Ave Maria and Celebration: An Examination of the Visionary Influences on the Design and Development of two New Town Intentional Communities in the State of Florida

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AVE MARIA AND CELEBRATION: AN EXAMINATION OF THE VISIONARY
INFLUENCES ON THE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF TWO NEW TOWN
INTENTIONAL COMMUNITIES IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA

A Thesis Presented

by

KATHLEEN M. CAHILL

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

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DEDICATION

To my parents, Daniel and Jayne Cahill, for their unwavering devotion and patient, loving support.
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ABSTRACT

AVE MARIA AND CELEBRATION: AN EXAMINATION OF THE VISIONARY INFLUENCES ON THE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF TWO NEW TOWN INTENTIONAL COMMUNITIES IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA

MAY 2008

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Directed by: Professor Elisabeth Hamin

The creation of new towns is a deeply rooted planning movement that is based on the human population’s constant search for a better way to live. This is evident in the depth of the movement’s history and the emergence of these towns today. Intentional settlements establish new towns in order to define a specific type of corporate, religious, political, or social community. Through a comparative case study method, the visionary influence on the design and development of two new town intentional communities, Celebration, Florida and Ave Maria, Florida, are examined in this paper. Celebration and Ave Maria each integrate the basic concepts of new town planning and the shared vision behind an intentional community through the vehicle of New Urbanism. The vision, land use, marketing, and governance are examined in each town. The nucleus of each community, the town center, is evaluated through the analysis and comparison of the character of use and architectural design. This in-depth analysis identifies specific connections between the vision for each town and the established identity.
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CHAPTER 1
RESEARCH DESCRIPTION AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

This thesis examines in general the intentions and vision behind the formation of two new towns, and in particular the expression of that intention in the area defined as the town center in each town. Two case studies Celebration, Florida and Ave Maria, Florida comprise the main body of research for this thesis. These two cases represent two distinct variations of a unifying purpose behind new town settlement. Celebration’s social purposes were developed by the Walt Disney World Company in the late 1980s, inspired by the vision of its founder. Ave Maria’s religious goals were formulated by Catholic entrepreneur and philanthropist Tom Monaghan in early 2000.

Regardless of the divergent missions, each founder identified and aimed to accommodate current societal needs and individual desires to live as part of a certain type of integrated community. These settlements stand as a response and a hopeful solution to the perceived isolation of conventional post-World War II residential development and have had an impact on the nation and beyond. This effect was evidenced in the numerous individuals and families who relocated to each community as well as the intrigued public that have debated the merits and deficits of these high-profile places.

Research Background

The formation of new towns presents a rich area of research. New town planning was seen as representing a solution to the lack of social fulfillment attributed to post World War II suburban development. In this view, the sprawling and indistinct design of
the suburbs increased reliance on the automobile and resulted in socially isolated individuals and families. New towns offered an opportunity to discover successful methods of creating self-sufficient communities through the implementation of planning techniques on a clean slate (Talen, 2005; Forsyth, 2005; Stephenson, 2002; Burby and Weiss, 1976).

In addition to presenting a laboratory for experimentation in community building, new town settlements have also been created with specific social and economic interests in mind. Throughout history, intentional and utopian communities have been formed around shared social, political or spiritual goals. Company towns, especially during the industrial era of the late 19th and early 20th centuries provide a place for residents to live, work, and recreate. The structure of religious settlements has traditionally been devoted to a shared moral value system (Talen, 2005; Parera, 2005; Hayden, 1979; Smith, 2007).

New Urbanism, a movement that was formalized in the early 1990s, shares some similarities to traditional intentional communities and post war new towns by using design principles to increase social forms of behavior. The design guidelines of New Urbanism have been used to retrofit older suburbs and neighborhoods and to construct new communities. Through the manipulation of the physical environment, New Urbanism strives to give places a secure identity and provide residents with a sense of connection, investment, and membership to the place where they live, work, and recreate (Barnett, 2000). With a back to the future approach, the movement draws heavily on models from the past. Market squares and town greens are adapted to provide a central, public place for neighbors to interact. New Urbanist suburbs, neighborhoods, and towns have been developed in a number of locations, many in the state of Florida, from the
panhandle down to the southern Gulf and Atlantic coasts of the state (Brain, 2002; Scott, 2002).

Celebration and Ave Maria integrate the basic concepts of new town planning and the shared vision behind an intentional community through the vehicle of New Urbanism. This hybrid design and development approach embodied in the formation of each town represents an opportunity for compelling comparative analysis and assessment.

**Purpose**

Examination of the two case studies through this research study will contribute to the academic literature documenting the historical and cultural evolution of new towns, intentional communities, and New Urbanist design. The advent of Ave Maria provides an exciting opportunity for study of an emerging community experiment. So recent and ongoing is the town’s construction and its residents that the real-time progression of this thesis has closely aligned with Ave Maria’s timeline for development and settlement. Conversely, Celebration is an already widely studied case, both as a New Urbanist community and as a product of the well-known Disney brand.

The character of the choices in design, marketing and governance made by the developers of Celebration and Ave Maria can all be understood within the framework of each community founder’s intention and vision for the design and development of their respective new towns. The form and design of the towns that result from these choices will serve to influence and inform successive communities that aim to meet social and spiritual goals. In addition county, city, and town planners, particularly in Florida, that are looking to provide a greater sense of identity for their community can benefit from an
understanding of how Celebration and Ave Maria utilized the area of the town center to establish a strong sense of identity.

**Chapter Outline**

This thesis consists of six chapters. Chapter 1 presents the purpose behind research on intentional communities in a historical context, establishes the research strategy, including the selection of two primary case studies, and defines some basic concepts. Chapter 2 sets a foundation of historical and theoretical knowledge through a review of relevant literature involving new towns, intentional communities, and the New Urbanist movement. Chapters 3 and 4 provide an accurate account of each case study through the examination of the development site, development partners, governance, land use, and marketing campaigns. Chapter 5 reviews the varying roles town centers have held throughout history and details the architectural elements, design guidelines, and community events represented in each case study’s town center. Chapter 6 provides a comparative analysis of each case study’s background, historical context with regard to intentional communities and new towns, and role of the town center within the town’s intentional mission. Chapter 6 also concludes with the author’s final assessments and recommendations for future research.

**Plan of Study**

The primary goal of this thesis is to understand the vision behind two current new town intentional communities, and the expression of the vision in the heart of the town, the town center. The main body of this thesis comprises two case studies; the town in each case study was conceived by a strong visionary individual with a strategic aim of intentional community building goals. A comprehensive literature review will provide an
essential historical and cultural context to inform the case study research and enable specific conclusions to be drawn about the relationship these towns have to past and present trends, movements, and settlements.

In order to achieve a more effective and extensive comparison two case studies were chosen in the same geographical area, the State of Florida. This geographical delimitation also involved a shared regulatory environment for the creation of these two new towns. Arguments could be established for the representation of intentional goals in other physical as well as non-physical components of towns. However, for the purposes of establishing an equal foundation for comparison between two new towns in different phases of construction, it was necessary to focus the examination of the case studies on one comprehensive and complete town element, the town center.

The theoretical framework for this research rests upon the following principles:

- The comprehensive, holistic master-planning process involved in the creation of new towns offers a unique opportunity for a community planning assessment.
- Intentional communities are grounded on a sense of community vision.
- Town centers have historically held the role of anchoring the identity and defining place in neighborhoods, cities, and towns.

The expectations for this study are:

- The overall land use allocations and the physical components of each town will exhibit a direct connection with the vision behind each community
- The utilization of New Urbanist principles is evident in the guidelines for each town center’s design.
- The character of use and architectural style predominant in each case study’s town center will form an identity that expresses the overall intention of the town.

Case Studies

Celebration, Florida, is a new town intentional community built in 1996 that was conceived and financed by the Disney Company. Celebration’s association with Disney and its well-known reputation represents an intentional community founded on the
“Disney ideology.” Ave Maria, Florida is a new town currently being built that was conceived and primarily financed by Catholic philanthropist, Tom Monaghan. A cornerstone of the town, both socially and physically, includes educational institutions operated in the Catholic tradition. This case study represents a community founded on traditional religious values.

Celebration and Ave Maria are part of a general movement as well as a more specific state-wide movement to create new towns that respond to prospective residents’ desire to live in places offering a community different from that found in conventional suburban development. The selection of the two case studies is based on identification of key convergent and divergent characteristics.

Celebration and Ave Maria were both built within the legal statutes of the same state. The towns both encompass roughly the same acreage of land. The two communities each incorporate the principles of New Urbanism. Finally both towns were produced by strong visionaries. Significant differences between the two towns include particular aspects of their respective visions, regional location, and development timeline.

The main difference between the two case studies is the distinctive intention and vision behind each new town. Celebration is the product of Disney’s experimentation in a new market; a town which brings to life the community ideals and nostalgia experienced by park patrons as they walk down Magic Kingdom’s ‘Main Street U.S.A’. Ave Maria is a town built around a Catholic university, which offers individuals and families a community where religious morals and values are integrated into daily life.
Methods

An extensive literature review concerning the development of new towns is documented in Chapter 2. The literature review explores the settlement of new towns throughout history, with particular attention to the establishment of intentional communities. The review traces the emergence of New Urbanism and identifies the principles and best practices associated with this development philosophy. In addition, the review captures the important yet varying roles town centers have played throughout history. The research questions driving the literature review are:

- What are the historical precedents for current new town intentional communities?
- How has the role of town centers been characterized historically and theoretically?
- What factors have contributed to the new town planning movement?
- How has New Urbanism contributed to the design and the philosophy behind new town planning?

The majority of this thesis is devoted to the exploration and analysis of two case studies. Yin asserted that case studies present a valuable research strategy to understand important social events or changes, such as the formation of human settlements (Yin, 2003). Extensive research has analyzed the physical, anthropological, environmental, and economic elements of Celebration however little to no academic research has been conducted on the Town of Ave Maria, because at this time the Town is still in its initial stages of development. The research that has been conducted on Ave Maria has yet to be complied and documented cohesively. Therefore, thorough background research was an essential part of the case study analysis. The research questions driving the case study analysis are:

- What was the impetus behind the creation of each town?
- What physical structures distinguish each town center?
• How does each town center incorporate residential, retail, commercial, industrial, and civic uses?
• How are the principles of New Urbanism utilized to advance the stated social goals of each town?

The comparative case study approach began with background research on the development of each new town, commencing with the origin of the vision. An important component of this background includes research into Florida growth management, in particular the Florida statutes that enabled the legal structure of each new town. Background research was conducted through the examination of town websites, newspapers, magazine and journal articles, U.S. Census data, Florida law, and at least one site visit to each town. Informal interviews with professional planners, architects, and reporters in the area, individuals who worked for the homebuilder in sales, in addition to current and former residents provided supplementary information.

Once a general historical background of each town was established, the town center was specifically analyzed through a two-tiered approach. The first approach consisted of a design analysis. It was clear from initial interviews conducted with members of the professional teams that worked on Ave Maria and the sales force employed by the homebuilder that the town was designed according to New Urbanist principles. Celebration is well-documented as a New Urbanist community by the Congress for the New Urbanism.

The principles of New Urbanism have been appropriated to each community in accord with the elements of a general development and design philosophy. While there is no completely standardized application of New Urbanism, there are qualitative principles and quantitative design guidelines established in the SmartCode. This code was
developed in 2001 by Andres Duany, one of the founders of the Congress for the New Urbanism. The use of the SmartCode is also referred to as transect planning, a regulatory alternative to conventional Euclidean zoning. Transect planning achieves a balance between human made and natural environments throughout different spatial scales and varying intensities. Regulations in the SmartCode are organized according to these different scales and intensities, or transects. The SmartCode has six transects: rural preserve, rural reserve, sub-urban, general urban, urban center, and urban core (Duany et al., 2006).

The description of the density, building types, and street network in the urban center zone (Transect 5) closely aligns with the documents describing the zoning in Ave Maria’s Town Core and Celebration’s Town Center. Celebration and Ave Maria’s town center guidelines for buildings, streets, sidewalks, parking, and civic space were compared to the guidelines that pertain to Transect 5 in the SmartCode. This tier of the analysis was intended to uncover the calibration to several of the key design features established in the SmartCode. The results of the analysis are documented in matrix format to facilitate direct comparison. This research was completed through the examination of master plan documents, design guidelines, photographs, site plans, town and developer statistics (both public and private), assessor data, and engineer measurements.

The second tier consisted of a use analysis. The SmartCode Article 6 Table 10 Building Function-Specific Research was used to compare the presence of buildings designed for specific use in each town center. Research was conducted on the activities and events that where held at the town center. This research was accomplished by
reviewing town center websites, town websites, informal interviews with residents and former residents, attendance at two town events, review of town data, master plan data, developer and county statistics.

**Conceptual Framework**

The word ‘community’ is used frequently throughout the planning field. Community can be used to refer to a geographical territory or relationships among individuals (Plas and Lewis, 1996). In most cases the word compels a favorable association, and it is this association that proponents of new communities capitalize on (Valhouli, 2006).

‘New community’ is a general term that can be applied to both residential communities and comprehensive communities that include both residential and commercial components. ‘New town’ refers to communities that have a degree of self-containment. These new towns can either be created by the private sector or the public sector, though U.S. new towns more frequently fall into the former category.

The Urban Land Institute developed their own definition for new towns, which encompasses the following attributes:

- A mix of uses
- Opportunities for neighborhood and community level involvement in governance
- Areas for interaction between a variety of social, economic, age and racial groups
- Opportunities for significant employment
- A range of housing prices
- An overall commitment to aesthetic values, open space preservation, human scale, and personal identity
- Opportunities for both interaction and privacy (Forsyth, 2005, 27-28)

‘New town’ is an umbrella term that includes several different variations within it.

Additional distinctions are found in freestanding towns, satellite towns, towns-within-towns, and company towns. Freestanding towns are usually remote and relatively rural,
with limited connectivity to larger cities (Forsyth, 2005; Campbell, 1976). Satellite towns possess economic, social and cultural characteristics of a freestanding new town but are intimately connected and within close range to larger cities (Nolen, 1927). Towns-within-towns refer to large-scale inner city developments where planning encompassed more than a large neighborhood. Finally company towns refer to corporate involvement or development that was solely due to an industrial interest (Forsyth, 2005).

‘Master-planned community’ is a broad term used to refer to all new communities. In the context of this work, master-planned community describes a development where the planning of all the components (commercial, residential, civic) of the community took place simultaneously by a developer or a set of developers, ‘the masters’. Once the physical development is in place and the residents have moved into the community they adopt the role of the master through homeowners associations, making decisions that affect the entire community (Krohe, 2007).

New Urbanism is a development philosophy based on the premise that the physical environment has a direct impact on social behavior. New Urbanist principles encourage higher densities than conventional development, a walkable mixture of residential, commercial and recreational land uses, and well-designed open space. This philosophy can be applied to existing neighborhoods as well as new communities (Barnett, 2000).

The term intentional community refers to a settlement pattern designed to encourage a heightened degree of social interaction. This interaction is often qualified by a social, religious or political vision. Regardless of the specific vision, each intentional
A strong resurgence in the concept of new communities largely grew out of the dissatisfaction with the patterns of post World War II suburban development. Low-density, single family homes defined the leading development pattern beginning in the 1920s and new towns presented a unique opportunity for planners and developers to create settlement patterns on a clean slate—tabula rosa. In contrast to the incrementalists, who believed that the success of communities hinged on sequential development, advocates of new towns believed in the power of simultaneous implementation. It was the master plan, developed at one point in time, which provided the ability to think holistically. Planners and developers hoped to identify the pure concepts of the optimal urban form through this master planning process. These professionals had the ability to control boundaries, edges, and centers in a way that was distinctly different from utilizing the ‘givens’ of pre-existing cities (Talen, 2005; Stephenson, 2002).

It was not simply the design of conventional suburbs that caused concern and dissatisfaction, more importantly it was the patterns of socialization that resulted from the design. The poor design of suburbs resulted in isolated individuals and families, and limited sociability (Langdon, 1994). James Rouse, a developer who focused on planned communities during the 1960s, was avidly against this type of sprawling development. He describes it in the following way:

Thus, bits and pieces of a city are splattered across the landscape. By this irrational process, non-communities are born—formless places without order, beauty or reason, places with no visible respect for people or the land. Thousands of small, separate decisions made with little or no
relationship to one another, nor to their composite impact, produce a major decision about the future of our cities and our civilization—a decision that we have come to label “suburban sprawl.” What nonsense this is! (Rouse in Forsyth, 2005, 25).

The advocates of master-planned communities identify the ethos of these settlements as stimulating civic pride and civil spirit through communal facilities, encouraging social integration that crosses socioeconomic, racial, ethnic backgrounds, providing for a proximity to nature and recreational facilities as well as accessibility to daily needs through public transportation (Talen, 2005). Shirley Weiss and Raymond Burby identified a set of widely-accepted characteristics of the master-planned communities as part of their study on new community development in the 1970s. These characteristics include:

- Size and unified ownership of the site
- Master-planning process, including developer, government collaboration
- Presence of housing choice and social and economic diversity
- Environmental consciousness
- Encouraging self-sufficiency within the balance of services, commercial, industrial and residential
- Fostering self-determination through self-governance
- Commitment to urban design (Burby and Weiss, 1976)

Talen cites two determining conditions of master-planned communities. The first condition maintains that planned communities must embody some of the qualities of urbanism or possess the potential to encourage urbanism. Principles of urbanism include diversity, connectivity, civic space and equity. The second condition identified by Talen determines that these communities must be purposefully designed. The two conditions attached to master-planned communities by Talen are designed to separate these types of development from large-scale private residential developments, which give less consideration to ecological, social and humanitarian goals (Talen, 2005).
The concept of a master-planned community has been promoted as a laboratory, or an experimental atmosphere, by which to discover successful techniques for human settlement (Talen, 2005). In 1977 Alonso described this type of experimental excitement in the following way, “…mostly the idea of new towns has some magic that fires the imagination, stirring some Promethean impulse to create a better place and a way of life, a calm, and healthy community of crystalline completeness” (Forsyth, 2005, 177). Talen makes the claim that it is not only the measure of the successes or failures of these communities that creates their important role in the evolution of planning but also the measure of the degree to which these developments inspire and teach future teams. Master-planned communities offer a more controlled environment in which to assess innovation of design and elements of success and failure. While pre-existing cities have a variety of factors to consider when evaluating design interventions, master planned communities foster a transparency that comes from the control, containment and simply the master plan that was present from the beginning (Talen, 2005).

In addition, proponents of planned communities, such as Mumford (1968) and John Nolen (1927) stated that there had come a time when a city had reached its full population and new development outside of city boundaries became necessary. Ebenezer Howard claimed that all the necessary and vital elements of the city could be created and contained in a place the size of a town (Talen, 2005). Master-planned communities offered an opportunity to attain many of the qualities of life that were eluding Americans as they were participating in ‘growth by spread’ via suburbanization. Advocates of master-planned communities assert that these quality of life goals would be
conceptualized in a regional way, with an organizational approach to the internal components and the external links of these bounded communities (Forsyth, 2005).

There are members of the planning and design field that are not in favor of the planned community concept. Practitioners and academics critiqued master-planned communities for a variety of reasons. New towns and planned communities were grouped together with the suburbs, which were both accused of giving up on the city, and escaping to new destinations, instead of investing resources to better the city atmosphere. The self-containment of planned communities translated for many into an exclusive living arrangement with a controlled, sterile environment (Talen, 2005). As a secondary piece of this argument although many planned communities had goals of social mixing, many times this type of internal diversity was difficult if not impossible to achieve. Finally, the implementation of a master plan diminished the importance of small-scale and incremental development that was considered by many entities to be a necessary component of authenticity (Jacobs, 1961).
NEW TOWN ORIGINS

Burby and Weiss (1976) claim that new community development is not an evolutionary process; “Instead, it has emerged and re-emerged as each generation has perceived the new community as an opportunity for profitable investment in real estate and as an answer to the various ills besetting society at the time” (Burby and Weiss, 1976, 16). This pattern of re-emergence is accompanied by various combinations of planning techniques utilized throughout the history of new communities.

