
UAP 5714 – Community Building Seminar Small Town Sustainability

Fall 2007

Tuesdays 7 pm to 9.30 pm

Location: Alexandria: Polycomm Room / Blacksburg: Architecture Annex, Rm 200

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Office Hours:
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Web access to course material:

<https://learn.vt.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp>

Office hours by appointment

Web Assistance/Help Desk:

User Services (231-HELP) or <http://4help.vt.edu>

Course Description

Small and medium-sized towns and cities are often overlooked in urban planning practice and research. These smaller towns, however, comprise a significant segment of our urban system and face difficult challenges in their community building efforts. Small towns close to growing urban areas or those attractive to tourism because of their natural and cultural amenities, face challenges from too much growth. In contrast, declining small towns face issues of economic revitalization, demographic shifts, brain drain, etc.

In this class, we examine several movements and policy approaches to small town sustainability. We will discuss sustainability broadly and incorporate considerations and planning approaches emphasizing environmental sustainability, economic vitality and social well being (the so-called three-E framework).

We will examine the Slow City movement, North Carolina's Small Town Initiative, European Union initiatives such as the AlpCity and the SusSET network, Beacon and Marketowns in the United Kingdom, Australia's country towns initiatives, Germany's and Austria's Quality of Life through Proximity project, and several initiatives in the United States and abroad regarding alternative energy, creativity and arts-led development, and main street revitalization, etc.

The seminar builds on active student participation. Each student will prepare a case study of an innovative approach to sustainability in a small town. Students will compile portfolios of their case studies and present in class.

Readings

Beatley, T. (2004). *Native to nowhere: sustaining home and community in a global age*. Washington: Island Press.

Other readings are posted on Blackboard and/or are handed out in class.

Grading

Participation	10%
Reading Notes	15%
Mid-term Portfolio	30%
Initiative Presentation	15%
Final Portfolio	30%

Class Requirements & Assignments

1. Participation

I really look forward to teaching this class and envision it as a graduate level seminar that thrives on a lively discussion and conversation about small town issues. Your participation, ideas and thoughts will be very important and I hope that each of you will add value and insights to this class.

2. Reading Notes

Each week, students need to prepare a set of reading notes and ideas (approximately 250 words). These notes are due at noon (12 pm) on the day of the class. The notes must be posted in the dedicated folder on the Blackboard discussion board. The notes may be informal contributions of your thoughts, ideas, and questions on the readings. Make sure that you discuss the entire set of readings. You may want to discuss the ways the readings relate to each other, your questions and critique, or examples of cases you know and are familiar with.

3. Mid-term Portfolio: Documenting Small Town Changes

For this assignment you will explore and document changes in a small town. Blacksburg students are encouraged to focus on changes in rural small towns in Southwest Virginia such as Floyd, Christiansburg, Radford, Newport, Pulaski, or Blacksburg. These rural towns are experiencing tremendous changes due to urban growth and development. Some might also experience economic decline and disinvestments. Alexandria students are encouraged to explore small towns on the outskirts of the Washington D.C. region. These towns are in close proximity to a large, sprawling metropolitan region and are in danger of losing their traditional, more rural identities. You could focus on towns such as Manassas, Harpers Ferry, Middleburg, Warrenton, or Leesburg.

Be creative in how you document these changes. I encourage you to use multimedia (photography, film, maps, etc.) and text (maybe even through historical analysis using oral histories, etc.). Also, make sure you document the factors that undermine small town sustainability (urban sprawl, strip mall development, McDonaldization, etc.)

4. Initiative Presentation

Each student will pick a small town initiative from a list provided. The presentation should focus on the main goals and programmatic components of the initiative. Detailed instructions will be handed out in class.

5. Final Portfolio: Analysis of Small Town Sustainability Initiative

For this assignment you will analyze the small town initiative you picked for the presentation. The initiative can focus on economic, environmental, or equity issues of small town sustainability. Like Assignment #1, you should create a portfolio of evidence documenting the initiative. In addition, you will synthesize your analysis in a short paper of about 15 to 20 pages. You will need to place the discussion and analysis of the initiative in the broader context of small town sustainability as discussed in class. I encourage you to make contact with the planners and policymakers responsible for the initiative (many of the cases are overseas and you could try to send e-mails or call them).

