



**Students
for the
New
Urbanism**

5 Ready Made Events

**The Congress for the New Urbanism
1720 N St NW • Washington, DC 20036**

Students for the New Urbanism Event Tool Kit

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Event: Film Viewing Club

Difficulty Level – Novice

Film: *Radiant City* (2006)

This is an interesting mockumentary that explores Canada's suburban sprawl, but it is relevant to North American sprawl in general. The film profiles a few suburban families and the hardships they face while trying to achieve the North American dream. Experts, who serve as bookends between each fake segment, provide commentary about the nature of suburbia versus that of the city. However at the end, there is a controversial twist that plays on the falseness of the world in which suburbanites live.

This is a low-key event for you and your fellow SNU members. If you wish to expand the event to a larger audience, please check with university/college guidelines for showing a movie to a mass audience. Your SNU advisor would be a good person to ask. Also, you may wish to adopt the marketing and planning schedule found under the Book Club Event Section.

Step 1: Purchase or rent *Radiant City*. It retails for new on Amazon.com for approximately \$20. Also, it is available through Netflix as a DVD option, but it tends to have a long wait time. Your university library may have the film within its collection. If your library does not own a copy, you may be able to secure it through an inter-library loan with another university.

Step 2: Once the film is secured, designate a time and place to watch your movie as a group. One option might be during your next regularly scheduled meeting. The movie's total run time is approximately 90 minutes. Also, as a group if you wish to critic and discuss the movie, there is a list of question available (Appendix A) which will added about 15 additional minutes to your event time.

Step 3: Hold your movie club event. While viewing, you may wish to follow this schedule:

Begin Event

Watch first 30 minutes of *Radiant City*

Discuss 2 questions for 5 minutes

Watch 31 – 60 minutes of *Radiant City*

Discuss 2 questions for 5 minutes

Watch 61 minutes – Credits of *Radiant City*

Discuss 2 questions for 5 minutes

End Event

While Radiant City is offered here as a good movie to screen as a group there are numerous other film options (Appendix B).

Event: Walking Audit

Difficulty Level - Easy

One event that takes little effort to plan and is easy to undertake is a walking audit. A walking audit is an assessment of an area's walkability. Walking audits are often undertaken to better the pedestrian experience. This tool collects both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data is often collected by using a measurement called the Pedestrian Environment Review System (PERS). PERS uses a 7-point scale, -3 (worst) to 3 (walker's paradise) with zero being average, to rank areas. To undertake a walking audit follow these steps:

Total event time: Approximately 90 minutes (depending on your audit area's size)

Step 1: Choose the location you wish to audit before the event: a park, downtown, your school's campus, etc.

Step 2: Set date and time for SNU members to be onsite.

Step 3: Divide members into "audit teams."

Step 4: Assign each team a different route or section to explore.

Step 5: Send teams to collect data in their assigned area. A walking audit sheet is provided to write down notes and score using the seven-point PERS scale (Appendix D).

Step 6: After approximately 1 hour teams should reconvene in a mutually agreed upon spot.

Step 7: Have a brainstorming session and condition report out.

A) 10 minutes - Within individual groups discuss your finds.

- What sections received the highest walk scores?
- What attributes and design elements make these sections walkable?
- What sections received the lowest walk scores? Why?
- Why did you score these sections poorly?
- What sections received average walk scores?
- Are there simple fixes that can be applied to bring the average scores higher?
- Overall, how walkable was this area?

B) 20 minutes - During this time, each group briefly presents their findings to the large group

- Describe your area's attributes.
- Share your area's major walkability pitfalls.
- Offer your area's major walkability successes.
- Give your recommendations for improving the area.

C) End the event with a greater understanding of walkability.

Event: Brown Bag Lunch with a Professor

Difficulty Level – Mid

The aim here is to use regular breaks, e.g. the lunch break, to provide some information to the attendees and SNU members in a voluntary and informal setting. It should be followed by a short question and answer session.