Talen makes the point that although many mistake the Garden City as the inception of new communities, the concept was rooted in the first American settlements. It was these initial towns that became the model that influenced later planners. In early American settlements, the large availability of land resulted in two types of land occupation: individual properties, and urban groupings. Individual properties situated on untouched land reflected the American dream for detached homes in a natural landscape, as well as sentiments of manifest destiny. The urban groupings were heavily influenced by European city models, in particular the Spanish town formulated by the “Law of the Indies.” The “Law of the Indies” was a set of instructions developed by Spanish monarch, King Phillip II in 1573 to guide Spanish colonists on how to organize, design, construct, and expand towns in the Americas. The design scheme was based on a grid pattern, with civic and religious buildings situated in the center and communal land surrounding the grid system (Parera, 2005).
The first Spanish settlement to follow the Law of the Indies was St. Augustine, Florida founded in 1565. William Penn amended the grid pattern to create Philadelphia in 1682. The United States government also reflected this type of design in Federal regulations when Congress adopted the United States Public Land Survey System in 1785. The U.S. Public Land Survey System subdivided land into one-mile square grid sections, and thirty-six of these sections constituted a township. This system was used for settlement and speculative development purposes (Parera, 2005).

There exists a nostalgia surrounding New England small towns that has been expressed through the replication of their design in more recent new towns. Many colonial New England towns adopted a looser variant of the grid pattern brought to America by the Spanish. These small towns integrated town and country by bounding the grid/the village with communally owned agricultural land, thereby ensuring its compactness (Talen, 2005).

**Religious and Utopian New Towns**

The grid pattern discussed in the previous section was also integrated into the utopian experiments of the 1800s, during which social reformers and religious groups envisioned communities grounded in morality. Precedents for this type of organizational living are found in European Christian monasteries and Colonial Puritan covenant communities, however, a greater large-scale acceptance for these types of communities took place in the early 1800s (Hayden, 1979). During this time period the Mormons fled religious intolerance in upstate New York through the Midwest and eventually to the isolated and unoccupied land of Utah, Wyoming, and Nevada (Parera, 2005).
Joseph Smith, the founder of the new church, drove the spiritual group to construct the religious capital of the New World, in order to prepare for the Lord’s second coming (Parera, 2005). In 1833 Smith laid out the specifications for this religious capital in the Plat of the City of Zion, a grid-like pattern. Figure 1 depicts Smith’s original design. The three central blocks in solid grey were designated for religious temples. The blocks surrounding the temples were for residential use. Density was controlled by specifications that limited one house per lot. Joseph Smith intended to cap the population of each city at twenty thousand people, after which a new satellite community would be created using the same pattern.

The simple egalitarianism of these ‘Cities of Zion’ was directed at shunning the sinful ways of American society, and preparing for the new social and religious order (Talen, 2005). The Plat of Zion integrated several historical organizational models including the plan for Old Jerusalem, Law of Indies, the settlement pattern of Colonial New England Towns, the spatial design of Philadelphia, and U.S. Public Land Survey System (Parera, 2005). The Mormons are considered one of the few successful religious groups to apply their town planning abilities at a large scale (Talen, 2005).
Many comparisons have been drawn between the Mormon model and Ebenezer Howard’s vision. Both models:

- Controlled for use and density
- Formed places of refuge from religious intolerance or large, polluted cities
- Required land to be under communal ownership
- Instituted a community cap, after which additional ‘satellite communities’ were created
- Combined urban and rural amenities
- Fostered societal self-sufficiency (Parera, 2005).

Salt Lake City, founded in 1847, is one of the most well-known manifestations of the Plat of the City of Zion model, forming a successive model for future Mormon settlements.

The repetition of the Salt Lake City model created many Utah towns with similar features. Salt Lake City also provides an example of a homogenous society implemented by church leaders who regulated the lives of community members through their complete control of cultural, social, political, and economic matters (Parera, 2005).

The success of the Plat model is evidenced by the fact that 83% of the original 537 Mormon settlements are still occupied, as of 2005. These communities strategically created a self-sufficient settlement which reduced dependence on non-Mormons, and dominated the geographical area’s culture and ideology. The reasons for the model’s success include the better provision of education (both religious and secular), the
facilitation of efficient services, and the solid trust that was placed in one stable, leader (Parera, 2005).

The 19th century utopian literature expressly connected the quality of the physical environment with the quality of life for the individual inhabiting that land. Utopian developments were thought to have the potential to provide for all human needs through one complete environment. These communities held social interaction in a higher regard than other settlements, and each was designed to induce a particular set of moral outcomes. This act of connecting morality and place heightens the value system for each group, with the hope that these sets of beliefs will be easier to follow (Smith, 2007). The expression of these ideas did not turn out to achieve great innovations in physical design but the utopian communities that did come to fruition were valuable examples of social experimentation.

New Harmony, Indiana is a well known utopian community begun in 1825 by the philanthropist Robert Owen. Owen strongly believed that the environment had the power to shape human conduct. His communitarian experiment promised to provide inhabitants with all the “necessities of life” including a place to work, free education, free health care, and housing. The 800 members of New Harmony, referred to as the New Harmonites were governed by Owen in partnership with a committee. In the short period of time that Robert Owen was in leadership the community was characterized by consistent reorganization. As a result economic self-sufficiency was never achieved, and sub-sections of the populations broke away, leasing land from Owen and forming their own communities.
In 1826, one year after New Harmony was established Robert Owen dissolved his organizational ties to the community, gradually selling his land to the remainder of the population. Despite the short life of New Harmony, by the end of the 1840s, the influence of Owen’s experimentation was traced to the origin of nineteen communities. Furthermore, the concepts explored in New Harmony, “…that institutions foster the individual personality, that communal labor was the only way to have social harmony, that common property was essential to the elimination of selfishness and competition, that the community itself was a paradigm of universal reform…all laid the foundation for the growth of utopian socialism throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century.” (Sutton, 2004, 19).

A multitude of communal utopias developed in the 1960s, many of which were labeled as “hippie colonies.” These colonies held varied missions and most were short-lived, lasting about two years. The period between 1975 and 2000 supported a trend of intentional settlements characterized very differently than the hippie colonies of the 1960s. The majority of individuals that had established these communities, and those that subsequently joined them, were college educated professionals looking for an alternative to conventional lifestyles that separated the domains of work and home. One example is the Stelle Community, an intentional community built around the Steel Woodworking Corporation, located southwest of Chicago in Illinois. The Community, which is still in operation today, conducts research in sustainable development practices. Their research, which is partially funded by the Federal government, has made advancements in the discovery of alternative forms of energy (Sutton, 2004).
19th Century Industrialization and Company Towns

The industrialization of the 19th century brought the exploration by several corporations of company towns, built up around a particular industry. Tyronne, New Mexico was a company town settled around the copper-mining industry (Talen, 2005). Lowell, Massachusetts planned in 1822 rose up around the factories and textile mills that were supported by the Merrimack River. These small factory houses can still be identified in the city’s housing stock today.

One of the most well known company town was planned, designed, and financed in 1881 by George Pullman, founder of Pullman Palace Car Works. The town, fittingly called Pullman, was located just south of Chicago. Pullman’s town concept provided his employees with a place to live, work, and play in the same area (Talen, 2005). The Pullman concept was not unusual in that many enterprises believed creating favorable conditions for their employees, would result in increased production and profit (Nolen, 1927).

The motivation for Pullman was part philanthropic and part profit-producing desires. The town appeared to be a success by way of the design and the complementary services and amenities that were available to workers until 1893 when the country experienced an economic downtown. Pullman laid off employees and cut the salaries of remaining workers without reducing rents or other costs of living in the town. It also became apparent through social research on Pullman’s population that this type of corporate structure may have had control over too many areas of individual lives. Talen claims that Americans’ experience of these planned company towns left them with mixed feelings. A large portion of the population believed that “the planned community offered
the promise of security and harmony, but it shunned the reverse, equally magnetic values of adventure, expansion, and desire” (Talen, 2005, 206).

The company towns that were built several decades after Pullman originated in response to the growth in factories adopting the assembly-line technique, also called Fordist production, because of its inventor Henry Ford. The design of these towns was markedly different than communities like Pullman, because of the integration of automobile-dependent values. The towns that resulted were intended to provide for the new use of the vehicle and the sentiments its use represented: independence and individuality (Talen, 2005).

**Influence of the Garden City on New Town Planning**

The Garden City as a type of development was conceived as an alternative to the heavy, polluted, industrial way of life. It embraced the goals of providing, “…a full range of daily life needs, ready access to nature, and a full measure of social life” (Lange in Talen, 1996, 123). These goals were targeted at the working class and the poor. Although ideas about connecting the environment to positive human development existed prior to the late 1800s it is Ebenezer Howard who is referred to as the founding father of the Garden City movement.

Howard explained his theory through a system of magnets. “Each city must be regarded as a magnet, each person as a needle; and, so viewed, it is at once seen that nothing short of the discovery of a method for constructing magnets of yet greater power than our cities possess can be effective for redistributing the population in a spontaneous and healthy manner” (Howard in Le Gates and Stout, 2003, 311). Howard identified three magnets: the town, the country, and the combination of the two, the town-country
which was considered ideal since neither extreme represents the “...full plan and purpose of nature” (Howard in Le Gates and Stout, 2003, 311).

A band of agricultural land, which later evolved as a greenbelt, would surround the community. Howard’s city would be economically self-sufficient and the responsibilities of governance would dwell in the faith of the people that resided there (Howard in Le Gates, 2003). Letchworth, Welwyn Garden City, and Wythenshawe, located in England, form the trinity of the first true Garden cities, and from there various translations were manifested in communities, suburbs and villages (Talen, 2005). Howard’s ideas had a significant affect on the future of city planning, with particular regard to planned communities and new towns.

The Regional Planning Association of America (RPAA), founded in 1923 by Clarence Stein, was a collaborative arrangement of architects, engineers, landscape architects, sociologists, economists, city officials, union leaders and writers invested in the study and the practice of the components of good planning (Parsons, 1994). The RPPA adopted Howard’s Garden City ideals and implemented them to different degrees in Sunnyside Gardens, New York (1924) and Raburn, New Jersey (1929) (Talen, 2005). Sunnyside Gardens was a privately financed development, backed by Alexander Bing, one of the founding members of the RPAA. It was in the achievement of...
integrating different socioeconomic backgrounds, by conceptualizing the development unit as the block rather than the single lot, that Sunnyside emulated Garden City goals. In addition the development was also touted as a successful example of planning techniques that brought about social mixing without governmental support. Finally Sunnyside adapted the garden city formula of one-part country, one-part city to a dense, completely urban location (Talen, 2005).

This RPAA began another development in 1929, Radburn, New Jersey. Although the planning of Radburn also commenced as a privately financed development, a combination of factors including the stock market crash caused the RPAA to turn to governmental involvement. While Sunnyside, New York was located within close range to public transit which eliminated a need to consider the automobile, one of the primary challenges in creating Radburn was to design for an auto-dependent population.

Radburn’s team of planners, architects, and developers contributed the idea of the ‘superblock’ which separated the pedestrian from traffic (Talen, 2005).

Figure 4: Radburn, New Jersey
Source: Chang-Moo, Kung-Hyuck, 2003
Federal Government Involvement in Building New Communities

After the Great Depression of 1929 the Federal government decided to become involved in community planning and building. In the 1930s the Federal Resettlement Administration, charged with relief works, built three new communities. These communities, which included Greenbelt, Maryland, Greenhills, Ohio and Greendale, Wisconsin, were often referred to as the New Deal greenbelt communities because of the way each was influenced by the Garden City design. Federal involvement also took form in company towns. Los Alamos, New Mexico, Oak Ridge, Tennessee and Hanford (now Richmond), Washington were all built in the early 1940s by the Atomic Energy Commission to accommodate employees and their families working at the atomic energy facilities (Burby and Weiss, 1976).

The 1960s and the early 1970s began another wave of Federal government involvement within the new community movement. The impetus for this involvement was a recommendation from the National Committee on Urban Growth Policy that 100 new towns comprised of 100,000 people should be built, in addition to 10 new towns of 1,000,000 residents (Forsyth, 2005). “In 1970 Congress found that new patterns of development and, in particular, new communities were needed to house future population growth, prevent future deterioration of the nation’s physical and social environment, and to make positive contributions to improving the overall quality of life” (Burby and Weiss, 1976).

The Housing and Urban Development Department administered two programs to facilitate these goals: Title IV of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968 and Title VII of the Urban Development Act of 1970. Title VII was considered more
influential of the two acts because it included loan deferrals for new communities and made these developments eligible for special grants. Unfortunately, several problems arose, many of which centered around financial issues that lead to the termination of federal programmatic involvement with new communities. Instead, the government chose to contribute to the movement by sponsoring collaborative opportunities for professionals involved in new town planning (Forsyth, 2005).

**The New Community Movement in the Private Sector**

In the time period between the 1950s to the 1970s innovative developers and planners responded to criticisms that related to the surge of suburban expansion that took place after World War II through master-planned communities. Master-planned communities presented the opportunity to avoid the mistakes that occurred through the segmented, incremental development of the suburbs. These communities experimented with higher densities, the incorporation of non residential land uses, and changing development patterns that created greater concentrations of open space (Schmitz and Bookout, 1998).

Americans also sought example in their European neighbors who had already begun new town planning programs. European programs, however, were supported by the public sector while the United States’ new town planning was largely dominated by private sector developers. In fact, the new town movement created an increase in the amount of large homebuilder companies, and formed a specialized niche of the ‘community builder’ (Forsyth, 2005, 33). Planners, developers, architects, and engineers in the United States hoped that the application of this type of holistic consciousness would result in both the implementation of good planning techniques as well as a
marketable product. “Ranging in projected population from 10,000 to 500,000 these communities were planned to be phased, coordinated, socially balanced, environmentally aware, and economically efficient” (Forsyth, 2005, 2).

It was Americans’ ‘quest for a community’ that the professionals behind new, planned communities sought to capture in their product. Many of the qualities of planned communities that were successfully marketed included quality of life characteristics that the suburbs had promised but never delivered. These included: a knitted community that fostered personable interactions, an intimate association with nature, and an “ordered diversity” (Forsyth, 2005, 14). Marketing these new communities to the public was a calculated risk, because although sprawl had few proponents it still had control over the majority of the real estate market (Forsyth, 2005).

In her 2005 book ReForming Suburbia, Forsyth collected and analyzed research on three satellite communities that were the result of the suburban backlash of the 1970s. These three communities included: The Woodlands located in Texas, Irvine Ranch in California, and Columbia located in Maryland. The study was designed to understand the contributions that these new communities and the planning teams behind them had made to the practices of planning. The three new communities were linked by a number of commonalities. Each community:

- Involved private sector planning and the need to capture the private market
- Incorporated planning and design innovations such as walkability, open space, and preservation
- Possessed a long-term overall vision
- Encompassed large land areas
- Had a prime location for attracting a range of activities
- Was financially backed by a rich developer
Although the three communities were connected through multiple goals, they were also each recognized for individual differences, both situational and procedural, that made them remarkable stand-alone examples. For example, The Irvine Ranch boosts the largest business parks district in California. This is particularly notable because the commercial development component of planned communities has consistently presented a large challenge for developers. Columbia, Maryland was approved as a community on the county level just two years before the last racially segregated school was closed down. Columbia’s developer James Rouse was heavily influenced by his Christian ideals which were embroidered into the social planning that went behind this community. The town is well-known for its successful attempt at racial integration, maintaining a population that was one-fifth African American throughout its early years. The Woodlands is not only considered an esteemed example of ecological planning but it also was one of a small number of new communities to utilize Housing and Urban Development Department programs, Title IV and Title VII (Forsyth, 2005).

The three communities were also united by their struggles, one of which was providing affordable housing. This challenge of implementing affordable housing is recurrent in U.S. new towns that were privately developed. Alternatively, European new towns that had more public coordination tended to experience greater success in this area (Forsyth, 2005).

Burby and Weiss completed a 1976 study on 36 new communities, during the period just following the re-emergence of the new town movement. Seventeen of the communities they studied were new and the majority of these new communities were built with no federal assistance. The research team found that overall the communities
fared better than conventional development with respect to land use planning, access to community facilities, and a reduction in automobile traffic. Resident opinions revealed that overall the communities came out on par or worse off than conventional developments on factors such as community governance and resident satisfaction with quality of life. Burby and Weiss concluded that one reason for these negative results involved the private sector’s limited ability to assume public sector roles that residents experienced in conventional developments (Weiss, 1976).

Alexander Bing, the developer that had an investor role in both Sunnyside and Radburn, did not believe a planned community would succeed if its goal was to make a profit. Planned communities require long term commitments that usually extend beyond the timeline of profit-motivated developers (Talen, 2005). Forsyth referred to this situation as the ‘paradox of private innovation,’ which described the tension between the innovative techniques that created well planned communities and the delayed collection of profits. There were also other identifiable tensions that existed between private and public perspectives underneath this ‘paradox of private innovation.’ Oftentimes the elite developers exploited their power networks to fast-track applications and alter regulations and requirements within the governmental structure. These teams of developers and planners were striving to create a replicable model which could only be achieved if the model was profitable. This convenient alteration of government instituted rules left many contemplating if the private sector could create these communities in a way that was also accountable to the public interest (Forsyth, 2005).
New Urbanism

The Congress of the New Urbanism (CNU) was founded in 1993, by a group of six architects and town planners. Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk and Peter Calthorpe were among the six founders. The formation of the CNU is based on the premise that the physical environment has a direct impact on social behavior (Ross, 1999; Winner, 2000). In 1996 the CNU adopted The Charter of the New Urbanism, a document which set forth principles for city design. “The Congress for the New Urbanism views disinvestment in central cities, the spread of placeless sprawl, increasing separation by race and income, environmental deterioration, loss of agricultural lands and wilderness, and the erosion of society’s built heritage as one interrelated community building challenge” (Barnett, 1995, 5). The proposed solutions to these challenges are rolled out in the Charter in the context of the region, the neighborhood, district, corridor and the block, street, and building.

The Neotraditional architectural style was adopted by the CNU as a vehicle by which to accomplish overarching social goals. The vision of Neotraditional town planning, also called Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND), is grounded on several elements:

- Land use mix constitutes the walkable integration of residential, commercial, office, and recreation land uses
- Densities challenge sprawling development patterns
- Street patterns facilitate multiple routes to one destination
- Mindful pedestrian circulation
- Open space crafted out of usable space instead of leftover land
- Architectural character emulates regional history
- Sense of community

Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk (DPZ) integrated TND into transect planning, an alternative to conventional, Euclidean zoning. “…The transect is a
regulatory code that promotes an urban pattern that is sustainable, coherent in design, and composed of an array of livable, humane environments satisfying a range of human needs” (Duany and Talen, 2002, 245). The overarching goal of transect planning is to achieve a balance between human made and natural environments throughout different spatial scales and varying intensities. These differences are expressed in six ecozones: rural preserve, rural reserve, sub-urban, general urban, urban center, and urban core. The SmartCode was established in 2001, as a specific tool that can be utilized by planning professions to calibrate the transect model to a particular community (Duany and Talen, 2002; Duany et. al., 2006).

Traditional Neighborhood Development and Transect Planning both fall under the umbrella term, New Urbanism. It is common for planning practitioners, authors, and academics to broadly refer to developments using these different techniques as New Urbanist. One of the most famous New Urbanist communities is Seaside, Florida which was developed in 1981 by Robert Davis in partnership with DPZ (Langdon, 1994).

Although New Urbanism is primarily utilized by the private-sector the philosophy has influenced the Housing and Urban Development Department’s (HUD) public housing program. The Housing Opportunities for People Everyone (Hope VI) was established in 1993 by HUD. HOPE VI is the antithesis of concentrated public housing, creating instead a situation where public housing is one component of a mixed use, mixed-income development (Ross, 1999; Saab, 2007).