Detailed instructions for each assignment will be handed out in class.

Virginia Tech's Honor Pledge

I expect that all assignments in this class conform to Virginia Tech's Honor Pledge as well as to the usual academic standards. The pledge states that "I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on this assignment." This means that you will refrain from plagiarism and cheating or from any other form of receiving unauthorized assistance.

For more information, see: <http://www.honorsystem.vt.edu/>

Special Needs

Any student with special needs or circumstances should feel free to meet with me during office hours.

Other Policies

- Reference & Writing Style

All written assignments should be typed and double-spaced (the convention is to use 12 point font like Times Roman with a 1 inch margin on the sides). You should follow the reference style of the American Psychological Association. This reference style is the most common in urban planning/urban studies. It involves in-text citations with the last name and the year in parentheses, i.e. (Mayer, 2005, p. 12) and a reference list, sorted by last name (and then by year) at the end of the text. Useful information can be found here:

<http://www.psywww.com/resource/APA%20Research%20Style%20Crib%20Sheet.htm#Intext>

- Due Dates & Late Assignments

Assignments must be submitted at the beginning of the class period in which they are due. Late assignments will not be accepted. If you need special arrangements, please discuss them with me well in advance. Late assignments will receive substantially reduced credit.

Draft Papers: if you want you can submit them to me in advance for feedback

When writing your papers, please make sure that you pay attention to writing style, clarity, and grammar. Allow for enough time to edit your paper. If you want me to review your paper, you should turn in a draft at least two weeks prior to the due date. This will allow me to use a week to review it and to hand it back to you in time for more editing and writing.

Class Schedule

	Date	Topic	Projects
Week 1	August 21, 2006	Introduction	
Week 2	August 28, 2006	Small Town Issues	
Week 3	September 4, 2006	Placemaking and Identity in a Global World	
Week 4	September 11, 2006	Small Town Sustainability	
Week 5	September 18, 2006	Guest Speaker: Jesse Richardson Topic: "Agriculture, agritourism and natural resources-based industries"	Readings TBA
Week 6	September 25, 2006	Mobilizing for Change in Small Towns & Student Mid-term Presentations	<i>Mid-term portfolio presentations</i>
Week 7	October 2, 2006	Sustainable Economies	Lydeana Martin, Floyd County
Week 8	October 9, 2006	No class – Conduct Research	
Week 9	October 16, 2006	Sustainability by Design	Laura Adkins, NTHP Main Street Program
Week 10	October 23, 2006	The Use of Culture and Creativity	
Week 11	October 30, 2006	Conviviality, Hospitality and Local Products	
Week 12	November 6, 2006	Equity: Housing, Work and Social Well-Being	
Week 13	November 13, 2006	Learning from Small Towns	
Week 14	November 20, 2006	<i>Happy Thanksgiving</i>	
Week 15	November 27, 2006	Student Presentations	<i>Portfolio presentation</i>
Week 16	December 4, 2006	Student Presentations	<i>Final portfolio due</i>

Schedule may be subject to changes.

Reading List

All readings are posted in the folder "Readings" on Blackboard and more may be added.

Introduction

Chapter 1 in Beatley, T. (2004). *Native to nowhere: sustaining home and community in a global age*. Washington: Island Press.

Brennan, C., & Hoene, C. (2007). Demographic Changes in America's Small Cities, 1990-2000. In B. Ofori-Amoah (Ed.), *Beyond the Metropolis: Urban Geography as if Small Cities Mattered* (pp. 69-86). Lanham: University Press of America.

McKethan, A., & Tewari, M. (2007). Prospering from Within: Identifying and Nurturing Local Assets. Retrieved August 17, 2007, from http://www.ncsu.edu/iei/io/2005/11/prospering_from_within_identif.html

Simms, A. (2005, January 24). The Gaudy Samesness of Clone Towns. *newstatesman*.

Small Town Issues

Bell, D., & Jayne, M. (2006). Conceptualizing Small Cities. In D. Bell (Ed.), *Small Cities: Urban Experience beyond the Metropolis* (pp. 1-18). New York: Routledge.

Barcus, H. (2006). Wal-Mart-scapes in Rural and Small-Town America. In S. Brunn (Ed.), *Wal-Mart World: The World's Biggest Corporation in the Global Economy* (pp. 63-75). New York: Routledge.

