



# Planning Implementation Tools Traditional Neighborhood Design



Center for Land Use Education

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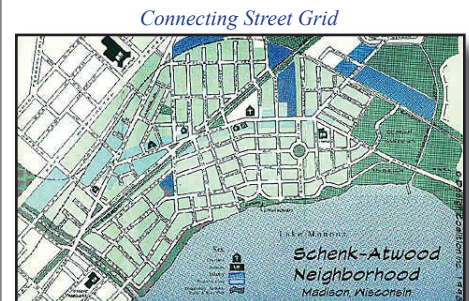
## TOOL DESCRIPTION

The Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning law defines Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) to mean: A compact, mixed use neighborhood where residential, commercial and civic buildings are within close proximity to each other. It is a planning concept based on traditional small towns and city neighborhoods. The variety of uses permits educational facilities, civic buildings and commercial establishments to be located within walking distance of private homes. A TND is served by a network of paths, streets and lanes designed for pedestrians as well as vehicles. Residents have the option of walking, biking or driving to places within their neighborhood. Potential future modes of transit are also considered during the planning stages. Public and private spaces have equal importance, creating a balanced community that serves a wide range of home and business owners. The inclusion of civic buildings and civic space such as plazas, greens, parks and squares enhances community identity and value. Such neighborhoods allow the efficient use of public resources and can help preserve the historic and architectural character of the community.

## Potential Uses

- ◆ Walkable neighborhoods
- ◆ Reduced use of automobiles
- ◆ Revitalization of historic areas
- ◆ Increased neighborhood vitality
- ◆ Housing variety
- ◆ Mixed use neighborhoods
- ◆ Meet market demand

*Figure 1. Schrenk-Atwood neighborhood in Madison, WI is an old neighborhood that exemplifies the components of a traditional neighborhood.*



*Diversity and Density – Schoeps Ice Cream Factory and Residences*



*Institutions – Atwood Community Center*



*Walkable size – Marquette Elementary School*



*Parks and Community Places*



*Transportation Choices – Bike Path*



*Business Core*



## IMPLEMENTATION

### TND Design Principals

A traditional neighborhood:

- ◆ Is compact with a discernable center;
- ◆ Is designed for the human scale with buildings placed closer to the street and a variety of gathering places.
- ◆ Provides a mix of uses, including residential, commercial, civic, and a variety of open space uses in close proximity to one another within the neighborhood;
- ◆ Provides a mix of housing styles, types, and sizes to accommodate households of all ages, sizes, and incomes;
- ◆ Incorporates a system of relatively narrow, shaded, interconnected streets with sidewalks, bikeways, and transit that offer multiple routes for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists and provides for the connections of those streets to existing and future developments;
- ◆ Retains existing buildings or creates new buildings with historical or architectural features that enhance the visual character of the community;
- ◆ Incorporates significant environmental features into the design;
- ◆ Reserves prominent sites and vistas for significant buildings or features
- ◆ Has an elementary school close enough so that most children can walk from their homes.
- ◆ Places parking lots and garage doors away from the fronts of the street
- ◆ Should be organized to be self-governing
- ◆ Is consistent with the community's comprehensive plan.

Adapted from information obtained from the Village of Sun Prairie

### CREATION

To use this tool, communities will need to adopt a TND ordinance or include appropriate language in an existing ordinance to allow the development and redevelopment of land consistent with the design principles of traditional neighborhoods.

The Comprehensive Planning Law for Wisconsin requires communities over 12,500 in population to enact a specific TND ordinance. UW Extension has created a sample ordinance that communities can adapt to their particular situation. (see section "For More Information, page 4)

The Wisconsin law does not require communities to map the ordinance. This allows the ordinance to be treated as a zoning district designation, an overlay zone, a floating zone or as a modified approach to Planned Unit Development (PUD).

