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**Case Study Submittal For
Planning, Urban Design, Infrastructure**



**Planning A Sustainable Future:
Connecting Land Use and Transportation**

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Planning A Sustainable Future: Connecting Land Use and Transportation

DESCRIPTIVE OVERVIEW

Well known to naturalists, seasonal visitors and vacationers, Sarasota's pristine beauty has attracted visitors for more than a hundred years. The protection of our environment is a community legacy we embrace, and are committed to sustaining for our children. Our community has a strong and pronounced environmental ethic. This ethic extends through a broad range of activities including natural lands preservation, progressive recycling programs, beach maintenance, forest protection, environmental stewardship, and land use planning. It is the last item that we wish to focus this case study on.

Like many communities across the United States, Sarasota County has been challenged with modern issues related to urban growth and suburban sprawl. Without careful review, these matters may threaten or permanently damage the future of our natural resources. In recent years, large numbers of Sarasota citizens actively participated in our long term land planning effort, locally known as Sarasota 2050. Two principle goals arose from our conversations about the future: enhance livability and preserve resources. These themes intertwine in our day-to-day perceptions of a sustainable future, and support our vision for tomorrow. We are keenly focused on protecting and enhancing the intricate balance between our environment, our economy, and our social realm.

Through much of 2005, small groups of community members engaged in conversations to affirm, and then re-affirm our understandings of a preferred future. Three hundred residents engaged in "Community Conversations", a structured process that sought to identify two things: "*What we value?*" and "*The legacy we want to leave for future generations.*" Together, citizens and local officials explored ways to nurture a community that can build on the best of what we have, encourage what we value, and create a future that accurately reflects our aspirations.

Over much of 2006 and 2007 there has been a rapid movement in community understanding and the evolution of codes, regulations and processes that support new elements of building high-quality places. These elements include an expanded understanding of:

- Placemaking
- Transit oriented development (TOD)
- New Urbanism
- Form-based code
- Charrettes
- The integration of land use planning and transportation planning

Planning A Sustainable Future: Connecting Land Use and Transportation

Our proposed case study will outline the paths we have traveled to develop this new community understanding of “place”, delineate the processes and data analyses we used to develop the various technical components, and critically review the effectiveness and real world application of these community building blocks.

INNOVATION/CREATIVITY

- How did you unleash or encourage creativity in order to generate solutions?

Our community has a history of active engagement in visioning and crafting our future – ever since the beginnings of our 2050 Plan. The impact of this participation has effectively led us to a new understanding of land use planning that creates “place”, and the efficiencies and costs of transportation systems. The community’s participation has led to an informed public, who better understands, and even encourages, the whole systems relationships between land use planning, transportation planning, economic development, and quality of life. This broad engagement has led to an embracing of “placemaking”.

- What ideas or opportunities emerged during your creative process?

As we looked more and more at the places we love and why, we began to see certain patterns. These patterns existed in street size, block length, lot size and building height and placement. Indeed, this is the essence of new urbanism and in turn, form-based codes.

To a certain degree, we have taken the traditional model of regulation and flipped it on its head. Government rules and regulations have always proscribed what will be built in a community. This process includes comprehensive plans, zoning code, development orders, and specific site and development stipulations. The creative process recently completed includes a bit less focus on the rules and process and greater emphasis on the outcome. This has led to a better visioning effort and better understandings and definitions of what we do want in the “places” that we build.

- How did your program/concept stretch or improve the boundaries of ordinary government operations?

Old land planning concepts of implementing a regulatory framework have fallen away as community charrettes are utilized to implement a more broadly owned land use vision which is delivering what is wanted by

Planning A Sustainable Future: Connecting Land Use and Transportation

community, rather than simply what is required by ordinance or regulation.

QUALITY MANAGEMENT

- What quality management principles, tools, and procedures were applied to your service delivery?

Sarasota County established continuing services contracts in the areas of land use planning and transportation. This allowed for timely and high quality connections with national experts in specific areas of code, form, marketing, and multi-modal transportation, among many.

VALUE PROPOSITION

- What customer needs and expectations were identified and fulfilled?

Locally we faced a conundrum in which land use changes, a rezoning for example, would work its way through the process, and contain numerous stipulations and drawings that would address the various community and commission concerns. Our elected officials and citizens began to look for a more friendly and meaningful way to participate in the design, development and re-development of our community. The charrette process inherent in our adopted form-based code fulfills these expectations.