Elements of the New Urbanist philosophy have been questioned by critics from various disciplines, some of whom refer to the set of principles as a ‘cult’. This cult, by definition, reduces individuality to a design appeal process, in favor of a shared aesthetic
environment. Opponents contend that New Urbanism requires community interactions to be too scripted, citing the screening of public housing candidates for HOPE IV developments as a mechanism to create ‘mixed-income utopias’ (Schmich in Saab, 2007, 2008).

**New Urbanism in Florida**

The New Urbanist movement has been compared to the mission and philosophy of John Nolen, a city planner who completed much of his work in Florida. Nolen is well known for his belief that successful communities would only be possible through a healthy civic presence. His city plans worked to integrate ‘civic virtue’ which rested in part on a strong partnership between public authorities and private individuals (Stephenson, 2002).

In 1922 Nolen worked with St. Petersburg to create Florida’s first comprehensive plan. Florida’s land boom had turned the state into the ‘last frontier’ and “a great laboratory of town and city building” according to Nolen. Nolen’s theories of civic virtue were put to the test in the South, an area of the country known during this time for racial tensions. He worked with a total of fifty-four projects in Florida during the 1920s. In 1925 he planned Venice, Florida which is considered “…the most complete example of the garden city in Florida” (Stephenson, 2002, 111). At the 1926 National City Planning Conference, Nolen promoted the importance of developing regulations and a unified state vision to address the future development patterns of cities and towns in Florida (Stephenson, 2002).

In addition to the precedents established by John Nolen in the early 20th century, institutions and examples in South Florida have acted as a catalyst for the New Urbanist
momentum. Miami, Key West, and Coral Gables provide historical examples of communities that influence New Urbanist principles. Institutions in South Florida have also increased the production and Floridian concentration of planners, architects, and designers educated in the New Urbanist tradition at the School of Architecture at the University of Miami (lead by Dean Plater Zyberk) and Florida Atlantic University. These educational institutions, in collaboration with the Seaside Institute (developed out of Seaside, Florida) provide the tools necessary for the dissemination of New Urbanist education.

Although New Urbanists projects have sprung up across the country, the State of Florida, seems to harbor a propensity for supporting communities born of this philosophy (Brain, 2002). Seaside, known as one of the first New Urbanist communities, was developed in the Florida Panhandle. WaterColor and WaterSound, neighbors to Seaside were built nearly twenty years later. Central Florida contains the New Urbanist development of Celebration and Alachua County, north of Central Florida, is home to Haile Plantation Village Center (Dunlop, 2002). Abacoa Florida, located on the southeast coast was planned by the six founders of the Congress of the New Urbanism (Scott, 2002). Recently, the City of Orlando was involved in the creation of Baldwin Park, a New Urbanist neighborhood.

The redevelopment of the Orlando Naval Training Center (ONTC) in Orlando, Florida has been called “one of the nation’s most important New Urbanist projects” (Stephenson, 2002, 113). The ONTC had been operating in Orlando since 1968 at a 1,100 acre site located less than five miles from the downtown. When the City became aware in the early 1990s that the ONTC had been identified for closure, they responded
by developing a Reuse Plan for the site. Orlando’s Master Plan integrated the results of citizen outreach, garnered through a Visual Preference Survey and a mini-charrette. The themes that emerged from stakeholder meetings closely aligned with New Urbanist principles:

- Linking the site with surrounding neighborhoods
- Providing public access to lakes
- Utilizing open space to form a network of green throughout the project
- Creating a vibrant main street
- Dispersing automobile traffic through a gridded street network

A long detail-oriented process resulted in the City’s selection of Orlando ONTC Partners (Orlando Partners) to redevelop the site into what is now known as Baldwin Park. The redevelopment of the ONTC spurred another New Urbanist development in the region. A component of the plan for Baldwin Park included a regional greenway system, which connected Orlando to two nature preserves. Winter Springs, Florida a community located in between the two preserves developed a traditional town center surrounded by a greenway that supports interconnected parks and trails (Stephenson, 2002). The two New Urbanist projects, though divergent in scale, represent the benefit of regional collaboration.

Literature suggests that Florida’s identity as the “the state of New Urbanism” rests on four primary factors: population, geography, growth management legislation, and historical planning precedents. Florida’s population has grown dramatically, particularly in the ten year period between 1990 and 2000, when the population grew by three million from 12,937,926 in 1990 to 15,982,378 in 2000 (United States Census, 1990; United States Census, 2000). A more dramatic change in the state’s population is evident between 1950 and 2000, when Florida’s population increased by nearly 13 million
people. This data does not account for the numerous tourists that Florida attracts and must account for in its patterns of development. In addition to population pressures the State’s growth is also constrained by its natural habitats, including the Everglades, the largest subtropical wilderness in the United States. State officials have responded to these growth pressures by enacting the Local Comprehensive Act of 1975, which required that every city and county produce a plan. Florida’s Growth Management Act that was passed in 1985 provided incentives for the application of innovative planning approaches through funding opportunities (Scott, 2002). Finally, the Sustainable Communities Demonstration Project and Sustainable Communities Network created by the legislature in 1996 encouraged local growth that embodied the tenets of sustainability—economic, ecologic, and social (Brain, 2002).

**Summary**

The creation of new towns is a deeply rooted planning movement that is based on the human population’s constant search for a better way to live. This is evident in the depth of the movement’s history and the emergence of these towns today. Pullman, Salt Lake City, New Harmony, the Steele Community and other similar settlements provide examples of one individual who utilized the new town concept to define their own type of corporate, religious, political, or social community. New Urbanism is a development philosophy that has become intertwined with new town planning. This recently formalized movement draws on design to encourage greater levels of social behavior in residents.
CHAPTER 3
CASE STUDY BACKGROUND: CELEBRATION, FLORIDA

Vision

Celebration is commonly linked to a vision Walt Disney had for a utopian community called the “Experimental Prototype City of Tomorrow (EPCOT)”, (Kroloff, 1997; Knack, 1996). Disney’s interest in community development actually began earlier than EPCOT in the 1950s in the State of California. Walt Disney disliked the trend of low-density, sprawling, commercial development that was occurring around Disneyland and he was discouraged at the lack of public space. Architect Charles Moore (who would eventually design a structure in Celebration) praised Disneyland for offering well-designed public space, even if it was the type of public space that the public had to pay a fee to enjoy. Moore further encouraged Disney to transfer their successful design into a project that would provide a greater level of public good (Moore, 1965).

Jim Rouse, the developer responsible for Columbia, Maryland, advanced Moore’s opinion a step further. In a 1963 speech Rouse made to a Harvard University audience he stated, “I hold a view that may be somewhat shocking to an audience as sophisticated as this, and that is, that the greatest piece of design in the United States is Disneyland. If you think about Disneyland and think of its performance in relationship to its purpose you will find it an outstanding piece of urban design in the United States” (Price, 1974, 1).

The model city of EPCOT, which Walt Disney envisioned as a place for Disney employees to live back in 1966, re-emerged in 1987 as Disney staff and designers considered the shape of Disney’s new project. Walt Disney expressed the purpose behind
his vision of EPCOT in the following way. “The strength of the nation is the family and one public need is the protection of the ability of that family to live and grow physically and mentally within the inter-family disciplines that have made our country great.” (Potter, 1972) Walt Disney believed that societal problems such as poverty, racial conflict, and break-ups of families would not be solved “...by wrestling with them in the outmoded social structures that, in large part, had given rise to them. He was convinced the only way to solve these problems was to start from scratch and create an entirely new kind of social structure” (Prizer, 1976, S-3). This new social structure was to be facilitated through physical design.

Disney’s original design of EPCOT as a contemporary style community included housing, green space, and parks that radiated out from a central hub. The central hub was to be a climate controlled center where the “pedestrian was king.” A people-mover would provide the primary form of transportation into, out of and within the center, while all the automobile routes would be located underneath the city. Offices, hotels, conference centers, theatres and restaurants would all be contained in this bubble encased center.

High density apartments, recreational uses, neighborhood and other residential areas were located in concentric zones around the hub. A total of 20,000 employees
would live in EPCOT, effectively merging the concept of a cutting edge town design with the well established principles of a company town. Every decision made in the city was to reflect a devotion to the happiness of those that lived, worked and played in the community. Residents would have to be willing to be the subjects of a living experiment, playing a central role in improving the way all communities are designed (Ross, 1999). Disney intended EPCOT to have a fixed-capacity and when the population threshold was met another city, linked by transportation, would be established.

Disney’s EPCOT bear strong similarities to Democracity, an exhibition designed for the 1939 New York Fair by American industrial designer Henry Dreyfuss. Democracity depicted a futuristic American city with a series of interrelated functions expressed in concentric circles and internally complemented by technological advancements. The conceptual plans for both EPCOT and Democracity also drew from the garden city concept of Ebenezer Howard and the futuristic designs of Le Corbusier (Saab, 2007). The EPCOT that opened in 1982 bear little resemblance to the radial city that had been the subject of Walt Disney passion. However, the process behind Celebration’s inception re-examined many of the underlying themes of the original EPCOT.

History of the Land

In 1965 the Walt Disney Company discreetly purchased nearly 30,000 acres of land straddling Orange and Osceola County, Florida for roughly $200 per acre (Prizer, 1976). A total of 18,000 acres of the 30,000 was developable (Potter, 1972). The Company was close lipped about the future land use plans for the purchased acreage. In 1967 the Florida Legislature approved the establishment of the Reedy Creek
Improvement District (RCID) through three separate legislative acts (Phillips, 1976; Knack, 1979; Foglesong, 2001).

RCID included all of Disney’s property and its two cities, Bay Lake and Reedy Creek (the latter would be relocated and renamed Lake Buena Vista). Disney had established a case for the Legislature’s approval of the RCID by asserting that the Company’s success hinged on flexible regulations for innovative projects that were beyond the scope and capacity of either Orange or Osceola County’s current structure. The famous line that Disney applied to this situation was, “What other place has a castle?” (Knack, 1979, 20).

The RCID was exempt from county and state controls over building, planning, and development. The district was also authorized to finance infrastructure with municipal bonds and levy taxes based on values established by each county’s assessor office. Disney’s building, zoning, land use, and safety regulations were set by the RCID’s governing board, a five-member board of supervisors.

The board of supervisors was synonymous with Disney because its members were elected by landowners. The cities of Bay Lake and Lake Buena Vista supplemented the powers of this board in the form of a city council. When many of the monumental decisions concerning the land were made in the 1970s, the two cities were home to less than fifty residents, all of which were Disney employees who had received permission from the company to live on the land. The city council was comprised of these residents, the primary decisionmakers. Journal articles written at the time contend that Disney sold each city council candidate five acres of land prior to the quadrennial elections, reserving the option to buy the land back at a later time. Zoning decisions were approached by an
unbiased commission, with no direct connections to Disney (Phillips, 1976; Potter, 1972; Knack, 1979).

Walt Disney died in 1966 leaving the “Florida Project” to his brother Roy Disney. Roy Disney lived to see the opening of Magic Kingdom in 1971, but died shortly thereafter. A version of Walt Disney’s EPCOT came to fruition in the theme park centered on futuristic concepts and innovative technology that opened in 1982. In 1984 Michael Eisner was hired as the Chief Executive Officer of Disney. Eisner was specifically charged with maximizing Disney’s “brand” (Lassell, 2004). It was under Eisner’s leadership that Disney extended itself into community development.

In 1987 Peter Rummell, the Head of the Developmental Division of Walt Disney, recommended that the company consider experimenting with residential development. Rummell indicated that the 10,000 acres of land that remained from the original tract of land purchased in 1965 (after the development of the theme parks) would be a viable location for housing. The land in question was located just south of major thoroughfare U.S. 192 and was currently leased to cattle ranchers and timber companies. This arrangement provided an agricultural tax exemption for the land (Prizer, 1976; Lassell, 2004; Ross, 1999).

Osceola County had been untouched by much of the tourism in Central Florida. The County was known as the cow capital of the state and its largest landowner was the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Knack, 1979; Judge, 1973). There was a sense of immediacy in deciding the future of the 10,000 acre tract as the state threatened to prevent development on the land, much of which was characterized as environmentally sensitive (Lassell, 2004).
Tom Lewis, the Vice President of Imagineering for Disney also played a role in the eventual development of the land into residences. Lewis had previously worked for the Florida Department of Transportation and more importantly the State’s Department of Community Affairs, during which time he created influential growth management laws. Lewis supported the recommendation of small town development because he believed the project was synergistic yet non-competitive with Disney’s primary business: immersive environments (Ross, 1999).

In 1987 Rummell convened the Conference on the Future, a think tank of the leading experts in industry and technology. Initially a number of ideas were explored for the town. Jacquelin Robertson, who would later co-lead the master planning process, attended the conference and encouraged Disney to design a mixed use residential community. Two of the discarded ideas included combining residential development with an attraction, similar to Hershey Park, Pennsylvania or creating a small town built around an educational institution. These two ideas were considered due to Disney’s interest in connecting the town to its tourist attractions (Lassell, 2004).

A design competition was held in 1987 and four firms were invited to submit plans. The four firms were Robert A.M Stern Architects, Duany Plater Zyberk, Gwathmey-Siegel and Edward Durrell Stone. The Disney Company reviewed the plans and requested the firms of Robert A.M. Stern and Gwathmey-Siegel to collaborate to deliver a final product that would successfully merge the two firms’ concepts. The final plan that was submitted to Disney was shelved for several years (Lassell, 2004).

A new design competition several years later added designers Charles Moore, Jacquelin Robertson, and the firm of Skidmore Owings Merrill to the list of competitors
from the previous competition in 1987. Skidmore Owings Merrill bowed out of the
compétition shortly after it began. Robert A.M. Stern Architects and Jacquelin Robertson
worked on the Master Plan for Celebration, collaborating heavily with Peter Rummell
and others at the Disney Development Corporation. The team dramatically changed
focus and direction from Walt Disney’s original contemporary, modern ideas to small
town planning concepts. The master plan was underscored by three interrelated
principles all conceived by Rummell. These principles included detail oriented urban
design with specific regard to human scale, high standards for building design, and an
environmental consciousness towards future populations (Lassell, 2004).

Five quality of life cornerstones were also established for the town of Celebration.
These cornerstones include:

- Health: the well-being of the person and the community
- Education: life-long learning
- Technology: the integration of developing science and living
- Sense of community: a shared vision of what daily life should include
- Sense of place: the identity of the town (Lassell, 2004).

The Planned Unit Development (PUD), which establishes the design guidelines and
objectives for the town and will be described in detail later in this chapter, was also
developed to promote a set of specific objectives including:

- A reduction in the number and length of automobile trips;
- Increased pedestrian travel to increase citizen security, interaction, neighborliness, and sense of community bonding;
- The integration of citizens diverse in age, lifestyle, and economic status
- A diversity in types of housing, shopping, commercial trade, civic facilities, recreation and employment;
- Orderly patterns of streets and blocks, subdivision lots, open space, automobile parking and pedestrian pathways;
- Streets that are part of the public space containing traffic, parking, sidewalks, street trees, lighting, signs and buildings;
- Traveled portions of streets that are sized for their purpose within the “streetscape” described above;
• An environment in which the needs of everyday life can be achieved with less reliance on the private automobile by providing a network of alternative modes of transportation (Osceola County, 2002, 11).

The Development of Regional Impact (DRI) submitted by the Disney Development Company and approved by Osceola County in 1991 included 4,900 acres with 8,065 dwelling units, 810 hotel rooms, 325 time shares, and 2 million square feet for retail. The DRI also allocated 1.7 million square feet for an Industrial Workplace attraction, expected to receive 15,000 visitors a day and a 5,000 seat performance center for the Disney Institute (Ross, 1999).

The development of Celebration also enabled Disney to conserve a large tract of land that secured the majority of future environmental impacts from the expansion of theme parks on existing land. Instead of participating in small-scale trading where development on one area is advanced through the fragmented conservation of land in another area, the 8,500 acre ranch purchased by Disney avoided this back and forth through a one time exchange. The large tract was turned over to the Nature Conservancy to manage as the Disney Wilderness Preserve (Ross, 1999). The Preserve includes trails, archeological sites as well as an Environmental Education Center (Lassell, 2004).

**Marketing the Concept**

The Disney Company conducted a great deal of consumer market research, before and during the master planning process, to determine the target population of the town. Some of this research was conducted through exhibitions at the Innovations attraction in EPCOT. Disney stockholders were also polled through postal surveys. Disney determined that the Neotraditional architecture style was well suited to the baby boomer generation. This architectural movement was described as a balance between security
and responsibility with individual freedom and personal choice. The town also promised high technology advantages, including the community’s own intranet, and a fiber optic system for dispatching multi-media amenities. Disney suggested that this technology would play an important role in building an interactive community (Ross, 1999).

Community was at the heart of Disney’s marketing campaign for Celebration. While the term community had been captured and exploited by the housing industry for many years, Disney was attempting to raise the association of the word to a new tier. Specifically, the company marketed a sense of community that they claimed was in danger of becoming extinct; suggesting that buying into the town would be more than a real estate investment, it was also a quality of life investment (Ross, 1999).

Some of the advertising slogans and billboards read, “Buy a New House and Get a New Town” (Ross, 1999, 4), “Honest to Goodness Town” (Ross, 1999, 11) and “Isn’t This Enough Reason for Celebration” (Ross, 1999, 3). The last phrase was accompanied by a photograph of two young girls swinging on old fashioned swings. The marketing campaigns were designed to transport their audience back in time, invoking nostalgia for simpler ways of living. Brochures for Celebration spelled out the draw in a more crystalline way:

There was once a place where neighbors greeted neighbors in the quiet of summer twilight. Where children chased fireflies. And porch swings provided easy refuge from the care of the day. The movie house showed cartoons on Saturday. The grocery store delivered. And there was one teacher who always knew you had that “special something.” Remember that place? Perhaps from your childhood. Or maybe just from stories. It held a magic all its own. The special magic of an American home town. Now, the people at Disney—itself an American family tradition—are creating a place that celebrates this legacy. A place that recalls the timeless traditions and boundless spirit that are the best parts of who we are (Ross, 1999, 18).
The author Andrew Ross points out that the real, living advertisement of Celebration lay within the juxtaposition of the new town to the commercial and strip development that was contiguous to its borders on U.S. 192. It was this automobile dependent, flashy, commercial development that Celebration was designed to remedy with the promise of a well designed settlement pattern. Celebration was never marketed as a New Urbanist town. Disney was determined to put forth a pure notion of just “a town.” In addition some New Urbanists were hesitant to accept Celebration as a New Urbanist development for fear that the Congress’ association with Disney’s consumerism would negatively affect the CNU’s reputation (Steuteville, 2004; Ross, 1999). New Urbanists still proclaim “For those who would attack the New Urbanism as insipid nostalgia, Disney is a fat target” (Steuteville, 2004, 1).

It was the Disney brand that established instant credibility and automatic assurance of quality in the minds of many potential homebuyers. The fantasy theme parks that Disney is so well known also established high expectations of “wish fulfillment” for new residents. “Devised by the original developer of Never-Never Land, Celebration simply could not avoid its baptism as an instant utopia” (Ross, 1999, 8).
The success of Disney’s marketing campaign was immediately evident in the number of people that vied for an opportunity to live in the new town. Celebration broke ground in 1994 and on Founders Day, November 18, 1995 a total of 5,000 people showed up to bid on the 351 homes for sale and 123 apartments for rent (Lassell, 2004). Writers that recorded their observations of the event described a mixture of “Disney fever” and “property fever” in the crowd (Frantz and Collins, 1999; Ross, 2004).

