

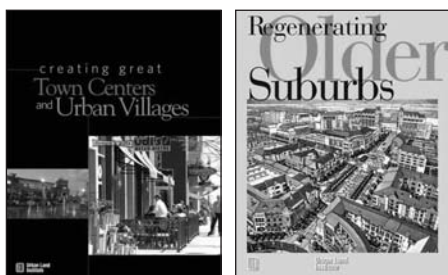
RECOMMENDED READING

Updating the Corporate Library

Creating Great Town Centers and Urban Villages, by Prema Katari Gupta and Kathryn Terzano
(Urban Land Institute, ©2008)

Regenerating Older Suburbs, edited by Richard B. Peiser with Adrienne Schmitz
(Urban Land Institute, ©2007)

REVIEWED BY MAURA M. COCHRAN, CRE, AND PETER L. HOLLAND, CRE



WE RECENTLY OBSERVED that the overall utility and quality of the resource books that we use in our practice have improved in recent years. We should know: Bartram & Cochran’s library has tomes going back as many as fifty years. While some dusty volumes will always remain as must-haves (you never know when you are going to need *Ellwood Tables* or *Friedman on Leases*), others are simply coffee table books, more useful as paperweights, but without substance. Others still are esoteric and academic to the extent that they have limited practical use to us as real estate and business advisors.

Over the past several months, our assignments have required us to research urban and inner-ring suburban renewal projects. Our work required recent, innovative and successful case studies. We also needed compelling graphics so that our clients could quickly “get it,” and enough substance for us to develop and refine our own analysis.

Two books published by the Urban Land Institute proved very useful in this process: *Creating Great Town Centers and Urban Villages*, Prema Katari Gupta and Kathryn Terzano, ULI 2008, and *Regenerating Older Suburbs*,

edited by Richard B. Peiser with Adrienne Schmitz, ULI 2007. Together, they present the “ying and yang” of renewal—namely, case studies of urban areas striving to be more suburban, and suburban areas striving to be more urban. Before these two books arrived in our office, we spent many hours (not always productive) researching appropriate case studies. The ULI publications by comparison were targeted to our needs and provided both detailed and accurate information.

Creating Great Town Centers and Urban Villages has four sections: an Introduction that sets the stage for under-

About the Reviewers



marketing plans and corporate relocation assignments.

Maura M. Cochran, CRE, SIOR, joined Bartram & Cochran, Inc. in 1987 and has worked in the commercial real estate industry for more than thirty years. She practices both national and local consulting and project implementation, including due diligence analysis, adaptive reuse studies,



joining CoreNet, Holland served as senior vice president for Hartford Financial Services. He has more than 25 years of experience consulting Fortune 100 and not-for-profit organizations in the field of real estate.

Peter L. Holland, CRE, is a principal with the Hartford, Connecticut-based real estate advisory firm of Bartram & Cochran, Inc. Previously, he served as COO and CFO of CoreNet Global, where he formed part of the thought leadership of the profession and had day-to-day responsibility for the strategic direction, finances and operations of the organization. Before

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standing changing attitudes; Development Trends (the integration of civic anchors, non-boutique retail, offices and hotels); Development Principals (which summarizes a 2006 ULI publication *Ten Principles to Developing Successful Town Centers*); and fourteen individual case studies.

While it is hard to identify any one section as the most relevant, the case studies (which run about eight pages each) stand out for their direct practical usefulness. The case studies detailed the history of the development, site plan, tenant mix and lessons learned. The project data sheets provided the types of tenants, broken down by square footage and number of establishment/units, the development costs and schedule, as well as the entire development team's (developer, master planner, architect(s) and landscape architect and construction firm) location, Web site, as well as the projects. The contact information was particularly helpful. We contacted a number of the developers, architects and planners and were able to interview members of the development teams. Mentioning that we saw a reference to a project in ULI's book gave us an immediate entry and resulted in return calls and productive informative interviews.

The premise of *Regenerating Older Suburbs* is that while inner-city neighborhoods—the most distressed area of the city—have been the recipient of significant study, analysis and funding, the neighborhoods beyond them have been largely ignored by policymakers and developers. However, older first-ring suburbs have many of the problems typically associated with our country's more urban areas.

The book initially was conceived as a monograph funded by a grant from the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors to Richard Peiser during a 2003 sabbatical. Peiser serves on the faculty of Harvard University's Department of Urban Planning and Design. The book eventually evolved into fourteen chapters, each of which

was contributed by a distinguished author. The book is well organized and is an easy reference tool, being divided into three major sections with helpful subdivisions. In all, ten case studies are provided. We, as well, often find case studies to be repetitive, however, those selected for this book were varied and covered international and domestic locations and a range of issues that the communities and developers were required to confront. As there are different authors for each of the chapters, the chapters are not entirely uniform in content. For example, one case study provided a three-page pro-forma, while others provided taxable sales index charts, a survey that had been sent to real estate professionals, or a listed policy incentive for economic development. This variation is actually a benefit in that each chapter delivers something new to the reader.

The case studies included a development in a “distressed” area (pre-war inner-ring suburb of London); four locations with average economic conditions and three that were ranked as “good to superior”—one of which is the Forbidden City in Beijing.

The book's final chapter presents Peiser's own thoughtful conclusions. No doubt drawing on his years of academic experience, he extracts useful observations from the case studies and we are left with new insights and an effective summary.

Both books are illustrative of the other high quality publications prepared and issued by ULI. These two books in particular merit a place in your own research library for consulting engagements. New urbanism, public/private partnerships, smart growth, and transportation centric development are all daily words in our vocabulary. Case studies such as presented in these two resources will serve to inform even seasoned practitioners with new ideas and new ways to help clients. ■