- How did your initiative program improve access to your government?

Access was improved in two areas. First, the developer of a property is able to engage County resources upon making the decision to develop, thus knowing whether the plans would be in conformance with the desired community form. Second, the broader citizenry is empowered to participate in the community discussion, design and implementation of the developments in places that directly or indirectly affect them.

- How has the health of your community improved as a result?

High performing communities are based on trust. It is a value that can be easily damaged or destroyed, so constant attention is necessary. Sarasota County's health was improved through innovations in the community planning and design process by: 1) providing a structure that allows and encourages more relaxed participative involvement in community planning; 2) that effectively makes government a partner in the

Planning A Sustainable Future: Connecting Land Use and Transportation

development process, and; 3) produces a land use form that is more multi-modal, providing choice opportunities for transit use, cycling and walking.

BUILDING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

- How did you remove the barriers to innovation?

Many communities have experienced, from time-to-time, an adversarial relationship between new development and/or redevelopment and the surrounding community. This angst generating process has been replaced with a partnership that is focused on achieving the common goals of community growth in an open, balanced and thoughtful manner.

- If you incorporated critical thinking and problem solving techniques, explain your execution process.

We sought experienced outside assistance to re-frame how we might see our future. We began to see a future in which many of the community's problems and concerns could be more openly talked about in a public discussion. In addition, this public dialogue has begun to recognize that we are what we build, that the underlying taxonomy of the built environment is an expression of our respect for nature, and our plans for human interaction in both commerce and social exchange.

- If your project involved teams, describe the level of autonomy, i.e. setting goals, HR function, budget authority, etc.

The project incorporated multiple networks of teams. We had a network of transportation planning, that includes teams on concurrency, mass transit, and transit oriented development. Our land use network included teams focused on form-based code, transit oriented development, economic development, and public spaces. As we looked at our team networks, the constancy was leader(s), manager(s), and technical expert(s) working as a team.

- What technological barriers did your organization overcome?

The organization has begun to utilize and plan with new land use visualization techniques. In addition, our GIS platform is now being utilized for more data analytics, thereby allowing more detailed understanding of block. The ability to utilize GIS to present complex datasets in a more simple spatial relationship has enhanced organizational understanding of transportation and land use relationships.

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MANAGEMENT PHILOSOPHY AND CULTURE

- What philosophy, literature, or body of research influenced your service delivery?

New Urbanism theories including transit oriented development, central place theory, maximization of public infrastructure, walkability, home-grown prosperity.

- How is it evident in your program/concept?

We have a Board approved form-based code that is being used by local developers. In addition, the Board has maintained its past commitment to the development of effective mass transit system.

INTEGRATED PROCESSES AND REENGINEERING WITH THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

- What new technologies were necessary and what methods and/or application did you incorporate?

We are using SharePoint to enhance our immediate and collaborative work. By sharing business data and counter-perspectives, SharePoint allows immediate connection of people with information and expertise.

- What business processes were used during the development of your program/concept?

The form-based code was an amendment to our zoning code, and thus was integrated into the public hearing process.

Understanding the workings of the network talent model was beneficial to the breadth and number of mixed teams that participated in this project.

- Was an outside consultant used? If yes, please indicate the level of involvement and identify the firm.

Outside expertise was involved in a range of activities, from framing the opportunities inherent in re-development using form-based code, to driving the examination of transit data, to interfacing with the Board and citizenry at public meetings, to drafting various documents.

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APPLICABLE RESULTS AND REAL WORLD ADVICE

- What are the applications you could share, that would be of value to other local governments (minimum of three)?

We can share:

Methodology for prioritizing re-development areas;
Our analysis of core transit infrastructure development;
Our Board approved form-based code.

- What are the results/outcomes?

We have new interest from our development community in applying our form-based code for re-development of areas in the urban service area.
We have already approved one new urbanism project.

- If performance measures were used, indicate what they were within the category of qualitative, quantitative, efficiency, effectiveness, or workload statistics.

Developing a new set of regulations that would guide future development and re-development in the creation of mixed use places is clearly a qualitative goal. Within the structure and program of this goal, we established a budget and a timeline for the delivery of a final form-based code to the Board of County Commissioners. The project was completed within the timeframe and under the projected budget.