

THE POLITICS OF PLACE

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Presented at CNU 2000: The Politics of Place

CONGRESS
FOR THE
NEW
URBANISM

JUNE 16, 2000, 11:00 AM

GOOD MORNING.

I'd like to continue a tradition I started last year to bring you up to date with the Congress and the activities of CNU. Since this is the only time we are all together, I thought it would be helpful to recap our accomplishments of the past year and let you know where we'll be heading this year.

As I mentioned Thursday evening, we're here talking about the Politics of Place, a theme that really resonates with where our movement is at right now. We're in a tremendous growth period. That means that our ideas are starting to resonate, but also puts the responsibilities back in our court. We must make our ideas relevant and compelling to the citizens of our communities, if we are to successfully accomplish the mission our board has set out for us: to change development practice.

Remember, we started small and have blossomed into a remarkable, diverse collection of some of the best thinkers in our country. In just a few short years, what was once considered radical is now at the center of a national conversation. What started as a small cadres of mavericks, is now a large, growing, diverse movement.. In just a few years (since 1993), our membership has grown from a core of architects, designers, and planners to a diverse membership of over 2,000 (architects, designers, and planners make up roughly 40% of our members, the rest are elected officials, developers, allied professionals, citizen activists).

CNU'S INFLUENCE IS EXPANDING

POLITICIANS ARE TALKING ABOUT IT

As you know, I met with the Vice President last year to talk about our concerns and ideas. Since then, we were able to brief the top leadership of all the major candidates in the primary. Needless to say, only the White House has addressed our issues directly. This week the White House Task Force on Livability came out with a new 22 point platform. You can pick up a copy at the information table.

In addition, though, elected officials from every level of government and every political persuasion are talking about our issues. This is an incredible sea change from just a few year ago, when we were considered radicals.

This year, I see an "aligning of the stars" taking place. For the first time, the newly elected leaders

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Before joining CNU, Ms. Poticha was a planner and consultant for 17 years, working with urban and suburban communities, regional agencies, nonprofit groups, community activists, and developers.

She has co-authored several significant HUD publications, *Charter of the New Urbanism*, a CNU publication, and *The Next American Metropolis*, with Peter Calthorpe. She holds a Master of City Planning from the University of California at Berkeley and a Bachelor of Arts from the University of California, Santa Cruz.

of the National Governor's Association and the U.S. Conference of Mayors are members of CNU. Both Parris Glendening of Maryland and Brent Coles of Boise, Idaho are making Smart Growth and New Urbanism central features of their platforms. In addition, a bi-partisan Senate Task Force and a Livability Caucus in the House are also trying to forge a program to address growth and development issues.

DEVELOPERS ARE GETTING ON BOARD

Developers are also getting on our wavelength. The fastest-growing group of CNU members, mainstream developers see the advantages of the New Urbanist approach. The potency of our message has also led to the ULI revamping its programs. In addition to hosting a series of Smart Growth events, this booklet, *Density by Design*, is one of the best I've seen. Virtually all the projects highlighted were done by New Urbanists.

Our annual conference with ULI was also a major success. Developing the New Urbanism drew over 350 participants, many of whom were representatives of major development interests and REITS.

And, New Urban News' list of projects that adhere to the principles of the Charter is growing. For the first time, the editors found that their list grew, even while they limited entries to projects under construction. This shows that our hard work is really coming to fruition.

ACTIVISTS ARE ORGANIZING FOR NEW URBANISM

On a parallel track, the activist community is also coming around to smart growth and New Urbanism in a big way. I have the honor of being a part of Smart Growth America, an alliance of national, state, and local advocacy organizations. For the first time, environmentalists have joined with social equity advocates, who have joined with groups like ours that are concerned with the built environment. I think this alliance truly has a great potential to influence the nation's views about growth.

THIS YEAR AT CNU

CHARTER OF THE NEW URBANISM

This year we are very proud to be able to publish a book on the Principles of our charter. I hope you'll all get a copy of this. It includes a wonderful collection of essays by the core leaders of our movement.

In addition, we've started work with our members to produce our own CNU publications on issues we see as major concerns. These "Principles of Inner City Neighborhood Design" were distributed to all the participants of HUD's annual HOPE VI conference. The Infill strategies booklet will be available sometime this summer.