Disney acknowledges that minority representation was absent from the crowd on Founder’s Day, and in the town’s resident population thereafter. Minority publications were used to market to people of color by The Celebration Company and promotional literature and short films featured minority actors. Despite this, there are several informal theories about the lack of racial diversity in the town. Perhaps the most prominent theory is that Disney has long been associated with the representation of all-white family values (Ross, 2004). Various religious groups have argued that Celebration represents a re-occurrence of “white flight,” by providing a purposefully homogenous community composed of the middle and upper class (Winner, 2000).
**Land Use**

In the early 1990s Celebration was de-annexed from the Reedy Creek District transferring zoning power to the hands of Osceola County. Florida law required that the Celebration Company receive approval from the County for a Development of Regional Impact (DRI), due to impact that Celebration would have on county resources (Osceola County, 2002). The Celebration Company submitted a DRI in June of 1991. Per normal proceedings a DRI is initially submitted to the Regional Planning Council (RPC), in this case the East Florida Regional Planning Council. The application is routed to the affected jurisdictions (counties, cities, towns) and departments, including the Florida Department of Transportation and the appropriate water management district. This submission is followed by two “sufficiency rounds” where the agencies review the application and submit questions to the RPC. The RPC then routes the questions to the applicant who then responds with answers. This process occurs twice and after the second round the applicant is not legally bound to provide responses to questions.

The next step includes hearings on the DRI held by the RPC. After the hearings are complete the RPC issues a report which signals the affected jurisdictions to begin their round of public hearings. After the DRI receives a stamp of approval from the County (or in some cases city) the application is sent to the State Department of Community Affairs. In addition to the DRI, applicants must submit other applications, which provide a greater amount of detail on the development. A Planned Unit Development Application (PUD) is one example of this detail-added on the design guidelines in the town. The Celebration PUD zoning and design regulations were conceived with consideration of The Celebration Company’s objective to make the town
flexible and innovative (Osceola County, 2002; Beamon, 2008). Celebration was approved in the form of an issuance of a Development Order by Osceola County in August of 1992.

The 10,000 acres of land that the town was developed upon was an archipelago, a chain of islands that rose up from swamp and wetlands that required further augmentation and connection to be developed. This form dictated the layout of the town on the land in many ways. Appendix A shows an aerial view of the developed and restored land. The already established major thoroughfares of Interstate 4, U.S. Highway 192 and State Road 417 also played a major role in the town’s location. Architects Stern and Robertson along with the landscape architecture firm EDAW worked together to establish Celebration on 4,900 acres of “restored, augmented land” (Lassell, 2004, 70).

An additional 4,700 acres of land formed a permanent greenbelt around the town, operating as a nesting site for the American Bald Eagle. Environmental negotiations between the county, the company, and the state resulted in the conservation of several tracts of land in addition to the greenbelt. The Disney Company agreed to maintain small areas of natural habitat in between the new homes, in addition to purchasing a tract of land containing wetlands and uplands in Osceola County. The Celebration Company traces the integration of natural habitat with structures back to Frank Lloyd Wright who professed that a house should not merely sit upon the land but be part of it (Lassell, 2004).

The northern and western outer belt of the town was designated for commercial and public use, allocating 60 acres for Celebration Health, a hospital and health center and 109 acres for Celebration Place, an office park. The future plans for Celebration
Place include 10 buildings with a combined area of 1 million square feet, 557,000 square feet of which had been completed as of December 2005 (The Celebration Company, 2005). A championship golf course, which is situated between the residential areas of Celebration and the greenbelt, serves as a visual and recreational amenity. The public course underscores the design theme of public access throughout the community. Two other design components that contribute to this theme are the purposeful lack of gates around the town and the layout of Celebration Avenue, the main road that runs directly through the town instead of around the circumference of the community (Lassell, 2004). The layout of Celebration Avenue also facilitates the shared view of the golf course, rather than limiting it to a discrete number of high end homes (Duany, 2002).

**Residential Neighborhoods**

The decision made by Celebration’s team of architects was that the architectural style of the residential component of the town would reflect North American housing types built between the 1740s and the 1940s. Housing styles were further reduced to six options: Classical, Colonial, French, Coastal, Mediterranean, and Victorian. According to the master planning team these styles represent a cross-pollination of housing types from England, France, Holland and Spain. Future residents have a matrix of options for deciding on a housing style, price, and lot size. Design guidelines restrict two adjacent houses or two houses facing each other from having identical styles or colors (Lassell, 2004).

A conscious effort was made to integrate high end homes with more affordable dwellings. The final effect creates neighborhood blocks where a pedestrian walks past a single family house then a town home and finally an apartment building. Celebration’s
PUD, regulations conceived by both the Celebration Company and Osceola County, sought to provide “the ingenuity, imagination, and flexibility” necessary to produce unconventional residential developments (Osceola County, 2002). Andres Duany recognized the successful integration of housing in Celebration as groundbreaking; a technique that a small number of New Urbanist communities could successfully implement and that conventional subdivision design avoids (Duany, 2002). Appendix B shows the integration of different housing types in the Town.

The residents of all the housing types have access to the same neighborhood park, a source of recreation and community building. These parks serve to unify each neighborhood, both physically and socially, and many of the neighborhoods are referenced by the name of the common park. The parks became more of a recreational necessity in Celebration neighborhoods because the lots are significantly smaller than conventionally designed neighborhoods (Ross, 1999).

In New Urbanist fashion the rear of each house faces service alleys which are designed to conceal garbage disposal and collection in addition to electricity meters. The purpose of the service alley is both aesthetic and social. The design of the garage in conventional subdivision facilitates insular activity as residents can go in and out in their car without an opportunity for social interaction. The secondary purpose of the service alleys is meant to create opportunities for neighborly exchanges. In a similar vein, the inclusion of porches on all housing types creates an outdoor room for residents to interact with passerby. The “Celebration Alchemists” as the designers are referred to by Disney, made each design decision to maximize community and minimize individuality (Lassell, 2004).
The architectural styles and design principles for Celebration’s residential neighborhoods were memorialized in the Celebration Pattern Book which acts as a blueprint for future design decisions in the town. The Book, which is considered the private property of Disney, covers every design aspect from elevations to roofing to landscaping (Lassell, 2004). The overall goals of the codes in the Book were “…aimed at refining the conversation between the buildings and the streetscapes” (Ross, 1999, 29). Research for the Pattern Book included a weeklong tour of historic towns such as Savannah and Charleston and newly built towns including Columbia, the Kentlands, and Seaside.

Discussion has resulted from the creation of the Pattern Book. Architects have argued that the prescription of the buildings in the book infringes on the creative role of their profession. Andres Duany contributed to this conversation, stating that “A code itself is a neutral instrument that can be adjusted, but it cannot eliminate the exceptionally bad without limiting the exceptionally good. The application of the Celebration Pattern Book has led to a general run of architecture that is never bad and always good, but not necessarily more than that” (Duany, 2002, 61). In light of Duany’s statement, The Pattern Book has acted as a marketing tool or a quasi-insurance policy for the high design standards of the town (Ross, 1999).

According to the homebuilders, the codes prescribed in the Pattern Book resulted in higher home costs in Celebration, as compared to similar developments in the region. When the first homes were purchased in Celebration the prices ranged from $150,000 for a town home to $1 million for the largest home. These prices were about 35% higher than homes in developments with similar amenities. Many residents and writers assert
that this created a “house rich and cash poor” situation for a percentage of Celebration residents (Ross, 1999).

The construction of Celebration coincided with a national housing boom, which resulted in a shortage of skilled labor. The Pattern Book required detail oriented construction, and offered a great deal of customization options for each home. Many residents were also requesting accessory apartments as part of their new home. In addition, Phase I homes were not designed according to the American Disability Association (ADA) standards, and many elements of the homes needs to be redesigned according to these standards. These factors contributed to delayed move in dates for residents and minor and major construction errors (Lassell, 2004; Ross, 1999; Frantz and Collins, 1999).

Residents who were the victims of these mistakes directed complaints to the Disney Company. However, the contractual relationship lay between the homebuyer and the homebuilder. Disney succeeded in applying pressure to the homebuilders, who incurred large costs in rectifying these construction mistakes. Many experts in the field maintain that Disney was able to use its power in a way that no other developer would have been in the position to do. These construction mishaps still blemish the origin of the town (Lassell, 2004; Ross, 1999; Frantz and Collins, 1999).

Andres Duany points out in his essay *In Celebration*, that there were other components of residential development that the town did not handle perfectly. One significant misjudgment of the Disney Company concerned town homes, or the lack thereof. The Company did not anticipate the high demand for this type of housing, most likely because there are no market demand models to consult for high density housing.
removed from metropolitan centers. In order to respond to the increased demand additional town homes were constructed in tracts of land removed from the town center. According to the New Urbanist philosophy it would have been more ideal to allocate units in the master plan and decrease the number of units if there was not enough demand (Duany, 2002). A press release by the Celebration Company indicates that there are a total of 4,883 dwelling units in the town, 229 of which are townhomes, and the remainder of which are single-family homes and condominiums (The Celebration Company, 2005).

Another criticism of the housing in Celebration is the absence of any affordable homes. Disney, like a high percentage of Floridian developers, chose to abide by state regulations concerning affordable housing by contributing to a fund in lieu of actually building the housing in Celebration (Duany, 2002). Ironically, the financial contribution was said to have financed housing for Disney employees who could not afford to buy into Celebration (Ross, 1999). According to New Urbanist standards this is an unfavorable practice, which contributes to the high concentration of housing for low to moderate income households instead of equitable integration of this housing (Duany, 2002).

The 2000 Census reveals that the median home price in Celebration is $380,900, putting it out of reach for many employees that work in the community. At the time the median home value (for owner occupied units) was $99,300 in Osceola County. The Median Household Income (MHI) in Celebration, as documented by the 2000 Census, is $74,231 while the MHI in Osceola County is far lower at $38,214. In Celebration the Median Gross Rent (MGR) is $968, while in Osceola County MGR is calculated at $714. Several sources indicate that Osceola County strongly encouraged high cost housing in Celebration for regional economic benefits, although this type of facilitation would not
have within the legal parameters of a government. Regardless many critics believe that Disney could have negotiated another arrangement (Census, 2000; Duany, 2002).

**Education and Religion**

The first residents of Celebration were served by one public school that taught children in kindergarten through twelfth grade. The location of Celebration School on 35 acres in the center of the town contrasts with the conventional philosophy of development where schools are developed on the cheapest land. In addition, pedestrian paths were laid out between the townhouses directly across from the school and the school. The town’s sentiment is expressed in the phrase “…children in Celebration are to be seen and heard” (Lassell, 2004, 72). From the time that the school opened in August of 1997, it was run as a county operated facility built on land donated by the Celebration Company. Disney also contributed over half of the cost of the new building for the school, a donation which was offset by an impact fee waiver from Osceola County. By the second year of the facility’s operation the percentage of students from outside Celebration accounted for one-half of all students. The students from areas outside Celebration were selected to attend the school through a lottery system (Ross, 1999; The Celebration Company, 2005).

Anthropological research conducted in *Chronicles of Celebration* and *Celebration U.S.A.* indicates that many residents of Celebration were attracted to the innovative educational system that was advertised as one of the five cornerstones of the town. A large number of households believed that the additional fees and assessments were worth the quality of education that their children would receive in Celebration schools. A portion of these families had children who did not fare well in conventional curriculums.
These families were relying on the school as a solution to larger problems (Ross, 1999; Frantz and Collins, 1999).

The framers of the educational system were well-respected experts in the educational field who developed the school’s curriculum and structure based upon a series of ‘best practices.’ Several of the system’s elements represented radical departures from conventional education. For example, children of different ages were grouped into ‘neighborhoods.’ The school had few books, relied heavily on electronic materials, did not follow a conventional grading system or administer tests. Eventually the teaching structure of the school transitioned to include more conventional standards, but only after an intense up rise from the parents of students. This issue, similar to the residential construction errors, caused many residents to move away with disfavor from Celebration. Another group of parents were displeased with the watering down of the innovative teaching style and began a new school in the town that continued to emphasize this structure. There have been several claims by residents, the Disney Company and professional planners that these crises assisted in community building (Lassell, 2004; Duany, 2002).

At the turn of the century Osceola County’s need for a new high school was met through the donation of land by the Town of Celebration. Celebration’s school that originally served kindergarten through twelfth grade was converted to a K-8 school and the new high school, that opened in 2003, serves grades nine through twelve (Lassell, 2004). In August of 2001 Stetson University opened a facility in Celebration’s Town Center. Stetson is well respected as the state’s first private university. The campus offers
advanced degrees in Business, Educational Leadership and Counseling. The University has also provides in-service training for educators (Stetson University, 2008).

The master plan for the Town of Celebration did not include places of worship but the plan did leave parcels empty with the intention that the land would eventually be occupied by churches (Lassell, 2004). There are other viewpoints that claim Disney’s original vision included one church in the town, which would assist in solidifying the sense of community amongst residents. It was this vision that resulted in a ‘bidding war’ between different religious denominations. Disney selected the Presbyterian Church to be the first religious institution to build in Celebration. Authors of Celebration U.S.A. claimed that the Presbyterian Church was chosen on the grounds that its postmodern mission emphasized inclusion (Frantz and Collins, 1991; Winner, 2000).

Several churches have been established on the land set aside for the structures, while others temporarily populate buildings like the Health Center and the Cinema for meetings. A group of the leaders of each respective church meet in order to encourage an overall spiritual component to the town that is characterized by unification and cooperation.

**Governance**

Although Celebration is referred to as a town it is actually an unincorporated area of Osceola County. The County, which is governed by five elected County Commissioners, provides public safety services and operates each of the public schools in Celebration. Two community development districts (CDD), authorized by the state of Florida as “special purpose units of local government” manage infrastructure needs in Celebration. Water and sewer are also provided by the CDDs, who purchased capacity
from Celebration’s neighbor, the City of Kissimmee. The CDDs are authorized to float bonds, and assess fees for infrastructure needs. Celebration CDD oversees residential areas and Enterprise CDD’s jurisdiction is commercial areas. All of the meetings held by the CDDs are subject to public scrutiny (Celebration Joint Committee, 2008; Lassell, 2004).

The town is also governed in part by its residents through community associations (Lassell, 2004). The associations are similar to those developed on a subdivision basis, and the powers of Celebration’s associations do not interfere with the regulations of county, state or federal powers. Communities governed in this private way are often referred to as “privatopias” (Ross, 1999, 228). Florida statute requires that CDDs hold an incorporation referendum when the area reaches a certain population threshold (as determined by the law). Residents of Celebration have expressed a desire to be designated as a legal municipality. The community association will become the basis for governance at that time (Duany, 2002).

The Celebration Residential Owners Association (CROA) represents landowners while the Celebration Non-Residential Owners Association (CNOA) is comprised of commercial landowners. CROA is governed by a seven member board, five members of which are elected on a district basis, and two of which are elected “at large.” The CNOA is governed by a five member Board of Directors, all of these members are appointed by The Celebration Company. The two associations collaborate within the Celebration Joint Committee which is administered by the Town Hall. One of the primary responsibilities of the Celebration Joint Committee is to hire the town manager (Lassell, 2004, Celebration Joint Committee, 2008). All of the town hall employees are employed by
Capital Consultants Management Corporation a community management firm contracted by The Celebration Company. From the beginning, the unique position of the town manager incited questions about the true self-governance of Celebration residents. How could the town manager equitably represent Celebration residents if he/she was being paid by the developer? (Ross, 1999).

By the summer of 1997 The Celebration Company had relocated from the town center in Celebration to Burbank, California. This choice was explained as “the loosening of paternalistic ties to empower residents to govern themselves (Ross, 1999, 109).” Rumors continued to circulate about the true reasons behind Disney’s new backseat position. In November of 1997, Disney released the following explanation, “…Celebration is to be developed as its own brand, distinct from Disney’s and so, from a business point of view, is being treated in a way similar to company products that are not branded with the parent’s name (Ross, 1999, 113).”

Long-range business and governance plans for Celebration included the transfer of control from Disney to the CROA in a period of five to ten years. Until 2003 the CROA was controlled by The Celebration Company which occupied three out of the five seats with high ranking Disney employees. The year 2003 was a landmark time in this transition of power and control from Disney to the homeowner associations. Disney sold its remaining assets, including the golf course and the Town Center, and turned over control of community assets to the CROA. Strict stipulations were included in the sale of the golf course to C.S. Golf Partners LLC, one of which was that the course had to remain open to the public. Lexin Capital, the company that purchased and now owns and manages the stores and restaurants in the town center agreed to continue to host town
events and abide by the architectural design standards. The CROA established a transition team of residents to plan for this gradual change in power (Celebration Joint Committee, 2008).

In addition to self-governing bodies, residents are also governed by the covenants and restrictions that they agreed upon before their lease or the deed was officially signed. These agreements address a variety of home appearance and other behavioral regulations including the rule that houses must be occupied nine months out of the year (Lassell, 2004).

**Conclusion**

It has been thirteen years since the first residents moved into Celebration, and over twenty years since the beginning of the town’s planning process. Residents have moved in and out of the community, children have grown up living in the town, and much of the initial development proposed in the original development application has been built. The passage of time has enabled Disney to measure and define Celebration’s success in different ways.

There are many tangible and intangible reasons why the company regards the Town as a full-fledged success. Celebration’s Town Center received two awards from the American Society of Landscape Architects in 1998. The Urban Land Institute gave Celebration the Institute’s Award for Excellence as Best New Community in 2001 (The Celebration Company, 2005). The Urban Land Institute’s Chairman “…praised the designer’s emphasis on architectural quality, integration of housing types and land uses, and nurturing of institutions and infrastructure” (Lassell, 2004, 152).
“In the end,” Duany suggests, “Celebration should be assessed the way all new urbanist developments should be assessed—not by photos or short visits, which suffice for architectural criticism, but by inhabiting the place. Does the community improve how a day is lived? Does it accommodate the ebb and flow of life?” (Duany, 2002) The answers to Duany’s questions are found in the results of a Celebration Quality of Life Survey which revealed that ninety percent of residents believed the physical characteristics of the town improved their quality of life. A total of ninety six percent of residents that participated in the survey believed that these physical characteristics of Celebration encouraged social involvement in the town. Nearly all of the survey participants’ (ninety eight percent) original expectations of a sense of community were met in the Celebration (Steuteville and Langdon, 2007). The fact that the town has had an impact on the design and structure of other planned communities is also a sign that the original goals of Disney have been met.
CHAPTER 4
CASE STUDY BACKGROUND: AVE MARIA, FLORIDA

Vision

The vision for the Town of Ave Maria rests on one individual, Tom Monaghan, a self-made millionaire and founder of Domino’s Pizza. A conservative Catholic, raised partly by Catholic nuns, Monaghan uses large portions of his fortune to invest in foundations and non-profits with Catholic missions (Monaghan and Anderson, 1986). Monaghan established Ave Maria College in 1998, as an institution run in the Catholic tradition. Soon after it opened the college outgrew the two former elementary school buildings where it was housed. In 2000, the Ave Maria School of Law was established in the former National Sanitary Headquarters in Ann Arbor Michigan. Soon after its opening, this institution also needed room to expand.

The long-term strategic plan for both schools included the relocation to the 280-acre site in Ann Arbor called Domino Farms. The plan was stonewalled when the required zoning approvals were denied. Public officials cited the already crowded status of Ann Arbor, and the nearby city of Ypsilanti, where five major universities are located currently (Cox, In the beginning: Michigan town feels duped, 2007).

In the early 2000s, Monaghan commissioned several studies to determine the feasibility of moving both Ave Maria College and the Law School to Southwest Florida. The outcomes of these studies lead to the decision to relocate both schools. Ave Maria College, which was renamed to Ave Maria University (AMU) was the first school to move. AMU was temporarily relocated to Naples, before becoming permanently established in the Town of Ave Maria in 2007. As of the date of this publication, Ave
Maria Law School is scheduled to move to the Town in 2009. Monaghan’s vision for the Town of Ave Maria grew out his goal to find a new location for both schools. While flying over the vast expanse of land in Collier County Monaghan he came to the realization that the Catholic school could share its faith mission with an entire town (Cox, *In the beginning: Michigan town feels duped*, 2007; Rice, 2007).

