

Duany, Andres, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Jeff Speck. Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl + The Decline of the American Dream. New York: North Point Press, 2000. Print.

urban/rural transition is reserved for the outer edge of the entire collection of neighborhoods.

In addition to this radial organization, the neighborhood also possesses a Cartesian substructure, as shown at left. The larger streets that lead to the center divide the neighborhood into quadrants, each of which is sized to be the independent realm of the small child. As such, each is equipped with nothing but the slowest roads, and contains a local "pocket park"—often no bigger than a single house lot—located within a three-minute walk of every dwelling. The neighborhood thus grants freedom of motion and a certain degree of autonomy even to its youngest citizens.

#### MAKING TRANSIT WORK

The neighborhood structure is naturally suited for public transit, be it light rail, trolleys, buses, or jitneys. But there are also three rules that transit must follow in order to appeal to users, regardless of the urban framework:

1. *Transit must be frequent and predictable.* The challenge is not to prove this obvious principle but to create a transit system in which frequency is economically viable. This objective can be achieved only at certain densities; studies suggest that a minimum of seven units per acre is necessary if transit is to be self-supporting. For lower densities, the careful organization of neighborhood centers, to be served by smaller vehicles, can result in a successful net-

\*The conventional wisdom among transit analysts is that a minimum of seven dwellings per acre is needed to support bus service every thirty minutes, and fifteen units per acre can support bus service every ten minutes (Joint Center for Environmental and Urban Problems, *Florida's Mobility Primer*, 38).

work. This network, however, would likely require financial support.

2. *Transit must follow a route that is direct and logical.* Riders shy away from transit systems in which the path is not efficient and easy to understand conceptually. Anyone who has ever taken a shared hotel bus to the airport knows how intolerable an uncertain, zigzagging route can be. Yet bus routes often dogleg interminably. The desire for a trustworthy, unchanging route is one factor that helps explain riders' preference for light rail over buses.

3. *The transit stop must be safe, dry, and dignified.* In most suburban communities, transit passengers are made to feel like impoverished transients, waiting by the side of the road on a graffiti-covered bench or inside an ungainly plastic bubble. No wonder, then, that the only people who take the bus are those who have no choice, creating a self-perpetuating underclass ridership. In contrast, the structure of the traditional neighborhood offers the possibility of a transit experience that is both comfortable and civilized. When the transit stop is located at the neighborhood center, next to the corner store or the café, the commuter has the opportunity to wait for the bus or trolley indoors with a cup of coffee and a newspaper, with some measure of comfort and dignity. For this condition to occur with regularity, transit routes and urban plans must be developed in concert. Ideally, transit authorities should also work directly with shop owners, who typically welcome the extra business that a transit stop can generate.

#### THE STREETS

We have already discussed pavement width, but we must be more specific. On well-traveled streets within a neighborhood, there is no