HOPE VI WORK

You heard from Elinor Bacon this morning. She is our greatest ally in our partnership with HUD.

At the annual gathering of professionals involved in the HOPE VI program, I was struck by the remarkable changes that are going on. Housing authority officials that formerly were only concerned about bottom-line issues are now talking in very sincere ways about rebuilding cities and improving the lives and opportunities of residents. It was truly an inspiring event and CNU can be very proud of our participation in this program.

GSA-USING FEDERAL REAL ESTATE TO REVITALIZE COMMUNITIES

- Launched Regional Partnership Program

- Assisted with National building location policy
- Trained GSA officials about design and community workshops
- Revamped CNU's Task Force Program

We are currently in the process of revamping the task forces. We're finding ways to make them more relevant and accessible to members. We hope that by redirecting the energy of the task forces to "infiltrating" the thinking of various professions, that we'll open up opportunities for individuals to participate in CNU initiatives.

Special thanks go to retiring Task force chairs: Randy Lyon of the Developers Task Force and Katherine Clark-Albright of the Education Task force. They really gave something to the organization. In addition, Todd Zimmerman has moved from the Implementation Task force to a special role as the interdisciplinary coordinator of Task Forces.

THE FUTURE OF CNU

As I mentioned Thursday evening, we are really at a significant crossroads. Our focus needs to be on Implementation – the specific strategies that work to take the inspiring principles of the Charter into action. development and regulatory tools, citizen participation techniques, information on what's going on, and cutting edge research must be accessible and relevant to the ever-growing number of practitioners and civic leaders.

WEBSITE

To this end, we are substantially upgrading our web site.

By the end of this summer we will have a range of new services on-line, including:

- **News** database – up to date coverage of how the media is writing about NU
- **Contacts** database – information on members, their interests and accomplishments. I hope you will each take the time to fill out our on-line form.
- A **visual** database – Images that are available to you to insert into a slide show or power point presentation. These images will be both about the principles of our charter and specific exemplary projects.
- And, a **Projects** Database – detailed information on new urbanists projects for those who want to learn about what is being built. We will be calling on those of you that are involved in specific projects to help fill our this information.

AWARDS PROGRAM

You'll find in your packet an announcement for the new CNU Charter Awards Program. The first awards will be given at next year's congress. The Board sees this as a good way to reward those folks who are doing the right thing. I hope you'll consider making an entry.

REGIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM

Now that we are on a roll, I believe that we should take two more steps:

- To train more practitioners about the principles and techniques of new urbanism; and
- To partner with our allies at the local level to demonstrate how our ideas do address the real world constraints of specific conditions.

This year we are launching our regional partnership program, where we form alliances with like-minded local organizations and we hope to set up training sessions that can travel around the country to cover the basics on how to do new urbanism.

MATURING THE CHARTER

At the same time that we move forward with an effort to make CNU the place that people think of to get information on cutting edge implementation tools, we must make sure that we are constantly maturing our ideas. This year I would like the organization to focus on four key areas:

- **Repairing the Suburbs** – we've launched a study of dead and dying shopping malls with PricewaterhouseCoopers and we hope ICSC. These sites hold tremendous promise for retrofitting existing places.
- **Addressing Gentrification** – I think that it's time that we proactively state our position on gentrification and make concrete suggestions about increasing the supply of affordable housing throughout regions.
- **Environment** – a number of our members feel that the original charter does not go far enough to address environmental concerns and the membership itself does not understand the techniques of making projects more environmentally-responsible. I would hope that the environment task force would help me put together a position paper for review and discussion at our next congress.
- **Transportation** – We've done a great job talking about the need for traffic calming and transit, but many of our members feel it's time to take the next step. I'm calling on the transportation task force to work with me to outline those important strategies and develop a handbook on street standards that could be adopted by the engineering establishment.

CONCLUSION

We've come a long way, but clearly, there is much more to be done. I suggest that we return to the preamble to our charter and renew our commitment to reclaiming our homes, blocks, streets, parks, neighborhoods, districts, towns, cities, regions, and environment.

Thank you and enjoy the rest of the day.