Hibbard, M., & Davis, L. (1986). When the Going Gets Tough: Economic Reality and the Cultural Myths of Small-Town America. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 52(4), 419-428.

Mayer, H. J., & Greenberg, M. R. (2001). Coming Back From Economic Despair: Case Studies of Small- and Medium-Size American Cities. *Economic Development Quarterly*, 15(3), 203-216.

Popper, D., & Popper, F. (2006). The Onset of the Buffalo Commons. *Journal of the West*, 45(2), 29-34.

New Economics Foundation. (2005). Clone Town Britain. Retrieved August 3, 2006, from http://www.neweconomics.org/gen/z_sys_publicationdetail.aspx?pid=206

Placemaking and Identity in a Global World

Chapter 2 in Beatley, T. (2004). *Native to nowhere: sustaining home and community in a global age*. Washington: Island Press.

Hargreaves, A. (2004). Building communities of place: Habitual movement around significant places. *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 19, 49-65.

Hubbard, P., & Lilley, K. (2000). Selling the Past: Heritage Tourism and Place Identity in Stratford-upon-Avon. *Geography*, 85(3), 221-232.

Ritzer, G. (2003). The Globalization of Nothing. *SAIS Review*, XXIII(2), 189-200.

Ritzer, G., & Malone, E. (2000). Globalization Theory: Lessons from the Exportation of McDonaldization and the New Means of Consumption. *American Studies*, 41(2/3), 97-118.

Small Town Sustainability

Campbell, S. (1996). Green cities, growing cities, just cities? Urban planning and the contradictions of sustainable development. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 3, 296-312.

Chiras, D., & Herman, J. (1997). Sustainable Community Development: A Systems Approach. In I. Audirac (Ed.), *Rural sustainable development in America* (pp. 107-127). New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Daniels, T. (1989). Small Town Economic Development: Growth or Survival? *Journal of Planning Literature*, 4(4), 413-429.

Rogers, M. (2005). Social Sustainability and the Art of Engagement—the Small Towns: Big Picture Experience. *Local Environment*, 10(2), 109-124.

Yanarella, E. (2006). Sustainability comes to the Canadian Prairie: Lessons and Caveats from the Town of Okotoks, Alberta. *Terrain.org* Retrieved August 17, 2007, from <http://www.terrain.org/articles/18/yanarella.htm>

Agriculture, agritourism and natural resources-based industries

Guest Speaker: Jesse Richardson

Readings TBA

Will be posted on Blackboard

Mobilizing for Change in Small Towns

Slow Food

Pietrykowski, B. (2004). You Are What You Eat: The Social Economy of the Slow Food Movement. *Review of Social Economy*, LXII(3), 307-321.

Slow Cities

Mayer, H., & Knox, P. (2006). Slow Cities: Sustainable places in a fast world. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 28(4), 321-334.

Food movements

Henderson, E. (1998). Rebuilding Local Food Systems from the Grassroots Up. *Monthly Review*, 50(3).

Anti Wal-Mart Movements

Beaver, W. (2005). Battling Wal-Mart: How Communities Can Respond. *Business and Society Review*, 110(2), 159-169.

Sustainable Economies

Chapter 12 in Beatley, T. (2000). *Green urbanism: Learning from European cities*. Washington D.C.: Island Press.

Farthing, S. (2007). *Small Towns as Drivers of the Rural Economy?* Paper presented at the Association of European Schools of Planning Conference.

Goodno, J. (2005). Pitching in: Some small towns are going into the retail business. *Planning* (April), 40-41.

Otto, A. (2007). Downtown Retailing and Revitalization of Small Cities: Lessons from Chillicothe and Mount Vernon, Ohio. In B. Ofori-Amoah (Ed.), *Beyond the Metropolis: Urban Geography as if Small Cities Mattered* (pp. 245-268). Lanham: University Press of America.

Stone, K. (1997). *Impact of the Wal-Mart Phenomenon on rural communities*. Paper presented at the Increasing Understanding of Public Problems and Policies, Chicago, Illinois.

Additional readings (optional)

McGrath, J. M., & Vickroy, R. (2003). A Research Approach for Tracking Local Economic Conditions in Small-Town America. *Economic Development Quarterly*, 17(3), 255-263.