In 2001, Tom Monaghan, approached Paul Marinelli, President of Barron Collier Company, and expressed his interest to relocate his university to Southwest Florida (Dillion, *In the beginning: power to the residents*, 2007). A significant landowner in Southwest Florida, Barron Collier Company history is traced to its founder, Barron Gift Collier, who sailed to Florida in the 1920s and purchased over one million acres of land in what is now Collier County. Marinelli was interested in the new town concept Monaghan presented because he felt that a university would drive the development and eventual settlement of the new town (Rice, 2007).

**History of the Land**

In 1997 authorities from the Florida Department of Community Affairs took note of the fact that Collier County’s 1989 growth management plan had not addressed thousands of acres around the town of Immokalee (Cox, *In the Beginning: Creating a Town*, 2007). Immokalee has been known since the 1800s as a ranching community which has recently become recognized as the region’s center for agriculture. In 1999 Florida Governor Jeb Bush mandated that the County devise a protection plan for this land, a total of roughly 5,000 acres, or risk the loss of state funding. It was around this time that the economy in Collier County was beginning to diversify, creating a significant gap, between the low taxes and increasingly high incomes. Naples had become the
fastest growing metropolitan area in the State of Florida and the County as a whole was the site of a major land rush. It was an appropriate time for intense comprehensive planning to react to this growth by balancing development with the protection of environmental resources (Pittman, 1999).

The land of immediate concern supports many of Florida’s natural resources including the Florida panther and the largest nesting colony of endangered wood storks in the nation (Pittman, 1999). The mandate issued by Governor Jeb Bush urged the County to consider alternatives to sprawl such as urban villages, new towns, and satellite communities (Cox, *In the Beginning Creating a Town*, 2007).

County Commissioners established a ten person committee to oversee the creation of development regulations for the area that was previously unaddressed in the county’s growth management plan. The committee was comprised of business leaders and community activists, many of whom were said to have strong ties with developers, creating resentment on the part of residents and wildlife advocates. Barron Collier Company and several other large landowners offered to voluntarily finance a study to map the future use of the land. The Collier County Commission agreed to the offer in order to avoid financing the study with taxes. However, since the research was privately funded it was not subject to open governmental laws and many residents resented the secrecy surrounding the study. This resentment carried over when the committee issued recommendations, based on the study, for the revised growth management plan (Cox, *In the Beginning Creating a Town*, 2007).

A series of events following these recommendations altered the politically charged climate in Collier County and the potential future of the 5,000 acres of land
surrounding Immokalee. Just prior to 2000 a new County Commission was elected. Many residents believed that the new Commission was able to represent the diversified interests of the County population more accurately and exhibited fewer ties with landowners and developers (Cox, *In the Beginning Creating a Town*, 2007). In addition, in 2001 the Florida Legislature established a statute to create the Rural Land Stewardship Program (RLSP), which gives counties the authority to designate Rural Land Stewardship Areas. The designation of these RLS areas triggers the implementation of innovative and flexible planning and development strategies. (The State of Florida Department of Management Services, 2006)

The program is marketed as “a market-driven program that protects resources and contains sprawl” (Stewardship America, 2005). The structure of the RLSP shares functional similarities with programs that support transfer of development rights. The plan effectively awards credits to landowners who own environmentally valuable land. Developers can then purchase credits from landowners to build on less environmentally sensitive land (Stewardship America, 2005).

The RLSP is promoted as a win-win-win situation for developers, landowners, and taxpayers. The program is designed to streamline permitting and reduce carry-costs for developers, transfer environmental liabilities into assets for landowners, and reduce the cost to the public to conserve continuous tracts of resource laden land (Stewardship America, 2005). Collier County became the first County to designate a Rural Land Stewardship Area, and subsequently Ave Maria became the first development to take advantage of the designation (Beever, 2008).
Ordinarily, the new town would not have been able to exceed 4,000 acres however the requirements linked to the RLS area were altered by a provision inserted on behalf of one of the landowners that financed the original land survey to exempt private post secondary institutions from this portion of the criteria (Cox, *In the Beginning Creating a Town*, 2007).

**Marketing the Concept**

There has been evidence of tension regarding the focus of marketing campaigns between Tom Monaghan, the primary visionary individual behind Ave Maria, and his development partner Barron Collier Company. Paul Marinelli, the President of Barron Collier Companies is joined by the homebuilder Pulte in supporting a strategic marketing approach that promotes the Town as a family friendly community (Cox, *In the beginning: changing perception*, 2007). Marinelli states “…We’re trying to get back to where people live, work, and recreate together and truly create those neighborhoods like our parents had years ago” (O’Brien, 2007, 99). Alternatively, Tom Monaghan’s personal mission, to die broke proselytizing the Catholic faith, is evident in the religious components of Ave Maria he has chosen to speak about when making public appearances during the early stages of the town.

In 2004 Tom Monaghan proclaimed that the Town would control cable television to prevent pornographic content from reaching viewers in the Town and that contraceptives would not be sold within the Town’s boundaries. Monaghan later retreated on these strong words, stating he spoke out of turn and got carried away with the concept and his involvement behind the Town (O’Brien, 2007, 99). The controversy between Ave Maria’s secular and religious developers appeared resolved by March of
2006 when Monaghan and Marinelli appeared together on a national news program. Monaghan’s silent appearance symbolized agreement as Marinelli “...assured the national audience that Monaghan would have no control over Ave Maria’s morality” (Rice, 2007, 5).

Blake Gable, the project manager for Barron Collier Company, explained that the company is striving for an “open, inclusive community” that emphasizes traditional family values. Furthermore, the developers of Ave Maria assert that while contraceptives will not be formally restricted, pharmacies and health centers in the town will be requested to participate in a voluntary moratorium. Barron Collier Company and representatives from Ave Maria University reminded the public that at the heart of the Town is a university that must be run in the Catholic tradition. The Catholic Church does not condone the use of contraceptives (O’Brien, 2007).

The current advertising campaign for Ave Maria centers on the phrase “Ave Maria: A Place to Live and Work, Play and Learn. Every Family, Every Lifestyle, Every Dream” (Barron Collier Company, 2008). The campaign, in particular the repetition of the word ‘every’, is a clear reaction to the accusations of religious exclusion.

The Town of Ave Maria has its own comprehensive website that includes information about amenities, housing prices and recent events in the town. The website invites visitors to “Come discover Ave Maria, a new hometown where you can live, play, shop, dine, learn and work in a naturally beautiful environment” (Barron Collier Company, 2008). A frequently asked questions section where answers are provided by Barron Collier Company, the developer, includes the following question and answer: “Q I’ve heard that Ave Maria is a Catholic town. Is this true? A: Absolutely not. Ave Maria
is open to every religion, ethnicity and age. In fact, we believe that the intermingling of people of different backgrounds, interests and life stages will be important to making Ave Maria a true community” (Barron Collier Company, 2008).

An article in the December 2007 edition of Portfolio Magazine included speculations about the success of the marketing campaigns and the potential response from the primary target audience, the 66 million Catholics in the United States. Some real estate professionals claim that marketing the town is an easier task with a built in customer base, but simultaneously wonder, “How many Americans share Tom Monaghan’s idea of Utopia…?” (Rice, 2007, 2).

The downturn of the housing market may also affect strategic marketing approaches, specifically the (secular) developers’ decision to downplay the Catholic identity of the town. Tom Monaghan believes that the large amounts of money spent by Pulte and Barron Collier to generalize the advertising of Ave Maria may result in a loss of profits. He believes the profitable sale of homes hinges on the distinctly religious identity of the town (Rice, 2007, 3).

The first homebuyers of Ave Maria form one enlightened expression of marketing campaigns. Local papers featured the stories of these first residents, families young and old, both Catholic and not. One couple profiled, Roseann and Henry Knetter are a retired couple that moved into Ave Maria in June. The couple’s desire to move to the community rested on both the religious component and the New Urbanist philosophy that was integrated into the physical design. Roseann Knetter relayed her interests by saying, “The fact is that I wanted to walk to everything, including church. When I was a child,
we would walk to every place we needed to go. I never forgot how good that felt” (Dillion, *In the beginning: meet the pioneers*, 2007).

The O’Shea family moved to Ave Maria in May, 2007, and they were the very first residents to settle in the town. Mike O’Shea is an employee of Legatus, a professional organization established by Tom Monaghan in 1987 to connect Catholic ethics with business. There are currently over 70 established chapters of Legatus, and the headquarters was relocated to Ave Maria (Legatus, 2003; Dillion, *In the beginning: meet the pioneers*, 2007).

**Land Use**

Although Ave Maria is located within its own District, zoning power is still in the hands of the Collier County. Ave Maria’s developers submitted an application for a Development of Regional Impact (DRI) in July of 2004. The DRI required the developers to qualify and quantify the impact Ave Maria would have on the surrounding area by answering a series of questions. Per normal proceedings the DRI was submitted to the Southwestern Florida Regional Planning Council (SWFRPC). The submission was followed by two “sufficiency rounds” where relevant agencies reviewed the application and submitted questions to the SWFRPC. The SWFRPC then routed the questions to the developers who responded with answers. This process occurred twice and after the second round the developers were not legally bound to provide responses to questions.

A Development Order was issued by the SWFRPC, recommending mitigation effects on the part of Ave Maria’s developers. The Development Order trickled through the SWRPC Council, the Zoning and Planning Boards of Collier County, and finally a
Development Order was issued by the County Commissioners. After forty-five days with no appeal Ave Maria received approval on July 15, 2005.

Collier County and Ave Maria collaborated to produce the Master Plan for the Town, establishing specific design and architectural standards. Upon approval of the Master Plan in 2005, Collier County deemed the Plan in accordance with the County’s Land Development Code (LCD) that was adopted specifically for the Rural Land Stewardship Area Overlay District. Any exceptions to the guidelines set forth in the Master Plan must be approved by Collier County government (Collier County, 2005).

The master plan described the model for the Town as such, “The model for Ave Maria is to both maintain the agricultural heritage and rural character of eastern Collier County and promote the economic viability and diversification in a self sustaining community” (Collier County, 2005, 2). The opening of Ave Maria in the fall of 2007 represented a landmark for the region of Southwest Florida in the areas of education, environment, religion, and real estate (Dillion, Ave Maria Pioneer Family Heads to Greener Pastures, 2008).
Ave Maria is located about thirty-five minutes northeast of Naples and eight to ten miles west of the Town of Immokalee. The new town is bordered by Immokalee Road on the north, Camp Keais Road on the west, Oil Well Road south, and Immokalee Service Grade Road on the east.

The Town of Immokalee, with a population of 20,000, hopes that the anticipated regional growth brought forth by Ave Maria will serve to connect the community with more jobs and opportunities to diversify the economy which is currently reliant on agriculture. Immokalee is characterized as a poor community with a concentration of migrant workers, due to the low-skill, low-wage jobs prevalent in the farming town. According to the U.S. Census the Median Household Income in Immokalee in 2000 was $24,315 and the Median Home Value in the same year was $68,500 (U.S. Census, 2000). Collier County has been the recipient of community renewal funding from the Housing and Urban Development Department and Immokalee has been a target of this funding within the county (The Housing and Urban Development Department, 2006).

Members of Immokalee’s Master Plan and Visioning Committee, Enterprise Zone Development Agency, and Chamber of Commerce were interviewed by a local reporter and each representative expressed optimism about the development and its ability to forge a beneficial relationship between Immokalee and Ave Maria. Advocates in
Immokalee hope that the Catholic principles of Town and the university will encourage residents and the developers to extend themselves, in the form of financial assistance and charity work, beyond Ave Maria. An estimated $201.1 million will be spent annually on construction jobs and $187.7 million on non-construction jobs in the town of Ave Maria. These jobs have already begun to change the labor force in Immokalee (Miguel, 2007).

Table 1: Ave Maria Land Use
Source: Ave Maria Master Plan, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>11,000 Units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisted Living Facility</td>
<td>450 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>690,000 Sq. Ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>510,000 Sq. Ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel</td>
<td>400 Rooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic</td>
<td>148,500 Sq. Ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>35,000 Sq. Ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oratory</td>
<td>75,000 Sq. Ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,027 Acres</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Use</th>
<th>Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University &amp; Ancillary Uses</td>
<td>955.5 Acres (6,000 university students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public school sites(s)</td>
<td>47.7 Acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community park in excess of requirement</td>
<td>23.8 Acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,027 Acres</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix C includes a visual depiction of Ave Maria’s land use breakdown.

Table 1 shows the specific physical components of the town. The majority of the land use in Ave Maria is devoted to residential, retail, and office. Additional land is also allocated for hotel, civic, and medical uses. Public uses are defined as roughly one-fifth of the town’s acreage. This category includes Ave Maria University, Ave Maria Law School, the dedication of land for future public educational facilities, and community
parks. Table 2 details the development for Phase 1 (2006-2011) and Phase 2 (2010-2016).

Table 2: Ave Maria Development Phases
Source: Ave Maria Master Plan, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Measurement Units</th>
<th>Phase 1 (2006-2011)</th>
<th>Phase 2 (2012-2016)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential Dwelling Units</td>
<td>Dwellings Units</td>
<td>6,010</td>
<td>4,990</td>
<td>11,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisted Living Facilities</td>
<td>Beds</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail, Entertainment, Service</td>
<td>Square Feet</td>
<td>367,900</td>
<td>322,100</td>
<td>690,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Office</td>
<td>Square Feet</td>
<td>267,600</td>
<td>233,400</td>
<td>510,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic/Community/Msc. Facilities</td>
<td>Square Feet</td>
<td>115,500</td>
<td>33,000</td>
<td>148,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Facilities</td>
<td>Square Feet</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>35,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel</td>
<td>Rooms</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>3,150</td>
<td>2,850</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-12 Schools (Public and Private)</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>1,120</td>
<td>1,980</td>
<td>3,100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix D includes Ave Maria’s Site Plan. The Town’s form is heavily influenced by the presence of water. Waterways are interspersed in residential neighborhoods for both recreational amenity purposes and stormwater mitigation. Open space in the form of recreational parks is located on ‘destination parcels’ that are generally associated with specific neighborhoods but do not form the center of each neighborhood.

As part of the requirements under the Rural Land Stewardship Program 17,000 acres of land owned by Barron Collier Company were protected from future development. This protected land is located on various parcels directly west of Ave Maria and in the northeast quadrant of Collier County. Although these parcels cannot be
developed, active farming is still permitted on the land (Cox, *In the Beginning Creating a Town*, 2007; Beever, 2008).

A separate federal mandate required that Ave Maria restore 160 acres of wetlands within the new town. The Town refers to this conservation effort as the Ave Maria Wetlands Restoration Project, which described their efforts to create a larger feeding and nesting area for the great white heron. This area included natural wetlands that had been impacted but not completely destroyed by human activity during the development process (Beever, 2008). These restoration areas can be seen open entering the town from Oil Well Road.

Barron Collier and Tom Monaghan contracted with Pulte Homebuilders to construct seventy-five percent of the town. DiVosta and DelWebb, homebuilder companies purchased by Pulte in 1998 and 2001 respectively, collaborated to design and construct six neighborhoods each of which is marketed to a particular sub-population (Dillion, *In the beginning: power to the residents*, 2007; Greco, 2007).

**Residential Neighborhoods**

The six distinct neighborhoods in Ave Maria include La Piazza, Hampton Village, Bellarwalk, Emerson Park, DelWebb, and Middlebrooke. The first phase of each of the neighborhoods has been completed, meaning that there are some homes in each
neighborhood (Roberts, 2008). Luxury condominiums in La Piazza, also known as the Town Core, are located in all six buildings oriented around the Oratory, Assisi, Lucca, Siena, Loyola, Firenze, and Avila. These condominiums are priced from the mid-$400,000s (Barron Collier Company, 2008).

Hampton Village, located south of the condominiums in La Piazza is marketed for open spaces, parks, and easy access to both schools and daily needs found in La Piazza. The homes in Hampton Village are priced from the mid-$300,000s. Bellerawalk is the only guard-gated neighborhood in Ave Maria. Eventually the neighborhood will have a private town center, Bellera Square. This neighborhood targets the active adult population. Plans for the Bellerawalk include an on-site Activities Director to coordinate entertainment. Homes in Bellerawalk are priced from the high $200,000s.

Emerson Park is designed for young families, and first time homebuyers. The neighborhood is centrally located with relation to schools and parks. Emerson Park homes start from the mid-$200,000s. DelWebb is Ave Maria’s second active adult neighborhood which has on-site Lifestyle Director to coordinate

Figure 11: Ave Maria Model Home
Photographer: the Author
special events. Homes in the DelWebb neighborhood start in the low $200,000s. Finally, Middlebrooke is located south of Hampton Village and La Piazza (Barron Collier Company, 2008).

During the Development of Regional Impact Application in 2002 Barron Collier Company agreed to build 1,900 units of affordable housing as part of the Development of Regional Impact application for Ave Maria. Collier County’s Impact Deferral Program will further reduce the sale price from $170,000 to $155,000 for first time homebuyers (Layden, *Ave Maria homeowners could see impact fees deferred*, 2007). This program was started in 2005 to address the shortage of affordable housing in the county. It provides interest-free, deferred impact fees that are due upon refinancing or sale of the home (VisionIntranet, 2008). The program is designed to incentivize the production of affordable housing within the private sector.

The homes in Ave Maria include rear service alleys, a distinctly New Urbanist design feature. The condominiums in La Piazza also reserve parking for the rear of the building. Neighborhoods integrate sidewalks to encourage residents to take advantage of walkable locations.
There are a series of parks that complement the neighborhoods. South Park, which opened in October, contains a variety of sports fields, trails, and an amphitheater (Dillion, *Grand opening celebration for Ave Maria’s South Park set for Saturday, 2007*). North Park, which opened in January of 2008 includes recreational fields, playgrounds, and picnic pavilions. A tennis park and water park are scheduled to open in the next six months. Each of these amenities will employ staff to offer lessons and organize events. The Town’s website also indicates that a fitness center and community center are included in the amenities of Ave Maria (Barron Collier Company, 2008). Residents pay an Ave Maria Master Association Fee, estimated at fifty dollars per month, for the use of these parks in addition to maintenance of other common areas.

In July of 2007, Anthrex, a medical supply manufacturing company, announced the company’s plan to purchase 12 acres in Ave Maria where a plant would be built and opened by 2009. The Director of Anthrex was quoted in the local newspaper, Naples Daily News, in explanation of his choice for the site. He said, “Ave Maria is a community that will provide the kind of working and living environment we desire for our employees.” When Ave Maria is built out the town is expected to host more than 10,000 jobs. The Economic Development Council of Collier County forecasts that Ave...
Maria will be the impetus for an influx of high wage companies locating in eastern Collier County (Layden, Anthrex, 2007).

**Education and Religion**

The Land Use Map in Appendix C shows the University District as accounting for nearly 20% of the total land use in the Town of Ave Maria. This District is located at the center of the town, directly across from the Town Core, and the Oratory. Ave Maria University (AMU) is the first major new Catholic university to be built in the United States since the late 1960s. AMU recognizes their institutional role as creating an environment where faith informs the character of the community (Ave Maria University, 2008). In addition to providing programs for its undergraduate population the University also hosts cultural events, including concerts and guest speakers, for the entire town (Barron Collier Company, 2008). The architectural style of the University’s facilities was heavily influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright. As a youth Tom Monaghan unsuccessfully attempted to finance his education in architecture, inspired by his passion for Wright’s design (Monaghan and Anderson, 1986).

In addition to higher education opportunities offered by Ave Maria University and Ave Maria School of Law there is another private school, Ave Maria Catholic Grammar and Preparatory School that serves grades K-

Figure 14: Ave Maria University Building
Photographer: the Author
12. The school has a temporary capacity for 200 students, and when the school opened in August it reached capacity for six grades and was forced to issue waitlists. Eventually, the prep school will be equipped to handle up to 1,000 students. Currently scholarships finance seven Immokalee students to attend the school for one year. Ave Maria donated forty-six acres of the town to Collier County for the construction of new public elementary school and high school. The schools will not be complete until 2012 and 2024, respectively, and therefore students seeking public education will be integrating into the County schools in close proximity to the town (Lewis, 2007).

