Outline

- Does the plan…?
- The 4 Elements
- How to Review Plans
- The 3 Basic Tests
- Site Plan Checklist
- Visual Aids
- Rules of Thumb
- How to Lie with Maps
- Imagery
- A Pattern Language
- Experiential Design
- Sense of…

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Secrets of Place-Making

Urban Design Review for Planning Commissioners
Ric Stephens
Stephens Planning & Design LLC

Does the plan…?

- …meet health, safety and welfare criteria?
- …conform to the Comprehensive Plan and comply with the zoning code?
- …respond to environmental concerns? Mitigation? Enhancement?
- …relate to existing and future surrounding land uses, development and circulation patterns, densities, products?
- …create a “Sense of Place” in character with the overall community

The 4 Elements

- Earth
  landslides, volcanoes…
- Wind
  storms, hurricanes…
- Fire
  wildfires, urban fires…
- Water
  flooding, tsunami, global warming…

How to Review Plans

- Take a preliminary look at the plans
- Visit the site and compare with plans
- Review the plans with the staff report
- Note opportunities and constraints, and possible conditions for approval
The 3 Basic Tests

1. View the development and surrounding area, considering functional and esthetic relationships.

2. Move in imaginary streets and walkways, checking technical, esthetic and social quality of life.

3. Plan for community flexibility in place-making elements such as walkways, open space, landscaping, etc. and how these may adapt/change.

Site Plan Checklist

- Environmental
  - Edaphic – soils, topo...
  - Hydrologic – waterways...
  - Biologic – trees, wildlife...
  - Cultural – paleological, archeological, historical
- Infrastructure
  - Grading
  - Utilities
- Structures (existing & proposed)
- Circulation, access & parking
- Landscaping
- Views (onsite/offsite)
- Surrounding land (existing & proposed)
- Experiential design
- Sense of Place

Visual Aids

- graphic scales
- entourage & analogous images
- elevations
- perspectives
- renderings
- photosimulation
- scale models
- 3D & VR models

1 Acre

- Mileway – It takes 15 minutes to walk 1 mile on level ground
- 20-25% of development is needed for circulation
- A cubic foot is about the size of a basketball
- 1 acre will park about 100 cars
- A 7,200 square foot lot is the same area as a tennis court (60x120')
- 1 story is about 10-feet high (remember to exclude the 13th story when estimating height)
**How to Lie with Maps**

1. Be shrewdly selective
2. Frame strategically
3. Accentuate the positive
4. If caught, have a story
5. Minimize the negative
6. Dazzle with detail
7. Persuade with pap
8. Distract with aerial photographs and historical maps
9. Generalize creatively
10. Enchant with elegance
11. When all else fails, try bribery

*11 Rules for Polishing the Cartographic Image* from *How to Lie with Maps* by Mark Monmonier

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**Image of the City**

- **Districts**
- **Paths**
- **Edges**
- **Nodes**
- **Landmarks**

“If art and audience grow together, then our cities will be a source of daily enjoyment…”

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**A Pattern Language**

- **Organic Patterns**
- **Formal Grid Patterns**
- **Curvilinear Patterns**
- **Neo-Traditional Design & Sustainable Development**
- **New Urbanism & Regenerative Design**
- **TNBT?**

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**Curvilinear Pattern**

- **Advantages**
  - Direct travel
  - Good terrain adaptation
  - Recognizable street hierarchy
  - Traffic stability
  - Reduced street mileage

- **Disadvantages**
  - Difficult & complex design
  - Irregular shaped parcels
  - Complicated utility installation
  - Increased traffic congestion

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**Grid Pattern**

- California Street, San Francisco
- Melbourne, Australia

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A Pattern Language

GRID ADVANTAGES
- Simple circulation design
- Expandable circulation pattern
- Simple utility design
- Simple to subdivide
- Simple street naming/numbering

GRID DISADVANTAGES
- Disregard for terrain
- Inconvenient diagonal travel
- Lack of differentiation
- Shifting & disperse traffic impacts
- Visual monotony

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Story-Telling

- The concept or story...
- The context or theme...
- The narrative or design...

Meaningful places tell great stories

The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces

- Effective Capacity
- Sun & Wind
- Trees
- Water
- Sitting Space
- Food
- The Street
- The “Undesirables”
- Triangulation

City Comforts

- How to Build an Urban Village
- Children in the City
- Feeling Safe
- Knowing Where You Are...

The small things that make urban life pleasant

Experiential Design

- Esthetic
- Entertainment
- Educational
- Escapist

Transforming places blend each experience

Sense of...

- Sight
- Hearing
- Touch
- Taste
- Smell and...
Sense of…

- Time
- Motion
- Discovery
- Identity
- Community and…
- Place

Thank you for your interest and sense of…humor

Ric Stephens

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- A Pattern Language: Christopher Alexander
- Planning Commissioner Training: www.planetizen.com
- Planning Commissioners Journal: www.pctypepad.com
- Place Making: Charles C. Bohl
- The Principles of Smart Development: APA
- The Social Life of Small Open Spaces: William Whyte

The Planning Commissioner Training Series is produced in partnership with the Nohad A. Toulan School of Urban Studies and Planning at Portland State University.

Information on this series is available on the OAPA web site at: http://www.oregonapa.org/pageview.aspx?id=18208

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