Sustainability by Design

Chapter 3, 4, 5 and 6 in Beatley, T. (2004). *Native to nowhere: sustaining home and community in a global age*. Washington: Island Press.

Chapter 3 in Beatley, T. (2000). *Green urbanism: Learning from European cities*. Washington D.C.: Island Press.

Miles, M. (2006). Garden Cities and City Gardens. In D. Bell (Ed.), *Small Cities: Urban Experience beyond the Metropolis* (pp. 135-150). New York: Routledge.

The Use of Culture & Creativity

Chapter 7 in Beatley, T. (2004). *Native to nowhere: sustaining home and community in a global age*. Washington: Island Press.

Evans, G., & Foord, J. (2006). Small Cities for a Small Country: Sustaining the Cultural Renaissance? In D. Bell (Ed.), *Small Cities: Urban Experience beyond the Metropolis* (pp. 151-167). New York: Routledge.

Fleming, T., Ghilardi, L., & Napier, N. (2006). Rethinking Small Places - Urban and Cultural Creativity: Examples from Sweden, the USA and Bosnia-Herzegovina. In D. Bell (Ed.), *Small Cities: Urban Experience beyond the Metropolis* (pp. 185-201). New York: Routledge.

Miles, S. (2006). Small City - Big Ideas: Culture-led Regeneration and the Consumption of Place. In D. Bell (Ed.), *Small Cities: Urban Experience beyond the Metropolis* (pp. 233-243). New York: Routledge.

Wood, P., & Taylor, C. (2004). Big Ideas for a Small Town: The Huddersfield Creative Town Initiative. *Local Economy*, 19(4), 380-395.

Conviviality, Hospitality and Local Products

Bradley, A., & Hall, T. (2006). The Festival Phenomenon: Festivals, Events and the Promotion of Small Urban Areas. In D. Bell (Ed.), *Small Cities: Urban Experience beyond the Metropolis* (pp. 77-89). New York: Routledge.

Feenstra, G. (1997). Local Food Systems and Sustainable Communities. *American Journal of Alternative Agriculture*, 12(1), 28-36.

Schneider, M. L., & Francis, C. A. (2005). Marketing locally produced foods: Consumer and farmer opinions in Washington County, Nebraska. *Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems*, 20(4), 252-260.

Stephenson, G., & Lev, L. (2004). Common support for local agriculture in two contrasting Oregon communities. *Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems*, 19(4), 210-217.

Works, M., & Harvey, T. (2005). Can the Way We Eat Change Metropolitan Agriculture? Retrieved August 3, 2006, from http://www.terrain.org/articles/17/works_harvey.htm

Equity: Housing, Work and Social Well-Being

Chapter 9, 10, 12 in Beatley, T. (2004). *Native to nowhere: sustaining home and community in a global age*. Washington: Island Press.

Additional readings will be added.

Learning from Small Towns

Chapter 8 and 13 in Beatley, T. (2004). *Native to nowhere: sustaining home and community in a global age*. Washington: Island Press.

Chapter 13 in Beatley, T. (2000). *Green urbanism: Learning from European cities*. Washington D.C.: Island Press.

Small town sustainability initiatives

- **Slow Cities**
 - <http://www.cittaslow.org.uk/>
 - Also see assigned readings (Mayer & Knox)

- **EU SusSET “Sustaining Small Expanding Towns”**
 - <http://www.britnett-carver.co.uk/susset/>
 - The goal of this initiative is to find the “best ‘coping strategies’ for small traditional, yet expanding, towns”
 - Includes towns in Scotland, Sweden, Poland, Greece

- **Aberdeenshire Town Partnership, Scotland**
 - <http://www.atap.org.uk/about.htm>
 - Goal: “The Aberdeenshire Towns Partnership (ATP) is trying to ‘promote their sustainable development’ through community planning and an Aberdeenshire Towns Action Programme”
 - Has a formal agreement between three public sector groups: Aberdeenshire Council, Scottish Enterprise Grampian, Communities Scotland