Religious worship is a central focus for the Town of Ave Maria. AMU has a chapel located on campus that is open to residents in the town. The centerpiece of the Town is a one-hundred foot church called “The Parish of the Ave Maria Oratory.” The land on which the church stands is also the physical center of the entire town, an area known as the Town Core. Although the residential portion of the town is oriented in separate neighborhoods, the Oratory, currently the one place of worship, serves to unify the town’s population. The Oratory was established as one of the physical components of the town from the onset. The structure was completely financed by Tom Monaghan at a cost of $24 million dollars (Collier County, 2005; Rice, 2007).

**Governance**

The Ave Maria Stewardship Community District was approved by the Florida Legislature in 2004 to oversee the development and provision of infrastructure for Ave Maria. A Board of Supervisors for the district act as the primary decisionmaking body on issues of community infrastructure and maintenance services. The Board maintains the authority to borrow money, issue bonds, levy taxes, special assessments, and user fees to
Ave Maria residents. Currently, residents pay an estimated operating fee of fifty dollars per year and a debt service fee of nine-hundred twenty dollars per year to the Ave Maria Stewardship District. These fees go to the installation of roadways, irrigation systems, water and sewer management and wetland mitigation and restoration (Barron Collier Company, 2008).

Police power along with building approval and zoning power resides with the Collier County government (Dillion, New Board Member, 2008; Ave Maria Master Plan). As prescribed by Florida Statute each supervisor’s term ranges from two to four years and each is elected by landowner votes within the boundaries of the district. Representation is based on a one-acre one-vote requirement. Currently Barron Collier Company maintains all the voting rights since they own all the acreage, but these rights will eventually be transferred to Ave Maria residents (Dillion, In the beginning: power to the residents, 2007).

The provision of public safety services in Ave Maria is the responsibility of the County. The three agencies within the County charged with public safety include the Immokalee Fire District, the Collier County Sheriff’s Office and the Collier County Emergency Medical Services. A temporary trailer northwest was stationed to house firefighters and ambulance workers. There are roughly 200 households that have moved into the town and an additional 450 students living on Ave Maria’s campus. Until March the Immokalee Fire District fire district was the only agency financially equipped to assume on-site responsibility for their portion of services. A state property tax reform is blamed for the County’s struggle to respond to increased development in this capacity. In March Collier County Commissioners amended the budget to enable 24-hour EMS
service to be provided to Ave Maria. The police have not assumed an on-site presence in
the Town therefore residents will depend on stations eight miles outside of the Ave
Maria. The Town of Ave Maria has already listed the provision of all of these public
services on the website marketing the community and those behind the town are pressing
the county to fulfill public obligations (Dillion, Question remains when fire, police, EMS
move in to Ave Maria, 2008; Dillion, Public safety not all staffing yet, 2008; Dillion, Ave
Maria get 24-hour staffing, 2008).

Conclusion

Although mixed marketing messages continue to be sent by the team of secular
and religious developers, Ave Maria is grounded by its denominational educational
institution and the Oratory, the Catholic centerpiece of worship in the Town’s center.
This center also serves as the binding element in a town subdivided into six demographic-
specific neighborhoods complemented by separate recreational amenities. Finally, Ave
Maria is striving to emulate the self-sufficiency of a new town by seeking to attract and
establish economic opportunities and structuring a form of self-governance that will
empower residents.
CHAPTER 5
TOWN CENTERS

Historical Context

The design and purpose of the town center has evolved throughout the history of the United States, a reflection of the broader evolution of new towns. American colonial towns are remembered for the strong tradition of public space, expressly evident in the town square (Bohl, 2002). The town square is often referenced as one of the most significant design elements of colonial small towns. The square was located at the central hub of the town and was primarily used for communal land for grazing cattle, militia demonstrations and trainings, ecclesiastical and civic purposes, as an ornamental amenity, or a marketplace. Many of the New England squares that are emulated today were characterized by openness. These areas were often irregular in design but achieved a unity “…through the careful spotting of churches and meetinghouses, through formal landscaping and through the regular placement of single private homes of uniform design around them” (Zucker, 1959, 243). These original town squares served as public space (Talen, 2005; Zucker, 1959; French, 1978).

Paul Zucker, author of Town and Square, From the Agora to the Village Green developed a typology of nine distinctive squares in American cities. These types include:

- Market Square: facilitates the exchange of goods
- Parade: symbol of self-preservation
- Green: surrounded by churches and other important community structures
- Parvis: church square, usually located at the front of the church to foster pre and post mass gathering
- Residential Square: small area enclosed by residences
- Collegiate Square: enclosed square associated with universities
- Civic Square: surrounded by governmental buildings
- Mall: connects two different areas of space or building complexes
- Traffic Square: nexus of two or more streets (Zucker, 1959).
The invention of streetcars and the introduction of suburbs in the late 19th century produced transit oriented town centers. The garden city concept of the early 1900s also appropriated town squares. Letchworth, England, a garden city built in 1904, includes a large space dominated by municipal and religious structures. The town center of Hampstead Garden (1906) features two massive churches facing each other. Hampstead also included subsidiary centers designed at a smaller scale than the primary town center. These secondary centers include small greens, schools, stores, and some public buildings (Bohl, 2002).

The 20th century brought forth shopping centers, issuing a shift in the public and civic purposes of past town centers. Shopping centers respond to the economic benefits of locating many stores in one place, whether this unfolds in a strip mall, pedestrian mall or shopping village. Market Square in Lake Forest, Illinois is heralded as one of the successful examples of a shopping center. It was built in 1916, and includes a mixture of uses, open-air pedestrian arcades, and a formal common. The National Register of Historic Places recognizes this area as the first planned suburban shopping center in the United States (Bohl, 2002).

One of the challenges of town centers in the 1930s included the integration of the automobile. The professional team that designed and developed Radburn, New Jersey in 1929 used educational facilities to define each town center. A commercial component was later added at the fringe of the community, in response to a growth in the population and needs of Radburn’s residents. The peripheral location of this commercial area was
due to the fact that the spatial needs of the town center schools precluded the addition of retail or commercial (Bohl, 2002).

The changes in post-World War II development were also apparent in the shifting role and design of town centers. Town centers built between 1950 and 1980 emulated a ‘separatist’ philosophy concerning land use and spaces for the vehicle and the pedestrian. These centers lacked both human scale and public spaces. William Whyte urged designers to “return to the agora” by designing places where people could meet and talk. Whyte considered the characteristics of the agora, which emphasized centrality, concentration, and mixture, an appropriate guide for future town centers. Charles Bohl, a professor at the University of Miami’s School of Architecture corroborates Whyte’s viewpoint by stating “…if the only reason people come [to the town center] is to shop, than the project has fallen short of creating the type of magnetic destination where people go to become engaged in the community and experience the place itself” (Bohl, 2002, 59-60).

**Town Center, Celebration**

**Location/Opening**

The Celebration Town Center was constructed prior to the completion of the residential component of the town, opening in November of 1996. In fact, the Town Center opened before 98% of its residences had even broken ground. This timeline signifies a shift from conventional development philosophy where households are put in place prior to any commercial development. This philosophy follows the logic that retail and restaurants will likely face a financial struggle if the primary target market, in this case the residents, does not exist. If research conducted after the arrival of residents
shows that the market cannot support the originally advertised commercial component of a planned community the developer will discontinue plans for a town center (Lassell, 2004; Ross, 1999; The Celebration Company, 2005).

Disney asserts that one of the reasons for preceding the residences with the town center was to enable the Company to show that it fulfilled the promise of a downtown in Celebration. In addition, Robert A.M. Stern, the architects that collaborated with Disney on the master plan for the entire town, noted if a downtown is not present when residents arrive they will establish other retail patterns outside the town. When Celebration had reached a population of 500 residents the town center contained fifteen stores, three restaurants, a coffeehouse, cinema, and about twelve offices (Lassell, 2004; Ross, 1999).

The Town Center is located off Celebration Avenue, the main road that runs through the town. Appendix A and B both illustrate the physical location of the Town Center in relation to the rest of the Town. There was speculation around why the Town Center was located so far from regional traffic. U.S. 192 is about two miles from Celebration’s downtown. Michael Eisner acknowledged that the location of the Town Center was a calculated risk, but he indicated that Disney’s financial position enabled the company to extend itself in this way (Ross, 1999).

In many ways the timing of the opening of the Town Center and its geographic location in the town were two factors stacked against the downtown’s economic success. Several of the first businesses fell victim to this ‘experiment’ when many of them could not make enough of a profit to thrive. The tenants of the Town Center petitioned to have Celebration labeled on Disney tourist maps in order to attract more customers, but the suggestion was rejected by the company. Prior to the summer of 1997, when Disney
removed its name from all marketing of the town, Disney controlled many of the aspects of the day-to-day operations of the downtown businesses, including hours. Proprietors of the town center businesses were depending on Disney to assist them in attracting customers, and many of them had placed the odds of their own success on Disney’s influential marketing (Ross, 1999).

It is likely that there would have been greater economic gains from the beginning if the center was built close to U.S. 192. However, as Duany points out, “…the regional traffic may have overwhelmed the small main street and undermined its role as a social condenser of the community” (Duany, 2002, 60). New Urbanists believe that a town center or a main street is not to be designed for direct profit, but for the social and community gains that it advances. One of these community gains lies in the way the downtown empowers residents, both young and old to walk to the town center instead of depending on automobile transportation. The Town Center in Celebration is one of the connections to Walt Disney’s original vision of EPCOT. EPCOT’s town center was part of Disney’s integral plan to foster the development of the family as a unit by making this area a place for families to enjoy activities during the day and at night (Duany, 2002; Potter, 1972).

Architecture

The designs that were manifest in Celebration’s residential component were dictated in large part by the Celebration Pattern Book. In contrast, the intention behind the buildings in the Town Center was to create modern, iconic structures that would serve as town landmarks. Designers were given creative freedom to produce distinctive designs.
The Town Hall, shown in Figure 15 was designed by Phillip Johnson, an architect who became famous in the 1950s for his modern designs. “Johnson’s Town Hall for Celebration is a two-story colonial inspired redbrick building that blends small-town tradition and a modernist line” (Lassell, 2004, 50). The Town Hall houses the Town Executive, town staff, and is the location for committee meetings.

Celebration’s Post Office, an official branch of the United States Postal Service, is located beside the Town Hall. Michael Graves, an architect who designed many of Disney’s hotels, including the Swan and Dolphin, is responsible for the structure. The curves of the building’s cylindrical tower contrast dramatically with the straight vertical lines and edges of the Town Hall. A stand of exterior mailboxes belonging to residents extends out from the tower. The intention behind this element is to establish another location for potential interaction amongst neighbors (Lassell, 2004).
The Preview Center, located across from the Town Hall on Market Street was designed by Charles Moore, of Moore Anderson Architects (Lassell, 2004). The tower is a revival of the preview towers that played a significant role in Florida’s history. Preview towers were once used to show property owners their parcel and construction progress on their new home. The preview towers also served as landmarks during the Florida land development boom, signaling opportunities for land investment.

The architect Cesar Pelli, former dean of the Yale Architecture School, designed the Cinema in the Town Center. The Cinema is located on Front Street, identified by Disney as the entertainment center of the town.
The structure is designed in retro-Hollywood Art Deco style, with two spires that contribute to the building’s signature status (Lassell, 2004).

Although the Bank of Celebration building, located at the corner of Sycamore and Celebration, is not an iconic building, its design integrates community-building features. The Bank was designed by Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, a husband and wife team, who eliminated the standard component of a drive-through. This elimination, similar to the addition of the outdoor mailboxes in the Celebration Post Office is meant to encourage neighborly exchange (Lassell, 2004).

Other significant buildings in the Town Center include both Celebration Hotel and Stetson University. Celebration Hotel was designed by Graham Gund Architects of Boston, Massachusetts and Stetson University’s building was crafted by Dreamer & Phillips (The Celebration Company, 2005).
The ‘background buildings’ in the Town Center that house restaurants and shops were influenced by the style of architecture predominant in the south (Lassell, 2004).

Figure 21: ‘Background building’ on Market Street in Celebration
Photographer: Dan Cahill

The iconic buildings in Celebration are dispersed throughout the Town Center. Figure 22 depicts an overall aerial view of the Town Center. It is clear from this visual perspective that the shape of the Town Center is defined in part by the presence of one major water body. Figure 23 shows an aerial view of Market Street where the Preview
Center, Town Hall, and the Celebration Post Office are located. A farmer’s market was being hosted in the Town Center during the time the image was taken. The main road in the Town, Celebration Avenue, connects travelers coming to the Town Center from the points east and west, Water Street connects travelers coming traveling south. Regardless of the point of entrance, visitors and residents entering the Town Center from these two roadways will immediately view one of the iconic buildings.

The square, shown in the aerial view, located at the intersection of Celebration Avenue and Market Street forms a non-traditional, hybrid of a civic square and traffic square, two types of squares identified by Paul Zucker, in his book *Town and Square, From the Agora to the Village Green*. The square primarily serves as a traffic island to slow speeds as vehicles turn onto Market Street. It also provides a place for pedestrians to sit in shaded areas accompanied by a fountain. Although it is bordered by the town hall and the post office on one side, Market Street separates the square from the civic buildings.

![Aerial View of Market Street in Celebration](source: www.maps.live.com, 2008)
Market Street dead-ends onto Front Street. Figure 24 depicts an aerial view of Front Street. The buildings on Front Street, including Caesar Pelli’s iconic Cinema, face the lakefront. An irregular shaped plaza located at the base of Market Street offers a place to gather on the lake.

![Figure 24: Aerial View of Front Street in Celebration](Source: www.maps.live.com, 2008)

**Events**

In 1997 The Celebration Company began to host downtown events designed to attract all of the generations that resided in the Town. Today, in 2008, the Town is famous for their festivals and celebrations, the majority of which are held in the Town Center. These events are so important to the Town that when The Celebration Company contracted with Lexin, the company that assumed management of the Town Center in 2004, stipulations were made for Lexin’s continued sponsorship of these festivities. Some of these events include block parties, regularly scheduled farmers’ markets, art
shows, lakefront concerts, and winter festivities with snow blowing machines (Celebration Town Center, 2008; Lassell, 2004).

Andrew Ross’ social account of Celebration included an interesting review of what the Town Center offered the teen population living in the community. Ross believed that teens sought out places where they can avoid adult surveillance and high-profile spots for “posing provocatively.” In Celebration’s downtown the teens found both.

As is common in many retail areas there is tension between teens and merchants, who believe the youth repel business. The teens requested a skate park in the Town Center or elsewhere in the community, but town decisionmakers did not feel that a skate park coalesced with the vision of Celebration. In order to encourage a sense of community in this sub-population an organization was established called the Members of Town Teen charged with representing peer concerns and planning appropriate activities for this age group (Ross, 1999).

The residents have voiced the desire to have a community center large enough to hold the majority of the town’s population. Developers choose not to allot a space in the original master plan for a community center large enough to host the entire town. Town Hall does make available a trailer containing materials for neighborhood block parties free of charge to residents (Lassell, 2004).

Residents have expressed the desire to have more service oriented shops in the Town Center. Currently most residents’ shopping needs are met outside the community (Lassell, 2004; Ross, 1999). The retail included in the Town Center is characterized as high-end. There are a variety of restaurants in the center with different price points, from
high-end Italian and Cuban food at Antonio’s and the Columbia to more affordable diner items at Market Street Diner (Duany, 2002).

Another commercial component of the Town, Water Tower Place, opened in the Fall of 2005 at the intersection of Celebration Avenue and U.S. 192 (The Celebration Company, 2005). This open air area contains restaurants, shops, a bank, a service center (with gasoline and a convenience store), a small library, and other retail needs. The commercial area is not considered a second town center, but rather a complement to the higher end specialty stores that are located in the Town Center. Since Water Tower Place is accessible from U.S. 192 in addition to Celebration Avenue it serves tourists and others travelers in addition to town residents.

**Zoning**

The Town Center in Celebration was designed to support mixed use, a concept that was relatively innovative for Central Florida at the time it was constructed. According to the Planned Unit Development Application (PUD), the document which establishes the zoning and design guidelines for the Town, the Town Center was established to maximize self sufficiency and decrease the need for residents to travel outside the Town for all of their needs. The type of commercial development that is encouraged in this area is defined as ‘neighborhood commercial,’ “small scale retail and office uses that support nearby development and are not designed to attract patrons from outside the community” (Osceola County, 2002).

Restaurants, boutiques and offices occupy the first floor of downtown buildings and one and two bedroom condominiums are located on the second and third levels (Lassell, 2004). Designers of Celebration used different techniques to simulate a gradual
development timeline. The downtown apartments were one showcase for these methods. Some of the apartments in this area were designed to look as if they had been converted from Victorian houses into smaller rental units (Ross, 1999).

In the beginning living units also occupied some of the first floors of Town Center buildings, but each was designed with the ability to convert into office space. This adaptation became necessary as the town center evolved (Lassell, 2004). The character of this use was designed to generate the type of energy that is a vital component of Celebration’s vision for a community, particularly two of the five Celebration cornerstones: sense of place and sense of community.

The PUD divides the Town of Celebration into fourteen tracts of land. Each tract includes one or a mixture of several land uses. The tracts are then combined to form three broad categories: Community Tracts, Commercial Tracts, and the Town Center. A primary purpose and goal is established for each category. The purpose of the Town Center, located in Tract 11 is to foster a compatible mix of uses that creates a shared source for social activity, education, and recreation, all of which contribute to the Town’s sense of community. The Town Center is established in the PUD as the “focal point” of the entire town. The specific planning, design, and development objectives/goals of the Town Center include:

- A strong sense of community identity based on a shared, coherent and functionally efficient mixed-use environment
- A hierarchy of public and/or private streets, designed for a balanced mix of both pedestrians, and the automobile
- Buildings and open spaces that serve as landmarks for community identity
- On-street parking and centralized interior parking to support principal uses in the Town Center
- A hierarchical transportation system that accounts for automobiles, public transit, bicycles, and pedestrians
- Compatibility of buildings in use and design (Osceola County, 2002).
The fourteen tracts of land are characterized by one of two intensity/density levels: high or medium. Tract 11, the Town Center is qualified as a medium density/intensity zone. The medium density/intensity zone includes the following by right regulations: 16 dwelling units per acre, a 2.5 Floor Area Ratio, and height restriction of six habitable floors. This compares with the high density zone which includes 40 dwelling units per acre, a 4.0 Floor Area Ratio, and height restriction of 26 habitable floors. The high density zone is utilized in the area south of Highway 192 and north of State Road 417 which contains Celebration Place, an office complex and Florida Hospital at Celebration (Osceola County, 2002).

As stated, the maximum principal building height in Celebration’s Town Center is set at six habitable floors. These buildings are disposed at a minimum setback, from the street, of 0 feet. The guidelines do not indicate a maximum setback. Additional notable design guidelines that are written into the PUD address travel lanes and sidewalk measurements. Market Street in the Town Center supports sidewalks that are six feet wide, and travel lanes eleven feet wide. Additional, select guidelines that pertain to Celebration’s Town Center are listed in Appendix E. This table juxtaposes design guidelines for the Smartcode Transect 5 to Celebration’s Town Center.

Appendix F includes the permitted uses in Celebration’s Town Center. This information was extracted from Celebration’s PUD, and organized according to the list put forth by the SmartCode. The table addresses the allowable uses under the categories of residential, lodging, office, retail, civic, education, civic support, automotive and industrial. There are no automotive or industrial uses permitted in Celebration’s Town Center. In all of the other categories Celebration allows certain types of uses. In the
category of lodging there was a mismatch between what the PUD indicated was allowed and what was physically present in the Town Center.

Since Tract 11, the Town Center allows for all types of residential housing, it would have been feasible for the Celebration Company and Osceola County to zone for housing around the downtown lakefront. Historically Florida lakefronts have been considered a precious amenity that translates into high priced lakefront homes for residential developers. In *Lakefront Doesn’t Have to Mean “I’ve Got Mine, You Get Your Own”* Chief Planner for the City of Orlando, Kevin Tyjeski, explores the historical pattern of development around the lakes in Central Florida.