Five weeks before the event: (first planning meeting, 50-60 min.)

Step 1: Divide SNU members into the following groups to handle responsibilities:

- a. Marketing (flyers, email blasts, social media, etc.)
- b. Logistics (space, speaker invite)
- d. Audience (confirmations, etc.)

Step 2: Discuss and rank possible professors and topics. Some possible ideas

Include:

- a. Your SNU group advisor – this person might be the best person to choose for your first brown bag lunch as they are already familiar with SNU, its goals, and your group’s members.
- b. A professor who recently completed urban research.
- c. A professor who shares an interest in New Urbanism.

Step 3: Set date and time and a back-up date and time:

- a. Ask yourself, “How does this fit into the academic and social calendar?”
- b. Stay away from dates close to holidays, midterms, finals, and big events.
- c. Determine an attendee limit so the event stays manageable.
-This will ultimately depend on your room size and manpower ability

Step 4: To do before the next meeting

- a. Set date and time for next week’s meeting.
- b. Logistics person(s) will secure professor.
 - 1) Ask if either days agreed upon at the meeting work for him or her. If the response is a no, move on to next highest ranked professor.
 - 2) Find out what the professor would like to speak about and inform him or her that the presentation should last 30 min., and it will be followed by a 15 min. question and answer session.
 - 3) Ask whether or not the professor will need PowerPoint?

Logistics person(s) will secure room

- 1) The room should be secured for at least 75 min.
- 2) The room should have PowerPoint if needed.
- 3) As this is a brown bag lunch, make sure food and drink are permitted.

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Logistics person(s) will reach out to the marketing person(s) with the details as soon as possible.

- c. Marketing person(s) will input data from logistics person(s) into the premade marketing template and create a Facebook event page before next meeting.
- d. Audience person(s) will determine who should be invited before the next meeting.

Four weeks before event: (second planning meeting, 20 -25 min.)

Part 1: Progress report and group feedback:

- a. Logistics person(s) reports what room and professor are secured and the event date, and time.
- b. Audience person(s) presents suggested invite list.
- c. Marketing person(s) shows marketing flyer.

Part 2: To do list

- a. Marketing person(s) incorporates any changes to the Facebook event page and flyer. The flyer should be posted within two days through email blast and bulletin board posting.
(Check with your college or university for proper procedures)
- b. Audience person(s) begins to invite guest through the Facebook group and manages the RSVP list.

One week before event: (third planning meeting, 20-35 min.)

Part 1: Progress report and group feedback:

- a. Logistics person(s) verifies that room is secured on the correct date and time and that the professor is still available.
- b. Audience person(s) discusses RSVP list.
- c. Marketing person(s) reports on current marketing strategy and takes feedback for the final marketing push before the event.

Part 2: Follow-up for the event will include the event's continued marketing and RSVP management.

Event Time: 75 Minutes	Minutes
SNU members arrive early and set up room and PowerPoint.	10
SNU President introduces professor to the audience.	2
Guest professor speaks on topic .	30
SNU President asks for question and then moderates the question session.	15
SNU President thanks professor and audience for attending.	2

Event: Design Awards and Showcase

Difficulty Level – Hard

Holding your own design awards will allow your group to advocate for New Urbanism in a fun and creative way. There are many ways to conduct a design awards, but this approach will build off of class projects student have completed. The best time to hold the event might be in January or February, so you can display projects completed during the first semester. The aim here is to award projects that best meet New Urbanism criteria that are not produced by SNU members. Hopefully, this will raise awareness of New Urbanism and your SNU group to those who previously were unfamiliar.

Four weeks before event: (first planning meeting, 50-60 min.)

Step 1: Divide SNU members into the following groups to handle responsibilities:

- a. Marketing (flyers, email blasts, social media, etc.)
- b. Logistics (space, etc.)
- c. Presenter manager (confirmations and invites)

Step 2: Set date and time and back-up date and time.

