

11.001J/4.250J: Introduction to Urban Design and Development

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Exercise 2

Due: Thursday, April 6 in class

New Towns: The Past and the Present

In the 20th Century, new towns in the United States grew out of the Garden City movement in England. Ebenezer Howard's concept of the Three Magnets and the Town-Country ideal shaped new towns such as Radburn, New Jersey (1928), Sunnyside Gardens, Queens, NY (1924), and the Greenbelt Cities of the 1930's. Over time, the new town movement in the U.S. shifted focus. After World War II, new towns such as Columbia, Maryland (1960's) and Reston, VA (1960's) grew of age in suburban America. Today, we have new towns such as Summerlin, Las Vegas in Nevada—a new town for approximately 200,000 people.

For this exercise, you are asked to **analyze and compare Radburn, New Jersey to Summerlin, Las Vegas**. As it isn't practical to visit each community (our funds are limited for these kinds of things), you will compare the two communities using statements of the founders/developers, promotional literature, images (drawings and photographs) and possibly newspaper and/or website accounts. You are asked to address the following series of questions:

1. What can you say about the differing structures/organization of these new towns based on available maps, plans and images? Consider differences in:
 - a. built form
 - b. mix of land uses
 - c. street layout
 - d. size of property lots
 - e. treatment of the public realm
 - f. treatment of the automobile and/or public transportation
2. What are the similarities between these new towns based on available maps, plans and images?
3. Using promotional literature, developer/designer comments and other available writings, discuss your understanding of the explicit philosophy/ideas of the towns' founders/developers regarding "community." Consider:
 - a. What or who makes a community? Is anyone excluded?
 - b. Who is targeted in the promotional literature or writings?
 - c. How important are the physical characteristics to making a "community?"

4. Using promotional literature and/or images and maps, discuss your understanding of any implicit assumptions regarding “community.” How do these assumptions reveal themselves?

Requirements:

- You must do this assignment alone, although you may certainly discuss your impressions and ideas with classmates.
- Your response should directly address the questions being posed and should be between five and seven double-spaced typed pages. Graphic material is a very helpful tool to document and convey some of the details of your analysis; visual documentation of your environments **MUST** be included in the form of maps and images. These visual materials **DO NOT** count toward the page limit, unless they happen to be very heavily annotated.
- Please use the websites for the two communities as a starting point:

www.radburn.org
www.summerlin.com

Secrets to Success:

- Some thoughts on paper structure and writing techniques:
 - Please have an introduction and conclusion to your paper. Your paper should have a logical sequence.
 - Ensure that you address all the questions posed in this assignment
 - Please cite all sources, including web sources
 - Label all maps, illustrations and sketches with “Fig. 1”, “Fig. 2”, etc.
 - Be concise.
 - Avoid wordy sentences and imprecise statements i.e. “many, various factors.” Be precise in your descriptions.