### ADMINISTRATION

Municipalities need to develop an efficient and expedited review process for traditional neighborhood developments that encourages developers to use the ordinance. Long approval processes make this type of development cost-prohibitive. Implementation is similar to the process for other developments:

1. An initial conference to discuss the proposal and appropriate procedures.
2. Submittal and approval of a "General Implementation Plan" and request for a zoning map amendment to a "Traditional Neighborhood Development District". The plan should contain:
  - a. A general location map
  - b. A site inventory and analysis
  - c. A conceptual site plan
  - d. A conceptual storm water management plan
  - e. Identification of the architectural style(s) of the TND and the accompanying site design style(s).
  - f. A written report that provides general information about the covenants, conservation easements, or agreements which will influence the use and maintenance of the proposed development.
3. Submittal and approval of a "Final Implementation Plan" containing:
  - a. Final site and stormwater plan
  - b. Detailed elevations of all proposed commercial buildings and typical elevations of residential buildings
  - c. A utilities plan
  - d. Phasing plans, where applicable

# Report Card: Traditional Neighborhood Design

<b>Cost</b>	<b>Money or staff resources required to implement tool.</b>
<b>B</b>	TND will require additional staff time for design review. If this time is too excessive, developers may find this tool cost-prohibitive. Developers will incur increased cost in upfront design work but can recoup that expense in lower infrastructure cost.
<b>Public Acceptance</b>	<b>The public's positive or negative perception of the tool.</b>
<b>B</b>	The public may be concerned about the impact of increased density on property values. They do appreciate the walkability of the neighborhoods and the nearness of services.
<b>Political Acceptance</b>	<b>Politician's willingness to implement tool.</b>
<b>B</b>	It is critical for elected officials, planning commission members and zoning boards to understand the concept and goals of this type of development. They can make it cost prohibitive for developers if they don't (the approval process takes too long).
<b>Equity</b>	<b>Fairness to stakeholders regarding who incurs costs and consequences.</b>
<b>B</b>	TND improves the quality of life for all but may not be perceived that way unless neighbors understand the concept. Amenities and demand may make them too expensive for some unless accommodations are made for low income housing.
<b>Administration</b>	<b>Level of complexity to manage, maintain, enforce, and monitor the tool.</b>
<b>B</b>	With a streamlined approval process, it is no more difficult to administer than any other subdivision ordinance. Municipal staff will need to be trained in this design approach to make it efficient.
<b>Scale</b>	<b>The geographic scale at which tool is best implemented.</b>
<b>Municipal</b>	This is best implemented within individual communities though collaboration between neighboring communities would be possible if their ordinances were consistent.

## GRADING EXPLANATION

A - Excellent  
B - Above Average

C - Average  
D - Below Average

F - Failing

Figure 2. Liberty Square, Sun Prairie

Townhouses



Single family



## WISCONSIN EXAMPLES

### Sun Prairie's TND Neighborhoods:

The City of Sun Prairie currently has three large traditional neighborhoods under development as well as one smaller housing project strongly influenced by TND design concepts. One of them, Liberty Square, is a 140-acre, 680-unit TND. Liberty Square will contain a wide range of housing types including single-family homes on varying lot sizes, several different multi-family housing options, and senior housing facilities. The development will also include a neighborhood scale town center commercial area, several small parks and open spaces, connecting trails and a new neighborhood park for residents in the area. Additional information about SunPrairie's TND developments can be found on the city's website at: <http://www.cityofsunprairie.com>



OFFICE	ROWHOUSES/CONDO FLATS
COMMERCIAL/RETAIL	TOWNHOUSE CONDOS
APARTMENTS	POTENTIAL CHURCH/SCHOOL/DAYCARE
SENIOR APARTMENTS	TWIN HOMES
SENIOR ASSISTED LIVING	SINGLE FAMILY HOMES

Senior Apartments



### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Virtual TND Tours. Take a "stroll" through some of the most popular TNDs nationwide, arranged by state. Just click on the TND's name. <http://www.tndhomes.com/tours.htm>.

Barnett, Jonathan (2003). *Redesigning Cities - Principles, Practice, Implementation*. Planners Press, American Planning Association, Washington, D.C.

Langdon, Phillip (1999). *New Development, Traditional Pattern*. Planning Commissioners Journal. Article 305, Issue 36

Ohm, Brian W., James A. LaGro, Jr., Chuck Strawser (2001). *A Model Ordinance for Traditional Neighborhood Development*. University of Wisconsin Extension. Available at <http://www.wisc.edu/urpl/people/ohm/projects/tndord.pdf>

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