or in the halls of the building.

The District seems more like an outside mall than a village center. As mentioned, there are very few small, independently owned venues. I walked into most stores and restaurants in The District and found the area to be much more generic than expected. As Vikas Mehta claims, the liveliest settings on a street have a very high number of stores that are one of a kind (Mehta 2009). This is something that Atlantic Station is lacking.

Overall, Atlantic Station has a very successful retail district in terms of visitors, liveliness, and vendor occupancy level. The residential district, however, seems disjointed and does not incorporate many of the design principles of New Urbanism. This case study diverged from the design principles of New Urbanism more than any of the case studies observed. I think using Atlantic Station as a case study showed that New Urbanism is applicable at all scales. While this neighborhood is made up of large buildings with very few single-family homes, an authentic community seems to have been established.

Amelia Park

Observations
There is a clear connection between the discussion of the design principles of New Urbanism as laid out in Chapter 3 and the design of Amelia Park. As pointed out by Dumbaugh, Amelia Park provides a continuous sidewalk network and streets are narrow and traffic calmed. There are also street trees and on-street parking on every street that serve as buffers between the pedestrian realm and motor vehicles. Walking around Amelia Park, I felt very safe from traffic or any type of crime. This is due in part to the walkability of the neighborhood, as well as the lack of traffic and pedestrians during the observation period.

The residential development in Amelia Park offers a variety of housing types and a variety of styles of architecture. Every home (townhomes and single-family homes) has an alley system connected to separate utility and garage access from sidewalks. Every single-family home has a front porch with sidewalks close to facilitate connection between public and private realms. The apartments above retail have yet to be built, but parking will be available behind the retail locations. As mentioned in the results, there is no building higher than two stories. There are many smaller buildings as opposed to a few large buildings. There is an integration of activities near each other and these activities will only increase in number as the development nears completion.

The retail district has yet to be completed which is causing less traffic flow into Amelia Park. There also remains 18.5 residential acres to be developed. A major factor in the stall of development is the economy. It will be interesting to visit Amelia Park after the retail district and remaining residential property has been developed. The amount of people visiting Amelia Park is markedly less than Atlantic Station and West Park Village. This is obviously due in part to the underdeveloped retail district, but
perhaps also due to the size of Fernandina Beach, the city in which Amelia Park is located. Atlanta boasts a population of over 500,000 residents and Tampa has over 300,000 residents, whereas Fernandina Beach has just over 11,000 residents and Amelia Island (on which Fernandina Beach is located) has 20,000 residents.

The inclusion of the Garden District added something different to the development that the other two case studies did not have. This seemed to add some originality and made the development not seem as generic or “cookie cutter” as the other two. If further research were to be conducted, it would be interesting to observe how many people use the Garden District as a walkway to get to one part of the development to the other.

Overall, Amelia Park follows the design principles laid out in Chapter 3 quite closely. With the exception of the undeveloped retail district and residential acreage, Amelia Park was an interesting development and seemed quaint and organic when compared to the other two case studies.

West Park Village

Observations

As with Amelia Park, there is a clear connection between the discussion of the design principles of New Urbanism as laid out in Chapter 3 and the design of West Park Village. The community provides a continuous sidewalk network that provides buffers from vehicles in the form of street trees and on-street parking. During my walk around West Park Village, I felt safe from traffic and crime. This is due in part to the large number of pedestrians in the retail district as well as the residential district. Much of the foot traffic in the development was due to the semi-annual community-wide garage sale.
that was occurring during the observation period. It would be interesting to visit on a
different Saturday and even during the week to see if there are less visitors.

There is dense residential development and a variety of housing types exist within
West Park Village. The apartment buildings are exclusively to the west of the retail
district and within the retail district with townhomes to the east of the retail district and
single-family homes east of the townhomes. There are streets that include both
townhomes and single-family homes, but in general the types of housing are separate.
There are many smaller buildings as opposed to few large buildings. All buildings are
built close together and are close to the street, which helps the pedestrian to feel safe and
engaged in their surroundings.

Most of the single-family homes are connected to an alley system that separates
utility and garage access from sidewalks. There is an area, however, that includes houses
that have garages on the front of the house as well as houses that have parking in the back
or side of the house with access through a private drive. The majority of homes have
front porches with sidewalks close which facilitates a connection between public and
private realms.

