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Duany: Apply New Urbanism to affordable housing

Orlando Business Journal - January 13, 2006 by [Jill Krueger](#) Staff Writer
New Urbanism is gaining the upper hand in community design.

That's the message Andrew Duany, a founding principal of **Duany Plater-Zyberk & Co.** and one of the leaders of the New Urbanism movement, delivered during the second annual Congress for the New Urbanism Florida Statewide Meeting at Rollins College in downtown Winter Park on Friday.

Duany, in fact, wants to see New Urbanism design concepts adapted for use in everything from rebuilding the Gulf Coast areas devastated by Hurricane Katrina in 2005 to low-income housing.

If that's done, Duany says, "The whole lower end of housing may be positively affected."

Duany says he was asked by the governor of Mississippi last year to come up with design guidelines on how to rebuild 11 cities in Mississippi devastated by Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

As part of an eight-day blitz, Duany invited 110 planners to come up with a redevelopment plan for 120 miles of coast based on the New Urbanism movement's principles: more pedestrian-friendly communities connected to more efficient transit, without suburban sprawl.

Duany became what he called "the general of the regiments" and rallied the designers to draft plans to rebuild infrastructure, housing and transportation in Mississippi.

The result: 18 reports to facilitate the Mississippi Gulf Coast's rebuilding efforts using New Urbanism design principles.

"This was noticed by our opponents," says Duany.

The CNU subsequently received criticism from the American Institute of Architects, the Los Angeles Times and anti-New Urbanists.

Among the concerns: New Urbanism brings sameness where old, distinctive cities like New Orleans would prefer to preserve their historic charm; it's not as affordable as other types of architecture at a time when rising home prices have exceeded cost-of-living increases for the poor and middle class in certain parts of the country; and not everyone prefers that architectural style.

Despite the criticisms, Duany told the Rollins College crowd he remains upbeat about the future of New Urbanism.

The challenge going forward, he says, will be in having so much demand within the movement over the next five years, that there won't enough experts to meet that demand.

That's why, Duany says, he has asked CNU members to increase their knowledge on New Urbanism and step up to the challenge.

"I want to put in front of you your duty to become experts," Duany says.

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