- a. Ask yourself, “How does this fit into the academic and social calendar?”
- b. Stay away from dates close to holidays, midterms, finals, and big events.

Step 3: SNU members will nominate classmate’s projects to the presenter manager(s) who will then send invites to prospective presenters and maintain the confirmed presenter list.

Step 4: To do before next meeting

- a. Set date and time for next week’s meeting
- b. Logistics person(s) will secure an event room for date and time agreed upon before next meeting. Room should be secured for at least 90min.
- c. Marketing person(s) will design two marketing templates and Facebook group before next meeting.
 - One template should be an open call for presenters with a deadline for submission (within 3 weeks).
 - The second should be a general event flyer to invite guests.
- d. Presenter manager(s) invites possible presenters, keeps track of confirmations, and accepts open invites.

Three to Two weeks before event: (second planning meeting, 20 -25 min.)

Part 1: Progress report and group feedback

- a. Logistics person(s) reports what room is secured.
- b. Marketing person(s) shows marketing flyers.
- c. Presenter manager(s) gives a report on confirmations and invites.

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Part 2: Follow-up for the next meeting

- a. Marketing person(s) distributes call for submissions flyer within two days through email blast and bulletin board posting, and will distribute guest invite flyer and activate Facebook event page within five days. (Check with your college or university for proper procedures.)
- b. Presenter manager(s) maintains confirmations and invites
- c. Logistics person(s) will determine how best to display work and secure the other needed materials. (i.e. easels)

One week before event: (third planning meeting, 30 min.)

Part 1: Progress report and group feedback

- a. Logistics person(s) reports how posters will be displayed
- b. Presenter manager(s) gives a report on confirmations and invites
- c. Designate a person to handle awards

Part 2: Follow-up for the event

- a. Awards person(s) will design and print a first place, second place, and third place award certificate using a basic word processor template. (Print a few extra copies in case of ties.) Also, this person will print out the judging rubric (Appendix D) for guests.
- b. Presenter manager(s) continues to manager presenter confirmations.

Day of Event: (total time 90 min., including 15 min each for setup to arrange materials and for break down)

Event Time: 75 Minutes	Minutes
SNU members their poster during this time	15
Open showcase to other guests and guests and SNU members will judge projects using rubric.	30
Presenters continue to display projects, and awards person(s) collects rubrics, tallies results, and fills out winner certificates.	25
Awards person(s) awards winners and thanks participants and guests.	5
Close event and return the room to normal.	15

Event: Book Club Discussion

Difficulty Level – Expert

Book: Glaeser, Edward (2011). *Triumph of the City: How Our Greatest Invention Makes Us Richer, Smarter, Greener, Healthier, and Happier*. New York: Penguin Press.

This is a contemporary mainstream nonfiction book on the evolution of cities and related associated government practices. The author, Edward Glaeser, has written many papers and books on urban affairs and local government related concepts. The book is an easy read, and it is relatable to a wide audience.

Five weeks before event: (first planning meeting, 50-60 min.)

Step 1: Divide SNU members into the following groups to handle responsibilities:

- a. Marketing (flyers, email blasts, social media, etc.)
- b. Logistics (space, etc.)
- c. Discussion (structure, leaders, etc.)
- d. Audience (confirmations, etc.)

Step 2: Set date and time and back-up date and time:

- a. Ask yourself, “How does this fit into the academic and social calendar?”
- b. Stay away from dates close to holidays, midterms, finals, and big events.
- c. Make sure you leave enough time between first marketing piece and event for people to read the book.
- d. Determine an attendee limit so the event stays manageable.
-This will ultimately depend on your room size and manpower ability.

Step 3: To do before next meeting:

- a. Set date and time for next weeks meeting.
- b. Logistics person(s) will secure a room for date and time agreed upon before the next meeting. Room should be secured for at least 90min.
- c. Marketing person(s) will design a marketing template and Facebook group before the next meeting.
- d. Audience person(s) will determine who should be invited before the next meeting.