The retail district of West Park Village appears to be quite vibrant in terms of
number of visitors and retail occupancy level. I did not notice any retail vacancies. As
opposed to Atlantic Station, the retail district in West Park Village feels more like a small
village than an outside mall. This could be due to the fact that there are many small and
independently owned venues. This adds what Vikas Mehta calls a “uniqueness and
character” (Mehta 2009, 53) that makes the area more interesting and lively as compared
to The District in Atlantic Station and certainly Amelia Park.
One major problem I noticed with West Park Village is that it is located outside of Tampa’s city center. While it provides a walkable and functional neighborhood alone, I imagine most residents drive to work and the commute could be considerable. It would be interesting to see how a new development like West Park Village would fare in Tampa’s city center.

Overall, West Park Village is a functional “traditional neighborhood development.” Out of the three case studies, West Park Village seems to be closest to the design principles discussed in Chapter 3. In terms of residential development, Amelia Park most closely follows the literature, but because of the lack of a retail district, West Park Village is the most comprehensive “traditional neighborhood development.”

Preference and Profitability of New Urbanism

Profitability of New Urbanism and preference of citizens of New Urbanism have a major role in a developer’s motivation to create a “traditional neighborhood development.” While it was not possible to understand the profitability of each case study due to time constraints, there is some interesting general data to understand the preference and profitability of New Urbanism.

In 2007, GfK Roper Consulting, the world’s fourth largest market research company, conducted a marketing study on the preference of New Urbanism by homebuyers in the United States among other things, called “Modern Communities.” This study found that Americans value neighborhoods and local connections more than they did than twenty years ago. Desirable neighborhoods now have more to do with knowing neighbors and less to do with exclusivity or social status. The study also found that New Urban communities are the most desirable areas in which to buy homes because “they
monitor sprawl, foster walkable amenities, and strike a development balance between homes, schools and businesses. The re-emergence of front-porch socializing, main streets and corner stores are key to America's most popular neighborhoods” (Jefferson 2007, 1). The most popular New Urban communities tend to have common space, traditional architecture that includes homes with front porches, and tree-lined sidewalks. The study found that the popularity of the neighborhoods revolves around a feeling of belonging, being joined by a common interest, and being part of something bigger. According to the study, “more than 90 percent of Americans consider the ideal neighborhood to be one where people live near one another, are friendly with one another, and have easy access to churches and transportation” (Jefferson 2007, 1).

A 2003 University of Maryland study published in the Journal of Urban Economics found that buyers pay a 15.5% premium for elements like a continuous sidewalk network, smaller blocks, increased pedestrian access to shops, and proximity to light rail. Also the latest data show that 30% of Americans would consider living in a “traditional neighborhood development” (Congress for the New Urbanism 2007).

Perhaps the “traditional neighborhood development” is the preference of only 30% because of the fact that general awareness of New Urbanism if just now on the rise as opposed to conventional subdivisions which are plentiful and well known. However, appreciation tends to rise faster in “traditional neighborhood developments” than in conventional subdivisions because the rising awareness of New Urbanism is creating a greater demand, but there is still a comparably low supply to conventional subdivisions. Subdivisions are the greater preference, but the greater supply has not allowed the conventional subdivision to appreciate as much as “traditional neighborhood
development.” Perhaps the current market will benefit New Urbanism in the long run. This market hiatus will leave potential homebuyers with more time to carefully consider a move and more time for awareness of New Urbanism to grow.

Limitations

The three case studies chosen do not, by any means, represent “traditional neighborhood developments” as a whole. These are three isolated examples and there are several other successful and unsuccessful examples throughout the United States.

The interviews performed with the member of the Jacoby Group and the four residents of Atlantic Station are not representative of all members of the development group or residents. It was difficult to access residents to interview due to the actions of the president of the Atlantic Station Civic Association. These interviews provide supplemental information to the rest of the research of Atlantic Station.

Observations made of all three case studies were a single event and do not represent every day life in these neighborhoods. I observed each case study on different days, which could lead to misleading results. I also had more information available to me for the background of Atlantic Station and Amelia Park. This could lead to a misrepresentation of the background of West Park Village.

