

The AIA's 10 Principles for Livable Communities

1



Design on a Human Scale

Compact, pedestrian-friendly communities allow residents to walk to shops, services, cultural resources, and jobs and can reduce traffic congestion and benefit people's health.

2



Provide Choices

People want variety in housing, shopping, recreation, transportation, and employment. Variety creates lively neighborhoods and accommodates residents in different stages of their lives.

3



Encourage Mixed-Use Development

Integrating different land uses and varied building types creates vibrant, pedestrian-friendly and diverse communities.

4



Preserve Urban Centers

Restoring, revitalizing, and infilling urban centers takes advantage of existing streets, services and buildings and avoids the need for new infrastructure. This helps to curb sprawl and promote stability for city neighborhoods.

5



Vary Transportation Options

Giving people the option of walking, biking and using public transit, in addition to driving, reduces traffic congestion, protects the environment and encourages physical activity.

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7



Create a Neighborhood Identity

A “sense of place” gives neighborhoods a unique character, enhances the walking environment, and creates pride in the community.

9



Conserve Landscapes

Open space, farms, and wildlife habitat are essential for environmental, recreational, and cultural reasons.

6



Build Vibrant Public Spaces

Citizens need welcoming, well-defined public places to stimulate face-to-face interaction, collectively celebrate and mourn, encourage civic participation, admire public art, and gather for public events.

8



Protect Environmental Resources

A well-designed balance of nature and development preserves natural systems, protects waterways from pollution, reduces air pollution, and protects property values.

10



Design Matters

Design excellence is the foundation of successful and healthy communities.



1. Existing Conditions.

Design Alternatives for a “big box” development



2. Good sidewalks create an environment where people feel comfortable walking.



3. First floor commercial uses contribute to street life. Parking is integrated within the block.

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Design alternatives for a “big box” development, courtesy Benjamin Lee, FAIA



4. Articulated frontages and appropriate landscaping define successful public spaces.