Four weeks before event: (second planning meeting, 20 -25 min.)

Part 1: Progress report and group feedback:

- a. Logistics person(s) reports what room is secured, the date, and the time.
- b. Audience person(s) presents suggested invite list.
- c. Marketing person(s) shows marketing flyer.

Part 2: Follow-up for the next meeting

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- a. Marketing person(s) incorporates changes and room information to flyer and posts within two days through email blast and bulletin board posting. (Check with your college or university for proper procedures.)
- b. Audience person(s) begins to invite guest through the Facebook group and manages RSVP list.

Three weeks to two weeks before event:

- a. During these weeks SNU members should become familiar with the book’s main themes and concepts and discussion person(s) should become familiar with suggested discussion questions (Appendix E).
- b. Marketing person(s) should stay in communication with audience person and adjust marketing strategy based on RSVP numbers. Repost flyers when they expire and send out another email blast.
- c. Audience person(s) continue to manage the guest list and should reach out once a week to marketing to report on the number of attendees.
- d. Logistics should double check with campus officials that the correct room, date, and time is reserved.

One week before event: (third planning meeting, 20-35 min.)

Part 1: Progress report and group feedback

- a. Logistics person(s) verifies that room is secured on the correct date and time.
- b. Audience person(s) discusses RSVP list.
- c. Marketing person(s) reports on current marketing strategy and takes feedback for the final marketing push before the event

Part 2: Follow-up for the event will include the event’s continued marketing and RSVP management. The discussion person(s) should go over the question and designate a timekeeper and note taker for the event.

Day of Event: (total time 90 min., including 15 min each for setup to arrange chairs in a circle and for break down)

Total Event Time: 60 minutes-2 minutes should be spent on each set.	Minutes
Discussion leader begins by welcoming the group and offers a brief introduction to the book and discusses its key themes (Appendix E).	4
Discussion leader asks the group Sustainability questions.	13
Discussion leader asks the group Education & Poverty questions.	13
Discussion leader asks the group Proximity questions.	13
Discussion leader asks the group Changing Cities questions.	13
Discussion leader turns attention over to note taker who then offers a short synopsis and dismisses guest	4

Appendix A: Questions to spur conversation during your movie event.

- 1) How does exurban development affect the traditional city and inner ring suburbs?
- 2) What are some of the hardships of lower income people who live in a suburban setting, and how are these different and the same for low-income city residents?
- 3) How might cities better attract and retain a diversity of incomes through design?
- 4) Throughout the film, the transportation network displayed is problematic; how might this be fixed?
- 5) As exurban housing developments have stalled across North America due to the housing bubble collapse, what should we do with the numerous half-finished sites?
- 6) How can we retrofit suburbia to allow for better interaction among its residents?

Appendix B: Additional Films to Watch as an SNU Group

Detropia (2012), directed by Heidi Ewing and Rachel Grady

This recent documentary examines the impact Detroit's failing economy, caused by long-term changes in the automobile industry, has on the city's residents and infrastructure.

Pleasantville (1998), directed by Gary Ross

This film is a story of two 1990s teenagers who find themselves transported into (c)1950s suburbia. Robert Beuka says in his book *SuburbiaNation*, "Pleasantville is a morality tale concerning the values of contemporary suburban America by holding that social landscape up against both the Utopian and the dystopian visions of suburbia."

The End of Suburbia: Oil Depletion and the Collapse of the American Dream (2004) and *Escape from Suburbia: Beyond the American Dream (2007)*, both directed by Gregory Greene

These two Canadian documentaries, which have won numerous awards, examine peak oil and its impact on contemporary suburbia.