Future Research

There are many opportunities for future research on this topic. The three case studies can be studied over time to note changes and developments within all three neighborhoods. During the observation period, a new high rise condominium building was being built in Atlantic Station. Also, there were numerous residential unit vacancies. When the economy improves, it would be interesting to research whether the number of
residents has increased and also if the new condominium building was able to sell units or if they have become rental properties. More interviews from a wider array of residents would be revealing. It would be helpful to interview a representative sample of residents and to not have self-selected respondents. This would create a more sound argument and statistically valid results.

It would be interesting to note the vibrancy of Amelia Park once the project is completed. One can assume that traffic within Amelia Park will increase after the retail district is completed and occupied. Also, it would be helpful to research another “traditional neighborhood development” that incorporates Garden Districts to be able to compare design and success of these areas. Also, a literature review on the design and purpose of Garden Districts would be helpful.

Further observations could be made on all three case studies. It would be helpful to observe the properties on the same day of the week and time throughout the observation period. A lengthier observation period is needed to gain a better understanding of how the neighborhoods operate on a daily basis. Along with further interviews with Atlantic Station residents, the same type of qualitative data could be collected from Amelia Park and West Park Village residents. This would provide a more thorough look at the social success of these developments.

The same quantitative data could be collected for Amelia Park and West Park Village as was collected for Atlantic Station to have a more thorough comparison of the three case studies. Also, further indicators could be evaluated along with crime rate and transportation data, such as market demand and changes in property value over time. Further research is needed to understand the demographics of all three neighborhoods.
Because each neighborhood was under development when the 2000 Census took place, revisiting this issue after the results of the 2010 Census are published would be revealing and add a different element to the research.
Chapter Eight: Conclusions

The hope of this research is to provide an explanatory and exploratory study of New Urbanism that notes how New Urbanist principles have or have not been incorporated into the three case studies presented. It is hypothesized that New Urbanism may pave the way for recapturing commute time for time with family, creating authentic and successful communities, and engaging with neighbors. Furthermore, by utilizing the design principles of New Urbanism, traditional neighborhoods that re-integrate the activities of daily living may be possible. In short, this research explores whether incorporating the design principles of New Urbanism can create walkable and successful communities that promote community-making with urban patterns that facilitate knowing neighbors, communication among neighbors, community activities, and a long term sense of belonging.

Atlantic Station departs from some of the principles of New Urbanist design, but residents feel a sense of community, nonetheless, and residents and employees of Atlantic Station have decreased their commute as compared to the average Atlantan. A walkable neighborhood was illustrated that fostered a sense of community for residents. Atlantic Station does not look like a typical New Urban community because of the lack of single-family homes and the majority of housing is low- and high-rise condominium and apartment buildings. From the few interviews performed, there appears to be a level of social capital present in the neighborhood through commitments to Homeowners’
Associations and the Atlantic Station Civic Association. Residents appear to trust each other and feel a mutual sense of obligation towards one another, a key component of social capital.

Critics claim that even though “traditional neighborhood developments” are meant to reduce trip generation, residents and employees are still commuting and as dependent on cars as they would be living anywhere else. The transportation data gathered on Atlantic Station shows a decrease in dependence on cars and increase in the use of alternative transportation as opposed to Atlantans outside of Atlantic Station. The resident interviews also show that residents are willing to walk for a purpose within Atlantic Station. Atlantic Station is the only case study located within a large city, so some of the alternative transportation was already in place before the development of Atlantic Station, such as the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA).

Looking specifically at my hypotheses, Atlantic Station has lessened commute time for residents and employees. This time has the potential to be recaptured for time with family. However, Atlantic Station does not appear to be a safer neighborhood as compared to other areas of Atlanta. There are some crime categories, such as larceny, in which Zone 5 appears to be contributing more than its share to all Atlanta crimes in that category.

The other two case studies, Amelia Park and West Park Village, are examples of developments that have utilized the principles of New Urbanism, almost exclusively, to create walkable communities that have the potential to be authentic communities in which residents know and communicate with their neighbors, have the infrastructure in place to participate in community activities, and have a long term sense of belonging.
There is access to the needs of daily living in West Park Village and it is just a matter of time before Amelia Park offers the same amenities.