- **Beacon Towns and Market Towns in the UK**
 - Overview: <http://mt.net.countryside.gov.uk/doclibrary/download/4313/Beacon-towns-intro.pdf>
 - http://www.countryside.gov.uk/LAR/archive/crc/market_towns.asp
 - <http://www.localfoodworks.org/Web/SA/SAWeb.nsf/b663df7c7f96694580256bd8003b9129/54130a8ac4b2a09280256ea9005167a3!OpenDocument>
 - <http://www.towns.org.uk/index.php>

- **European Council for the Village and Small Town**
 - <http://www.ecovast.org/english/index.htm>
 - Current Project: ASSET (Action to Strengthen Small European Towns) http://www.ecovast.org/english/asset_e.htm

- **EU: SmallTownNetworks**
 - <http://www.smalltownnetworks.com/>
 - The SmallTownNetworks aims to encourage the re-generation of towns in the Northern Periphery of Europe.
 - Countries participating include: Scotland, Finland and Sweden

- **AlpCity**
 - <http://www.alpcity.it/>
 - The project “focuses on local development and urban regeneration of small alpine towns. The network deals with the problem of socio-economic decline, low quality of life and urban environment in alpine towns”
 - Participating countries: Switzerland, Italy, France, Austria

- **North Carolina, United States: Small Towns Initiative**
 - <http://www.ncruralcenter.org/smalltowns/index.html>
 - “The Small Towns Initiative is designed to help North Carolina's small towns — those with fewer than 10,000 residents — achieve greater prosperity and improved quality of life. It gives special emphasis to towns experiencing hardships posed by business closings and layoffs, devastation from natural disasters or persistent poverty.”

- **Australia: Small Towns or Country Towns**
 - See Rogers article assigned in readings
 - 2000: First national conference on the Future of Australia’s Country Towns
 - Issues: decline of small towns
 - Now trend towards self-help and mutual aid

- **Handmade in America (North Carolina)**
 - Source: <http://www.handmadeinamerica.org/>
 - Goal: “HandMade in America, works to develop community strategies that will enhance our region's role nationally and internationally within the handmade field.”

- **ACENet in Ohio**
 - Appalachian Center for Economic Networks
 - Goal: “to build the foundation for a stronger, sustainable economy in Appalachian Ohio that has opportunities for those who want to start or grow their own business”

- **Your Town Alabama**
 - Source: <http://www.yourtownalabama.org/>

- Offers workshops teaching community leaders about community development, urban design, economic development, etc.
- **Small Town Design Initiative in Michigan**
 - Website: <http://www.spdc.msu.edu/la/smalltowns/index.html>
 - Application in St. Louis, Michigan: http://www.stlouismi.com/1/stlouis/Small_Town_Design_Initiative.asp
 - Application in South Haven: <http://www.south-haven.com/csh%20folder/csh/Pages/DDA/MSU%20Design%20Study.html>
- **Other initiatives related to: Culture & Creativity, Energy, etc.**
 - Examples for culture and creativity
 - Albania: http://www.sdc.admin.ch/en/Home/Projects/Creative_Cities_in_Albania
Short article about the project can be found here: http://cooperation.epfl.ch/webdav/site/cooperation/shared/publications/urbanews/UrbaNews_11_en.pdf
 - Floyd, Virginia
 - Michigan's Cool Cities Initiative: <http://www.coolcities.com/>
 - Examples for energy
 - Kansas http://www.treehugger.com/files/2005/07/small_town_gree.php
 - California <http://www.metroactive.com/papers/sonoma/08.10.05/willits-0532.html>
 - The plains <http://www.realestatejournal.com/buysell/regionalnews/20061204-gruley.html>
 - NPR story on eco-friendly small towns using Energy Star program <http://marketplace.publicradio.org/shows/2006/08/23/PM200608235.html>
http://www.energystar.gov/ia/products/commercial_food_service/Reedville.pdf
<http://www.andykerr.net/Energy/KerrSystemHP101CD.pdf>
 - Solar http://www.plentymag.com/features/2007/05/in_vermont_small_town_torn_ove.php
 - Wind power and issues against it: http://www.usatoday.com/weather/news/2006-05-26-NE-windfarm_x.htm
 - USDA rural energy initiatives: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rd/energy/>
 - Smart Communities Network: <http://www.smartcommunities.ncat.org/>
- **Feel free to pick another initiative. But please discuss it with me beforehand.**