Appendix D: Judging Criteria Form

Project: _____ Total Score: _____

On a scale from 1 to 5 (bad to excellent) this project:

Walkability _____ Takes into account surrounding context _____

Promotes diversity of uses _____ Includes spaces to gather and socialize _____

Renewable energy components _____ Rain Water solutions _____

Project: _____ Total Score: _____

On a scale from 1 to 5 (bad to excellent) this project:

Walkability _____ Takes into account surrounding context _____

Promotes diversity of uses _____ Includes spaces to gather and socialize _____

Renewable energy components _____ Rain Water solutions _____

Project: _____ Total Score: _____

On a scale from 1 to 5 (bad to excellent) this project:

Walkability _____ Takes into account surrounding context _____

Promotes diversity of uses _____ Includes spaces to gather and socialize _____

Renewable energy components _____ Rain Water solutions _____

Project: _____ Total Score: _____

On a scale from 1 to 5 (bad to excellent) this project:

Walkability _____ Takes into account surrounding context _____

Promotes diversity of uses _____ Includes spaces to gather and socialize _____

Renewable energy components _____ Rain Water solutions _____

Appendix E: Discussion Leader Introduction and 20 Questions to ask during the book event organized by theme.

Discussion leader: Brief Introduction

Edward Glaeser is an American economist and Fred and Eleanor Glump Professor of Economics at Harvard University. According to a review in the New York Times, 2011's *Triumph of the City: How Our Greatest Invention Makes Us Richer, Smarter, Greener, Healthier, and Happier* summarizes Glaeser's years of research into the role that cities play in fostering human achievement. Using a range of expository forms: history, biography, economic research, and personal story the book defines what makes a city successful. Welcome to our SNU book club to discuss this important book. After reading the book we came away with four main themes: sustainability, education and poverty, proximity, and changing cities. I will ask questions that fall within each category. It is important to note that there is no right or wrong answer to these questions as these are designed to encourage a healthy debate. We ask those wishing to respond to please raise your hand and wait to speak until I call on you. Two minutes will be devoted to discuss each question so please keep comments brief so we all can hear a variety of viewpoints. Once again thank you for coming, and let us begin.

Key theme: Sustainability

- 1) What are the barriers to planning and implementing sustainable practices?
- 2) If we enacted Glaeser's pro-urban growth policies, what effect would it have on rural America and its ability to provide food?
- 3) Looking forward, what water and resource issues does your municipality face?
- 4) Glaeser uses Dubai as an example of success, but does so with misgivings. Is Dubai a sustainable city?
- 5) What are methods suburbs can retrofit their car culture into something more sustainable?

Key theme: Education & Poverty

- 6) How can we fairly tie teacher's pay to performance?
- 7) How will or will not instituting a school voucher system help our urban education problem?
- 8) Glaeser feels we need to correct the poverty problem before we can correct our education system. How are the two intertwined?

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9) As Glaeser suggests, Rio and Mumbai's dense urban shantytowns are symbols of urban vitality. Can the same be said about our country's low-income housing?

10) How can we better integrate schools and neighborhoods through design?

Key theme: Proximity

11) How can the advantage of proximity enjoyed by cities like New York, Toronto, and Chicago be replicated in less dense areas like Salt Lake City and Vancouver?

12) Is Glaeser's argument that proximity breed's innovation still relevant in the information age?

13) Does proximity create innovation or do cities attract innovative people?

14) How has our government affected the ability of planners and architects to design for proximity?

15) If proximity creates innovation, why are suburban office parks popular?

Key theme: Changing Cities

16) Glaeser talks about NIMBYism as a problem, but are there legitimate concerns? How, as future professionals, can we mitigate these concerns?

17) How can free market development and environmental externalities be incorporated into zoning and land-use planning?

18) How do we achieve a good balance between preserving historical sites and growth?

19) Glaeser's dream city is filled with skyscrapers and promotes vertical building, what are the pros and cons to his viewpoint?

20) What are your thoughts on Glaeser's belief that shrinking cities have lost touch with the elements of reinvention?