In all three case studies, the population appears to be mainly white and affluent. This assumption is based on observations of the three neighborhoods. A major criticism of New Urbanism is that New Urban communities tend to cater to the upper-middle socio-economic class. While there may be a slight mix of incomes, studies show that there is little evidence of racial mixing and segregation by class, race, and ethnicity is perpetuated. The case studies presented do not prove that New Urban communities succeed in crossing class or race boundaries. From studying Atlantic Station, Amelia Park, and West Park Village, it seems as though New Urban design principles can help to overcome some barriers to community, such as social isolation, but not all barriers, such as lack of diversity in race and income.

As mentioned, Atlantic Station diverges from some of the design principles of New Urbanism, but residents appear to be experiencing a sense of community. Amelia Park and West Park Village include most of the design principles of New Urbanism, yet there is a chance that residents and employees are just as dependent on automobiles as they would be living in a different neighborhood.

As can be seen by the three case studies presented, there are certain tradeoffs with different types of projects. In the case of Atlantic Station, an attractive retail center was developed and residents and employees are able to be less dependent on automobiles, but the neighborhood does not appear to be any safer than other neighborhoods in Atlanta. In the case of West Park Village, a vibrant retail center seems to have been created, but most residents most likely have to commute to work. Many of these tradeoffs have to do with
the location and scale of developments. For example, Atlantic Station is located in
downtown Atlanta, where MARTA was established before the development of the
neighborhood so there was an existing transportation alternative before the first resident
moved to the community. In the case of Amelia Park, Fernandina Beach is a small city
where commute time may be minimal, but it is obvious that most people living within the
community must commute to work due to the lack of a developed retail center. As
opposed to Atlantic Station, though, Amelia Park is most likely safer than Atlantic
Station due to the location of the project.

Through this exploratory study, I believe I have shown the strengths and
weaknesses of the three case studies presented, as well as New Urbanism in general. I
hope that New Urbanism becomes a successful tool used to revitalize city centers and
simply create neighborhoods that are exciting to live in. I hope to see Americans having
a preference for this way of living and “traditional neighborhood developments” continue
to rise in number. New Urbanism is a potential way to bring back the traditional values
of community – knowing your neighbors, experiencing a long term sense of belonging,
and enjoying neighborhood life.
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Appendices
Appendix B: Photographs of The District

Corner of Atlantic Drive and 18th Street

Vacancy on Atlantic Drive

Stairwell and elevator to underground parking garage

Group of students in Central Park
Security officer

Market Street

Cirque Du Soleil on event space

Twelve Hotel and Residences

Retail at street level with lofts above
The Atlantic high-rise in the background
Appendix B (Continued)

Alley system of townhomes
Appendix C: Photographs of The Commons

State and 17th Street looking towards The Commons

Pond in The Commons

The Commons looking back towards The District
Appendix D: Photographs of The Village

IKEA with apartments across 16th Street

Taken from IKEA parking lot

Free Ride Shuttle in The Village

Shuttle stop
Appendix E: Photographs of Amelia Park

McArthur Family YMCA

Holy Trinity Anglican Church

One entrance into Amelia Park

Path along lakefront

Garden District
Appendix E (Continued)

Garden District

Single-family homes

Mail station

Playground

Townhomes

Alley
Single-family home

Village green in town center

Townhomes

Townhomes bordering village green

Traffic calming

Undeveloped retail area
Appendix E (Continued)

Existing retail

Entrance into Town Center

Existing vacant retail with apartments above

Existing retail

Undeveloped residential land adjacent to Town Center
Appendix E (Continued)

Undeveloped Garden District

Park Avenue

Garden District

Single-family homes

Single-family homes
Appendix F: Photographs of West Park Village

Village Plaza in Town Center

Water feature in Town Center

Entrance into West Park Village, retail area

Retail

Retail with apartments above

Village Plaza
Appendix F (Continued)

Alley

Single-family homes surrounding green

Apartment Pool

Single-family home

Alley

Street view, on-street parking
Appendix F (Continued)

Alley

Entrance into West Park Village