According to Tyjeski the City of Orlando’s recognition of lakes as a community resource began in the 1900s when the street pattern was established. The City’s 1926 Comprehensive Plan identified Orlando’s lakes as a principle attraction. However, the City’s planning staff is engaged in a constant struggle to preserve the lakefront as a neighborhood amenity through regulations and subsequent application negotiations with developers. The City is a strong proponent of the theories set forth by Phillip Langdon and DPZ that preserving the lakefront as a public space contributes to neighborhood and community identity. The space provides important opportunities for neighbors to meet in a neutral setting (Langdon, 1994; Tyjeski, 1999). Disney and Osceola County recognized the importance of the lakefront in the Town Center as a public space. Regardless of whether residents live in condominiums, townhomes or mansions they all have equal access to this area.

As previously stated, the lakefront has become a popular location for concerts, and a gathering place for residents to celebrate holidays such as the Fourth of July. When
an organized event is not scheduled, the space is available to residents as a ‘secondary porch’ which offers places to sit and relax. An interesting addition to this area worth noting is the availability of movable rockers. These high backed rockers can be dragged and clustered so groups of people can sit together. William Whyte, an American sociologist who has made significant contributions to the planning field, performed a study that revealed that movable chairs increase the use of public plazas (Whyte, 1988).

**Town Core, Ave Maria**

**Location/Opening**

The Master Plan for the Town of Ave Maria includes a Town Core, and three additional Town Centers. The Town Core is the only area of all the town center-oriented elements that is complete. Appendix C illustrates the relationship between the main entrance of Ave Maria and the Town Core; the Town Core is several miles in from external connector roads. Ave Maria Boulevard, the main road that runs throughout the town connects to Annunciation Circle, the road that encircles the Town Core. John Paul II Boulevard connects the Town Core to the Town Center 1.

Ave Maria’s Town Core and the first residences in the town were constructed simultaneously. Communication with the developers revealed that the simultaneous development was part of an overall goal to make Ave Maria a self-sustaining, self-sufficient town (Roberts, 2008). In January of 2007 the first

Figure 25: Ave Maria Street Signs
Photographer: the Author
commercial entities signed leases in Ave Maria. By the end of August, before most residents had moved to Ave Maria, twenty-five businesses had committed to rent space in the Town Core. Currently, this area houses twenty-four businesses. The Town Core is recognized by the developers and residents as La Piazza or simply The Town Center, despite formal distinctions made in the Master Plan (Collier County, 2005; Barron Collier Company, 2008).

The proprietors of the Town Core businesses were interviewed by the media in an effort to understand the foundation of their relocation decisions. One restaurant owner explained his decision as a personal fit related to his volunteer efforts with Ave Maria University. Another retailer stated that her decision to invest in the Town was a family decision based on a desire to be involved in a community that combined traditional family values, an educational institution, and religious beliefs. The president of Florida Community Bank, cited the Town’s potential to attract more employees, as the reason for the bank’s relocation from Immokalee to Ave Maria (Dillion, *In the beginning: town offerings its blessing to business*, 2007).

Although businesses had not yet opened by Ave Maria’s official grand opening in July of 2007, many establishments participated in the event through a sidewalk sale. The first businesses opened gradually thereafter, with the first eatery, The Bean, opening its doors for business in early December, 2007. The owners of the Bean, a husband and wife team live above the store with their children (Dillion, *First Eatery Opens in Ave Maria town*, 2007). The store proves to be a popular place for students as well.
In addition to complementary town centers in other locations of town, Ave Maria will also support a business park, the Park of Commerce. The Park of Commerce will be located a half mile south of Ave Maria University and the Town Core.

The initial components of this area, shown on Figure 26 will include approximately 40,000 square feet of retail space and 30,000 square feet of medical space. Anthrex, a manufacturer of medical supplies has plans to move a facility into this portion of the Town. The Park of Commerce will also contain a wellness center for residents.

There are seventy luxury apartments built on the first and second floors above the commercial uses in the Town Core (Cox, *In the beginning: changing perception*, 2007). The apartments range from 1,200 to over 1,700 square feet and advertise premium views.
of the Town Core. The apartments, in addition to all of the other housing options in the town are advertised on the town website. The luxury apartments start in the mid-$400,000.

The centerpiece of the Town Core is the Oratory, or a place of worship. The Oratory was originally intended to seat 3,300 people and extend to a height of 150 feet. In November of 2005, tightening budgets forced the architect to downscale the structure’s design plans to seat 1,100 people. The final structure measures slightly over 100 feet tall. The alteration also had an effect on the projected cost which decreased from 100 million dollars to 24 million dollars. The height of the Oratory was also reduced so the Town Core’s buildings were to scale (Smith, 2005; Rice, 2007).

The opening of the Oratory has been at the center of considerable controversy since the Town officially opened. Articles and interviews by local newspapers indicate that many of the residents that moved to Ave Maria were primarily interested in living in the Town because of the opportunities for a close-knit Catholic community. The Oratory was designated and marketed as a centrally located place of worship in the Town. However, the structure had to be dedicated by the Bishop from the Diocese of Venice, Florida for the building to be recognized as a church where the celebration of sacraments could occur. Officials from Ave Maria University made a dedication request to the
Bishop in September of 2007. The Bishop had not yet responded to the request by Christmas and the Town was unable to celebrate this holy day in the oratory (Dillion, *Without diocese ok, no Christmas mass planned in new oratory*, 2007).

While the University officials and the entire Town awaited a response from the Diocese, Catholic Mass was celebrated in the University chapel. A group of residents requested that the oratory be opened for informal prayer during this waiting period. This request was granted in late February (Dillion, *Ave Maria oratory now open for prayer*, 2007). Many residents voiced their displeasure to the media that there was no parish available to worship at in the town. These residents believed that the Oratory, similar to a local neighborhood parish, would offer opportunities to meet and socialize with new neighbors.

On March 31, 2008 the Oratory was consecrated by the Bishop of the Diocese of Venice as “The Parish of the Ave Maria Oratory.” March 31st also marked the Feast of the Annunciation, a Catholic Holy Day recognizing the Virgin Mary, who is the namesake for the town of Ave Maria. The street network in the Town is oriented toward the direction that the sun rose on the Feast of the Annunciation in the year 2000 (Dillion, *Dedicatory mass set for Ave Maria on March 31, 2008*; Dillion, *Ave Maria oratory to see the light of Monday, 2008*).

After the dedication it was determined that the Diocese would recognize the Oratory as a ‘quasi-parish.’ The jurisdiction of the parish includes both the university and the neighborhoods within the Town (Dillion, *Dedicatory mass set for Ave Maria on March 31, 2008*; Dillion, *Ave Maria oratory to see the light of Monday, 2008*). The relationship between the Diocese and the Parish of the Ave Maria Oratory is atypical of
the relationships the Diocese has with other parishes in its jurisdiction. Ordinarily the
Diocese would have already made a financial contribution to the construction and
maintenance of the building, which would be under the corporate ownership of the
Diocese. In the case of the Oratory the Diocese has had no financial role. The Oratory is
deeded to the university, and this entity is fiscally responsible for costs associated with
the building. The Diocese and the University will collaborate to determine what will
happen in the future concerning the income and operating costs generated by The Parish
of the Ave Maria Oratory (Dillion, *The oratory: who gets the collection? Who gets the
bills?*, 2008).

**Architecture**

As depicted in Figure 29 there are six buildings oriented around the Oratory,
Assisi, Lucca, Siena, Loyola, Firenze, and Avila. The names are derived from Catholic
Saints and/or European cities, and serve to orient both the businesses and condominiums
that are in each of the structures. The architectural style of the Town Core structures was
inspired in part by Siena, Italy (O’Brien, 2007; Collier County, 2005; Barron Collier
Company, 2008). According to the architect of Ave Maria Oratory, Harry
Warren of Cannon Designs, these buildings are meant to be background
buildings that support the bold statement made by the Oratory design (O’Brien,
2007). The structures were designed to form the “urban edge” of the Town Core

Figure 29: Layout of Buildings in Ave
Maria Town Core
Source: Ave Maria Master Plan, 2005
(Alf, 2008). “The Oratory at Ave Maria is the spiritual and conceptual heart of Ave Maria town and university development…The oval shape reinforces the focal quality of the Oratory, and all the major roadways serving the town radiate from this central position, underlying the centrality of faith in this unique community (Alf, 2008, 1).”

The Oratory’s design represents the architect’s expression of a combination of historic church forms and contemporary architecture. In particular, the steel buttresses that are part of the Oratory are a contemporary interpretation of the historic stone buttresses that grace many European cathedrals. The composition of materials is a combination of metal and travertine, a stone-type mineral. The interior of the Oratory incorporates stone, bronze, glass, and wood in a combination inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright’s interior designs (Alf, 2008).

A piazza stands in front of the Oratory, measuring 800 feet long by 400 feet wide, and offering a large gathering space. Each brick in the piazza has the name of an individual that donated to the Oratory (Alf, 2008). When standing in front of the Oratory on the piazza the buildings are meant to simulate a pair of hands curving up around and enclosing you (O’Brien, 2007).
Events

Beginning with Ave Maria’s grand opening in July of 2007, there have been several events hosted in the Town Core. A seasonal Halloween event oriented to families was held in La Piazza in October. Celebration of Lights, a multi-denominational light show, was held during the month of December in the Town Center. The developers of Ave Maria sponsored a Family Fun Festival in late January. Finally, a sidewalk sale was scheduled for late April of 2008. The Town’s website includes a calendar of events webpage. Many of the events that are listed on the calendar and not conducted in the Town Core utilize University space and neighborhood parks (Barron Collier Company, 2008).

The largest event held thus far in the Town Core was the consecration of the Oratory. The building was filled to capacity and attendees were drawn from international, national and local locations. A total of 2,100 people attended the dedication, 1,100 in the Oratory and 1,000 under tents in the Town watching on television. A local newspaper interviewed several different people, representative of different groups of town residents, about their reactions to the consecration of the Oratory. One Ave Maria University freshman student was quoted as saying, “Yes, we’ve had the first day of classes and the town opening, but until you have that faith center, everything else feels superfluous” (Dillion, Thousands welcome Ave Maria Oratory into Roman Catholic Church, 2008, 2). One resident conceptualized the monumental day by saying, “You can imagine that this church is supposed to be the center and the heart of the town, without this church it’s like we didn’t have a heart. Now it’s like we’re alive” (Dillion, Thousands welcome Ave Maria oratory into Roman Catholic Church, 2008, 2).
Zoning

Ave Maria’s Master Plan describes the activity of the Town as focused around a Town Core and three town centers. The Town Core and town centers are emphasized in the master plan as “critical components” of a successful town design (Collier County, 2005). Appendix D includes a site plan which distinguishes the different districts in the town, including the Town Core and each of the town centers.

The Town Core is described as “…a place where the bustling daily street life of a college town is the main event” and the area is the “…focal part of the town, establishing the municipal place of Ave Maria.” The Town Core supports mixed-uses, encouraging ground floor use to be devoted to commercial, retail, and office interests and successive floors to be occupied by living units (Collier County, 2005, 3).

Ave Maria’s Master Plan asserts that the central reason the Town Core maintains such significance is because the town-wide landmark, the Oratory and the Oratory Plaza are both located in this District. “The Oratory is the great church of Ave Maria, surrounded by the plaza that will be the most significant public place in Ave Maria” (Collier County, 2005, 25). The Oratory is elevated above ground level by a plinth. The oblong shape of the Oratory defines the shape and length of the boulevard, an elliptical street that wraps around the plaza.

The front of the Oratory is located at the eastern most end of the 1,000 foot long University Green (referred to by the community as the University Mall), a component of the University District. The University Green and the Oratory and piazza are separated by Ave Maria Boulevard. “The University Green is the central ceremonial and signature space of the University District” (Collier County, 2005, 21). University buildings are
arranged around the Green, which is an open lawn that spatially connects the Chapel (a part of the university) to the Oratory (a component of the Town Core). The sides of the Oratory include expansive bands of lawn which were designed to support town events, such as a farmers market. The back of the Oratory is the terminus of John Paul II Boulevard from the east (Collier County, 2005).

The Town Core in Ave Maria also serves as a connector between the University District and the Town Center 1. The Town Center 1 encompasses the area directly east of the Town Core. This area represents an extension of the mixed use prevalent in the Town Core, however, the intended density of the Town Center 1 is lower than in the Town Core (Collier County, 2005).

The design guidelines for the Oratory are distinguished from the guidelines for the Town Core as a whole. The height limitations of the buildings in the Town Core, with the exception of the Oratory, are measured by maximum habitable floors. The maximum height of the Oratory is 150 feet (from the crown of the street), and 200 feet (from the crown of the street) for a Bell Tower. Setbacks for the Oratory are 30 feet from the west, north, and south Right of Way (ROW), and 75 feet from the east ROW.

Select, significant design guidelines in Ave Maria’s Town Core are compared to the SmartCode guidelines, created by Duany et. al. in Appendix E. The maximum height
for buildings in the Town Core (with the exception of the Oratory) is measured at five stories. The minimum setback is zero feet, however setbacks are allowed to be increased, for the sole purpose of creating public spaces (i.e. plazas, courtyards, and gardens). The Ave Maria Master Plan uses Floor Area Ratio (FAR) to control density. In the Town Core the overall FAR shall not exceed 1.5 for the total building area within each block. Arcades and awnings are permitted to extend from the buildings in the Town Core to create shade and shelter from the hot and humid Florida climate (Collier County, 2005).

Additional notable design guidelines that are written into the Master Plan address travel lanes and sidewalk measurements for Annunciation Circle, the main street in the Town Core. The width of Annunciation Circle’s travel lane is ten feet, with a six foot wide sidewalk. Guidelines are also set for the amount of required parking and the width of those parking spaces (Collier County, 2005). This matrix indicates that the type of civic space integrated into the Town Core is a plaza located in front of the Oratory. Appendix F addresses the permitted uses in the Town Core. The Town Core permits uses in all of the categories: residential, lodging, office, retail, civic, education, civic support, automotive, and industrial, with the exception of the automotive and industrial.
CHAPTER 6
ANALYSIS OF RESULTS: RELATING THE CASE STUDIES

Background

Table 3 contains comparative information on the regional location, historical background, land use and political structure of Celebration, Florida and Ave Maria, Florida. These characteristics formed the basis for further analysis on each town, especially in regard to the town center areas.

Table 3: Comparative Matrix

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<th>Celebration</th>
<th>Ave Maria</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Walt Disney; market expansion, social</td>
<td>Tom Monaghan; religious</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Community Development District: Board of Supervisors</td>
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<td>Rural Land Stewardship Program</td>
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<td>Land Use: Initial Allocations</td>
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<td>Oriented around parks</td>
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Both communities are classified as new towns that were conceived and developed by a strong visionary individual with a specific set of goals, assigning them the label, intentional communities. Celebration was developed by Walt Disney World Company and Ave Maria was conceived and built by Tom Monaghan, the founder of Dominos Pizza Inc. Celebration is located in Osceola County, a part of Central Florida while Ave Maria is situated in Collier County, a component of the Southwestern region of the state. The land upon which both new towns stand was previously characterized as ranchland.

Ave Maria and Celebration are both characterized as new towns, within definitions already established in this thesis, in media reactions throughout articles cited in this work, and by academic scholars and planning practitioners. Although both communities are referred to as towns, neither is legally categorized as a town. Ave Maria and Celebration are formally classified as an unincorporated area of their respective counties. The Florida Legislature authorized special districts for each of the towns, known as Ave Maria Stewardship Community District and Reedy Creek Improvement District. These districts in turn enabled specialized forms of governance and centralized bastions of control for each set of developers. This framework also provided a form of self-sufficient governance. Ave Maria instituted a board of supervisors elected by landowners in the town. Celebration is run through community associations that include elected homeowners and renters.

The size of each town encompasses an area of roughly 5,000 acres. The amount of growth Ave Maria and Celebration were intended to produce classified each as a Development of Regional Impact, triggering a lengthy process of negotiations between the County and the developers. At the time of development each area was zoned
agriculture. Ave Maria’s site also has a Rural Land Stewardship (RLS) overlay which shaped much of the Town’s planning process. Each town conserved a very large amount of open space. Celebration conserved over 13,000 acres of land and Ave Maria conserved 17,000 acres of land. A portion of Celebration’s land conservation was linked to environmental mitigations of present and future theme parks owned by Disney. Ave Maria’s conservation was dedicated to the fulfillment of the RLS programmatic requirements.

Although the amount of developed land of each town includes the same size, 5,000 acres, the division of land use varies between Ave Maria and Celebration. Celebration intends on developing over 8,065 units of housing with over 5 million square feet devoted to retail and office space. The original plans for the town included a 1.7 million square foot workplace attraction, which has been tabled but not eliminated altogether. Ave Maria’s development plans include 11,000 units of housing, nearly 700,000 square feet of retail and 500,000 square feet of office. Substantial amounts of land are also allocated for civic structures and the Oratory in the Town Core.

Each town differs in form, and the manipulation of land uses. Ave Maria land form integrates water, characterized by both recreational use and functional purposes, primarily stormwater retention. Both the Land Use Breakdown Map in Appendix C and the Site Plan in Appendix D illustrate how water, in the form of Venetian Canals flows amidst neighborhood developments. In contrast, Celebration’s water bodies are defined as lakes, such as the one in Celebration’s Town Center. Ave Maria’s community parks are located on ‘destination parcels’ that are generally associated with specific neighborhoods but do not form the center of each neighborhood. Many of the
neighborhoods in Ave Maria target a specific demographic group, such as active adults or young families. The use of open space around these neighborhoods is directly related to the neighborhood’s population. A golf course takes the place of a park in one active adult neighborhood and a water park is associated with a family oriented neighborhood. Alternatively, Celebration integrates a variety of housing in many of the Town’s neighborhoods, intermingling townhomes and single family homes. Parks are located at the center of these neighborhoods to further encourage social interaction between neighbors.

**Intentional Goals**

Strong common themes emerge throughout the development history of each town even though the intentions behind the towns are markedly different. The concept for Celebration sprang forth from a company that had seen unprecedented success in the field of immersive environments, setting the stage for an entire industry which profits from the elicitation of a series of prescribed consumer responses. Celebration is clearly not the result of a simplistic transference of a fantasy atmosphere from a theme park to a neighborhood. It is, however, the product of an application of design which strives to yield prescribed resident responses.

The goals of the New Urbanist design philosophy utilized by the development team are intentional in and of themselves. The large porches complemented by wide sidewalks and neighborhood parks; small lots and pre-set housing styles all fit in to overarching social goals of Disney. These social goals include creating a community defined by civic engagement, community investment on the part of the residents, attitudes that foster neighborliness and behavior that supports the life of the traditional family unit.
Individuals desiring to live in Celebration must also be willing to participate on some level in the community. At the very minimum this participation rests on a willingness to sacrifice elements of aesthetic individuality for the benefit of the town at large.

An unmistakable branding occurred during Celebration’s initial phases of development labeling the community Disney’s new town. Disney’s marketing material for Celebration was infused with words like ‘special magic,’ fireflies and summer twilight. While the design standards applied to Celebration may have attracted one type of individual, the Town’s intimate association with Disney drew upon another sub-population. Individuals attracted to Celebration also had to be attracted to a lifestyle that was being sold by Disney. This draw was evident in the amount of individuals that were present on Founder’s Day to bid on one of Celebration’s first homes. Disney’s involvement intensified the social goals of the New Urbanist principles that were implemented in the Town’s design. Behind these social goals is Disney’s desire to experiment in a new market, developing successful community building methods that are replicated by others.

The intentions behind Ave Maria are rooted in the life mission of one individual, Tom Monaghan. Monaghan’s conservative Catholic beliefs fueled his desire to funnel his self-made fortune into environments that enhanced the catholic religious experience, and transferred the intangible concept of a ‘faith community’ into a tangible community. This personal goal was first achieved when he founded Ave Maria University and Ave Maria Law School in Michigan. The Town of Ave Maria represents the achievement of a more large-scale goal of developing a comprehensive community where inhabitants could share a life structured by Catholic ideals.
Despite the de-emphasis of religion as part of the marketing campaigns put forth by Barron Collier Company, the secular developer, the town has a distinct Catholic identity. The Town’s namesake, the Virgin Mary, and the influence of her holy day, the Feast of the Annunciation on the orientation of the street network are two of these elements. The locations of a Catholic university, Catholic preparatory school, and Catholic Oratory at the heart of the town are three additional supports. Advertising campaigns also co-branded the Catholic University with the town. The implementation of New Urbanist design goals in Ave Maria serves to complement the religious ideals that are at the forefront of the town’s mission.

**Historical Context**

Both Celebration and Ave Maria take their place on the continuum of new towns and intentional developments. Each represents an attempt to utilize design and planning techniques that have proven successful in the communities that were developed in the past. One example of this is found in the inclusion of a town center in each town. Both Celebration and Ave Maria also implemented a greenbelt around the town, a concept contributed by Ebenezer Howard in the early 1900s. Larger regional issues, concerning endangered species and county and state wide land conservation formed the impetus behind the preservation of open space around each town.

Celebration and Ave Maria each integrated architectural styles that were reminiscent of historical places and periods to contribute to each community’s distinct identity. Celebration’s residences represented North American housing types built between the 1740s and the 1940s in six specific historic/regional styles. Many of Ave Maria’s buildings are inspired in same way by the 20th century architect Frank Lloyd
Wright. The Town Core in Ave Maria was heavily influenced by European town models that centered around a large church. The Town also integrated a church square, a successful element of many colonial towns.

Celebration and Ave Maria are both classified as freestanding new towns, meaning the towns do not depend on a strong link with the nearby metropolitan areas of Orlando and Naples. Each town represents master planned communities which were simultaneously planned by a unified team of planners, designers, developers and homebuilders. The towns in both case studies meet the definition of new towns laid out by the Urban Land Institute, and established in Chapter 1. Elements of this definition include a mix of land uses, self-sufficiency in governance, a range of home prices, and a commitment to open space and human scale designs.

Ave Maria and Celebration both join their utopian predecessors in issuing community goals for greater levels of social interaction than are present in most residential settlements. While Celebration’s intentional identity rests completely on these social goals, Ave Maria’s intentional identity is founded on a shared religious vision issued by Tom Monaghan. Both towns are comprised of individuals who are compelled to become “pioneers,” (a label that was applied to both new residents of Celebration and Ave Maria) in establishing the vision of life that they share with each town’s founder.

**Town Center**

The Town Center in Celebration and the Town Core in Ave Maria play a central role in the intentional goals of each community. The Town Center in Celebration is the social nexus of the town, while the Town Core in Ave Maria is the religious nexus of the town. These nexuses result from elements of design in the town center and specific
buildings/uses that are located there. The focus on the Town Center and Town Core as a central place for each intentional community is also due in part to the location and time the area was opened.

**Opening/Location**

The Town Center in Celebration was opened in November of 1996, before many of the residents relocated to the town. The Town Core in Ave Maria was nearly complete before residents moved to the community in July and August of 2007, and the businesses located in the Town Core have opened gradually beginning in November of 2007. The Town Center in Celebration is located off of Celebration Avenue, the main road that runs through the town. This internal location away from major thoroughfares like State Road 417, Interstate 4, and U.S. Route 192 provide for a greater ownership over the Town Center by residents. Ave Maria’s Town Core is located off of Ave Maria Boulevard, again, away from external roads like Oil Well Road and Immokalee Road that connect the town to outside developments.

**Zoning**

The matrix in Appendix E describes select, significant zoning regulations in both Celebration’s Town Center and Ave Maria’s Town Core. The areas of zoning that are explored in the matrix include: building scale, streets and parking, and civic space. The zoning in each area is compared to the design standards set forth in the SmartCode Transect 5, which is an area similar to the Town Center and Town Core in Celebration and Ave Maria. The buildings permitted in the SmartCode Transect 5, the Town Center and the Town Core include those designed for residential, lodging, office, and retail uses.
Zoning for these types of uses facilitate the integration of multiples uses in one building, which provides for many resident needs in one location.

The guidelines for building height under the SmartCode recommend a six story maximum and two story minimum, in order to create a human scale environment. The Town Core in Ave Maria allows a maximum height of five stories, while the Town Center in Celebration allows six habitable floors. All of the design guidelines encourage minimum setbacks of zero, which push buildings close to street, creating a continuous façade of interest for pedestrians and providing definition to the public street. Street and parking design guidelines reveal consistent standards between travel lanes, sidewalks and the location and amount of parking. These street and parking guidelines represent the goal of creating safe speeds and buffers between the individual and the car.

The table in Appendix F compares the permitted uses in the SmartCode’s Transect 5 to the permitted uses in Celebration’s Town Center and Ave Maria’s Town Core. The overlap between the three columns can be found in the lack of permitted uses in the automotive and industrial categories. All three areas allow for houses, live work units, and encourage retail uses, such as restaurants. The permitted uses for the three areas in the categories of civic and civic support all allow for places of religious assembly, police stations, and medical clinics. One significant difference occurs under the category of education. Celebration permits all educational uses in the Town Center, while Ave Maria’s Town Core only permits childcare centers.

The matrix in Appendix E establishes that the design guidelines examined in Celebration Town Center and Ave Maria’s Town Core align closely with New Urbanist design principles for a town center. The table in Appendix F shows additional overlap
between the permitted uses in the SmartCode’s Transect 5 and those in Celebration’s Town Center and Ave Maria’s Town Core. These two comparisons found a degree of common design language between the two towns. However, the architectural style of the buildings in the Town Center and the Town Core, and the pattern in which each is arranged, creates two different environments.

**Architecture**

Although the architectural design of the residential component of Celebration is controlled by the Pattern Book, the civic buildings in the Town Center were designed outside of these requirements. Well-known architects were commissioned to create iconic landmarks for the Town Center and the Town as a whole. The design of the Town Hall integrates influences from the colonial architecture prominent in New England town squares with the sharp vertical lines and edges of the modernist movement. The Post Office was given a design which is equally unique. The cinema pays homage to the art deco movement. The Preview Center was the revival of a historical Florida landmark that signaled opportunities for land investment during the land boom.

The Town Core is defined by the presence of the Oratory, called the “Parish of the Ave Maria Oratory”, where Catholic liturgical ceremonies including Mass are performed. Six separate buildings in the Town Core create an urban edge for the area and provide a backdrop for an enormous Catholic Oratory. The Oratory extends 100 feet tall, adorned at the top by a crucifix. Its oval shape establishes the form for the entire area, including Annunciation Circle, the elliptical road that extends around the Oratory. All the major roadways in Ave Maria radiate out from the Oratory, roads that bear the names of saints and past popes. A plaza extends out from the front of the Oratory. The plaza is
reminiscent of a historic parvis, or church square that provides an area to gather before and after ceremonies. The Oratory can be seen from several miles outside the Town. The prominent shape and size of the Oratory which contrasts with the size and architectural style of the other buildings in the Town Core combine with the Oratory as a point of orientation to make it a sacred landmark for the entire town. The architectural style of the buildings in Ave Maria’s Town Core and Celebration’s Town Center breathe a sense of immediate history into the new town.

The civic space that each town supports, in the Town Center for Celebration and the Town Core for Ave Maria, has a markedly different layout. Celebration’s iconic buildings, such as the town hall and the post office, are interspersed throughout the Town Center located on both sides of Market Street in addition to Front Street. Despite the presence of a hybrid, traffic-civic square there is no one area that forms a centralized gathering place. Ave Maria’s civic space, the Oratory, is centralized on one parcel. The structure itself rises above the other buildings in height and forms a cohesive gathering space through its plaza.

Figure 32: Aerial View of Market Street in Celebration
Source: www.live.maps.com, 2008
The Oratory in Ave Maria’s Town Core and the lakefront in Celebration’s Town Center are two central examples of areas that specifically express each town’s intention. The Oratory represents the link between Ave Maria University and the Town Core, through the University Green. It also terminates the vista for the University Green, and John Paul II Boulevard. The Oratory and the land on which it stands are the only area of the Town Core owned by Ave Maria University. The strong physical and financial connection between the Town Core and the University District underscores the religious theme of the town.

The consecration at the Oratory in March of 2008 was a significant event for the town’s population. The delayed opening of the Oratory due to religious politics created a noticeable impact on the town’s ability to fulfill resident needs and desires. After the Oratory was dedicated residents were given a place to gather as a formal religious community. Many residents indicated they felt their community came alive, and was
given a heart, power metaphors that indicate the central role the Oratory plays in the lives of students and individuals that live in the town.

The function of the area around the lakefront in Celebration’s Town Center expressly connects with the town’s central social intention. The lake in Celebration is encircled by Front Street, one of the main Town Center streets. Celebration’s developers choose to preserve the lake as a public space instead of reserving the view and the space for high priced homes. The area is accessible to anyone living in the Town and it has become a popular place for residents to gather and spend time. A small plaza extends from the lake where it meets Market Street. This area forms a ‘secondary porch’ for residents through the presence of movable rockers and tables with umbrellas. This area also creates the stage for concerts and the Town’s famous 4th of July event. Celebration’s lakefront and the Town Center in general brought to life Walt Disney’s original idea for an active center that would support social gathering places for individuals and families to populate during the day and at night.

**Conclusion**

Ave Maria and Celebration continue the evolution of two significant community planning movements: new town development, characterized by experimentation in the creation of a better place to live and intentional communities, qualified by a common purpose. The implementation of New Urbanist principles was a mechanism utilized to embed the intentional goals in the physical design of each town. The hybrid design that resulted in both towns intertwines the three movements as equal partners, each reinforcing the other, and effectively avoiding the domination of one movement’s influence.
In addition, the convergence of these three movements meld a variety of specific contributions attributed to past planners. The greenbelt each town supports, devoted to preserving wildlife and agriculture, is connected to Ebenezer Howard’s Garden City model. The garden city, like Ave Maria and Celebration, represents the magnetic union of town and country, and emphasizes the importance of integrating nature into physical development. The governance of each town rests in the trust of the residents, a system in line with Howard’s self-sufficient ideals.

The two Floridian new towns also provide a refuge for those escaping the isolation that has come to qualify the conventional settlement patterns, offering instead a place designed to encourage a conscious, cohesive community. The formation of places of refuge was also a part of the Garden City model and the Plat of Zion, a city plan laid out by the Mormon religious group. Finally, the integration of New Urbanism, a movement recently formalized, is a natural extension of much of the work in new towns that was completed in the 1920s by John Nolen. Ave Maria and Celebration promote Nolen’s belief that successful community building rests on civic presence. Each town provides spaces and buildings where community members can interact to solidify connections, and strengthen a sense of membership in the town.

The fact that Celebration’s construction began twelve years before Ave Maria broke ground, as well as the close geographic proximity between the towns, leads to the question of whether the former influenced the latter. Celebration’s design process included an intensive study of well-planned towns, many of them located in the south. Rather than focusing on the southern region in general or Celebration in specific, planners and architects involved in the master planning process for Ave Maria indicated
that the town’s design was heavily influenced by the architecture and physical layout predominant in European towns that were centered around a one place of worship.

In this section the initial expectations regarding the comparative case study will be evaluated against the findings discussed earlier in this chapter. The first expectation was that the overall land use allocations and the physical components of each town would exhibit a direct connection with the vision behind each community. In Celebration this connection is present in the integration of residential homes, educational facilities, commercial space, civic buildings, and open space in the form of walking trails. These areas and uses serve to de-compartmentalize resident social interaction, and establish the self-sufficiency of a town. Furthermore, a new level of social interaction is simulated in the physical arrangement of homes in many parts of the town. This lack of income segmentation in addition to the orientation of neighborhoods around a shared park encourages increased levels of social behavior that disregard standard living patterns.

In addition to residential, commercial and open space, Ave Maria’s land use allocations include specific allotments for the Oratory and Ave Maria University. The Catholic University was the immediate impetus for the Town’s creation, and the Oratory was designated as the place of community worship. The importance of integrating these two physical components was established from the onset, establishing a connection between the vision and the physical components of the town.

The second expectation is that the utilization of New Urbanist principles is evident in the guidelines for each town center’s design. The analysis that was conducted on select, significant design guidelines in Celebration’s Town Center and Ave Maria’s Town Core revealed a correlation between SmartCode recommendations and
requirements concerning building scale, streets and parking, and civic space that were established for the Town Center in Celebration and the Town Core in Ave Maria. The analysis revealed that at minimum, each intentional community, had established a common design language for building disposition, building function, density, and pedestrian sidewalks.

The final expectation was that the character of use and architectural style predominant in each community’s town center will form an identity that expresses the overall intention of the Town. While the common design language provides an important foundation for each town centers’ basic building blocks, the variation in architectural style and character of use are the elements that form the distinct identity of each town. The Town Core in Ave Maria and the Town Center in Celebration both represent a “return to the agora,” providing a centrally located place where the concentration and mixture of uses designed to fulfill resident needs draws members of the community to these areas to meet, gather and converse with each other. In Ave Maria this conversation is influenced by the presence of the Oratory, the Catholic Church that is the centerpiece of both the Town Core and the Town as a whole.

The Oratory’s architectural style combines historic church forms and contemporary influences. Its physical form establishes the shape of the central roadway and the background buildings in the Town Core. In addition, all the major streets in the town radiate out from this structure. The plaza which extends outward from the Oratory connects Ave Maria University to the Town Core, emphasizing the themes of Catholic education and worship. The size of the Oratory, which stands at one-hundred feet, makes it a town landmark that is visible from miles away. The Town Core is dominated by this
religious use, an assertion that was evident in the consecration of the Oratory. This consecration transformed the secular structure into a Catholic place of worship. This event was the most widely attended event held in the Town Core.

The design of the town hall, post office, preview center, and cinema provide Celebration’s Town Center with a set of iconic buildings that are unique to the town. The landmark status of these structures contributes to Celebration’s distinctive identity. The outdoor mailboxes in the post office were specifically added to create another opportunity for social interaction, and the drive through on the bank was omitted for the same reason. The role of the lakefront plaza’s as a ‘secondary porch’ makes the lake an amenity accessible to everyone in the town. Celebration has become famous for its family oriented town events, and the area around the lakefront sets the stage for many of these family oriented town events. The events held in the town center are so essential to the social intentions of the town, that when Disney transferred the management of the Town Center to Lexin Capital in 2004, one of Lexin’s contractual obligations included the continued sponsorship of Town Center events.

**Directions for Future Research**

The case study of Ave Maria, in particular, presents a large span of research possibilities due to its recent inception. The progression of this thesis mirrored the real-time development of this community in many ways. The completion of successive phases of physical development in Ave Maria will bring provide additional opportunities for new research contributions in the areas of new town planning and intentional communities.
This thesis touched upon marketing campaigns for each of the towns, however, a comprehensive study of all of the advertising efforts associated with Celebration and Ave Maria would provide additional insight into the connections between the visionary influences behind the each town and the targeted population. The passage of time will also advance opportunities to examine the settlers of each community through different lenses, such as the degree to which residents expectations were fulfilled. While Celebration has been established for thirteen years, Ave Maria’s first settlers have not yet lived in the town for twelve months. The results of Quality of Life surveys administered to Celebration residents were used to evaluate the extent to which residents believed that the design of the town encouraged social involvement. Similar survey research could be completed in Ave Maria in order to determine if and how the design of the town impacts the experience of a faith community.

The addition of time will also bring the addition of new land uses, including the possibility of complementary town centers. An evaluation of these town centers in relation to the original Town Core of Ave Maria and Town Center of Celebration will renew an understanding of each area’s relevance and role. The workplace attraction is also an example of an element of the initial development application that has not been implemented in Celebration. The inclusion of an attraction in the town would present an opportunity for research on the mitigation of tourist interests. There has also been speculation that Ave Maria will draw religious tourists because of the Oratory, recently recognized as a Catholic Church. Research on each town’s strategic approach to addressing the private needs of the residents and the desire of the public to experience
elements of the community would offer another point of connection between the towns’
evolution and the original vision.

A broader look at the use of New Urbanism as a community development strategy
in the State of Florida could illuminate the linkages between design and behavior. The
research conducted as part of this thesis revealed a pattern of partnerships between
developers, architects, homebuilders, and planners involved in New Urbanist projects in
Florida. Clearly, the nature of this involvement signals a demand for communities that
institute these principles within the state. Research that examines a larger number of these
projects would assist in defining this success. In addition, Ave Maria and Celebration are
only two examples of many new towns that have been established in Florida in the past
twenty eight years. An examination of new towns and the statutory framework that is
responsible for their creation could have wider implications for a greater understanding of
Florida’s growth management measures.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX B
THE HOMES OF CELEBRATION
APPENDIX C

AVE MARIA LAND USE BREAKDOWN
## APPENDIX E

### DESIGN MATRIX

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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>Forecourt</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Stoop</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopfront &amp; Awning</td>
<td>Permitted</td>
<td>Not Adressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Permitted</td>
</tr>
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<td>Gallery</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arcade</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Permitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Travel Lane Width</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-25 mph</td>
<td>9 feet</td>
<td>11 ft. Market Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-35 mph</td>
<td>10 feet</td>
<td>10 ft. Anunciation Circle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-35 mph</td>
<td>11 feet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 35 mph</td>
<td>12 feet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parking Lane Width</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-25 mph (Angle)</td>
<td>18 feet</td>
<td>45º Angle: 9 x 12; 60º Angle: 9 x 10; 90º 9 x 9 9 ft. wide x 18 ft. long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-25 mph (Parallel)</td>
<td>7 feet</td>
<td>8 ft. wide x 20 ft. long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-35 mph (Parallel)</td>
<td>8 feet</td>
<td>8 ft. wide x 22 ft. long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 35 mph (Parallel)</td>
<td>9 feet</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sidewalks</strong></td>
<td>6 ft. Street (ST-60-34)</td>
<td>6 ft. Market Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-existent</td>
<td>6 ft. Width on Anunciation Circle; (5 ft. elsewhere in Tcore)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Required Parking</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>1.0/dwelling*</td>
<td>Single Family: 2.0/d.u.; Multi Family 3 + bedroom: 2/d.u.; Multi-family 2 bedroom: 1.5/d.u.; Multi-family 1 bedroom: 1.25 d.u.; Multi-family efficiency: 1/d.u.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lodging</td>
<td>1.0/bedroom*</td>
<td>Apartment: 1.0/d.u.; Condo/Townhouse: 2.0/d.u.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>2.0/1000 sq ft*</td>
<td>2/1,000 sq. ft. 1.7 spaces/1,000 sq. ft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>3.0/1000 sq ft*</td>
<td>2/1,000 sq. ft. 1.9 spaces/1,000 sq. ft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic</td>
<td>TBD*</td>
<td>2/1,000 sq. ft. 1.5 spaces/1,000 sq. ft</td>
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<td><strong>CIVIC SPACE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Type</td>
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<tr>
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<td>In context</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Square</td>
<td>In context</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plaza</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playground</td>
<td>In context</td>
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### APPENDIX F

#### ALLOWABLE USES MATRIX

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>T5</th>
<th>CELEBRATION TOWN CENTER</th>
<th>AVE MARIA TOWN</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Residential</strong></td>
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<td>Apartment Building</td>
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<tr>
<td>Row house</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duplex house</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sideyard house</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cottage</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
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<tr>
<td>Estate house</td>
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<td>Accessory unit</td>
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<td>Manufactured house</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lodging</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hotel (no room limit)</td>
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<td>Hotel (up to 12 rooms)</td>
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<td>S.R.O. hostel</td>
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<td>School dormitory</td>
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<td><strong>Office</strong></td>
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<td>Office building</td>
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<td>Work live unit</td>
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<td><strong>Retail</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Open-market building</td>
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<td>Retail building</td>
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<td>Outdoor auditorium</td>
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<td>Playground</td>
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<td>Fountain or Public art</td>
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<td>Parking structure</td>
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134
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<th>Category</th>
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