

The Next Generation of New Urbanists

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While the founders of New Urbanism are still going strong, a new organization is connecting the next generation of leaders of the movement.

August 25, 2003, 12am PDT | [Brian Wright](#)



During the past twenty years the New Urbanism has changed the face of planning in the US and abroad. The Founders and Pioneers of New Urbanism, its "Founding Generation", have taken New Urbanism to the forefront of planning and have solidly established the foundation, principles and methods necessary to move New Urbanism into the future. And while the Founders and Pioneers already have accomplished much over the last two decades, they are still in the primes of their careers -- owing to the fact that they organized themselves and refined their ideas when many of them were in their late twenties and early thirties.

I have been thinking for a while about how critical the Founding Generation is to New Urbanism and wondering how the following generations will be able to continue their success. Recently during the 15th anniversary Kentlands charrette where original team members, Leon Krier and those of us who work in DPZ's Washington, D.C. office, planned for the next 15 years in the evolution of Kentlands, we were shown photographs from the first charrette. As I looked at the pictures from the first charrette, it occurred to me that Andres Duany, my boss and one of the founders of the New Urbanism, was only a few years older than I am now when he headed the Kentlands design team, and Mike Watkins, the director of DPZ's D.C. office, my other boss, arrived at the charrette as a volunteer at the same age I am today. I realized that the idea of the Next Generation needed to be turned into action to help assure the continuation of the incredible successes of the Founding Generation.

I encourage you to consider the Manifesto of the Next Generation (below) and if you find it to be of interest, contact me so that we can add you to the membership.

About two weeks ago, Andres, in the uncanny way he stays ahead of the game, posted a poignant quote on the PROURB Listserve. I found this quote fitting for the introduction of the Next Generation. This quote should be significant to anyone who is interested in the concept of a generational movement of New Urbanists, striving to be good stewards of the New Urbanism, and working to make certain that the future of the movement that they hold dear continues on the course established by the Founding Generation:

"Youth is not a period of life, it is a condition of the spirit, a result of the will, a quality of the imagination, an intensity of emotion, a victory of courage over timidity, a taste for adventure over comfort. One becomes old when one abandons one's ideals."

Douglas Mac Arthur 1945
(Posted in a bathroom in rural Belgium)

We trust that New Urbanists in all stages of their careers will support the Next Generation. Please feel free to offer suggestions, advice or critique.

Sincerely,
W. Brian Wright C.N.U.
The Next Generation

Manifesto of the Next Generation

August 25, 2003

I. The Need

If the development and success of the New Urbanism and its Charter are to be sustainable and their current level of precision, clarity and efficacy are to be expanded upon, it is up to the Next Generation of New Urbanists to be prepared for that challenge. If we, as young professionals and students of the New Urbanism, do not take it upon ourselves to prepare for that challenge, we will not be ready to move New Urbanism forward when the time comes to do so. In order to do that, we need a means to bridge the gap between the Founding Generation and those that are coming into the movement today or have come in to it in the past few years. The Next Generation is being organized to address this challenge and facilitate efforts to assist in achieving it. The Next Generation will help assure that future generations will be equally influential in making the world in which we live a better place.

II. The Elements

- A. The Next Generation is being organized as a two-tiered organization. The first tier consists of young professionals of all disciplines. There is no age restriction per se, but the anticipated young professional participant might be in the first half of his or her career.
- B. The second tier in the Next Generation is the students. The proliferation of chapters of the Students for New Urbanism around the country in the past year is a strong indicator that young people are now, more than ever, being exposed to New Urbanism at an early time. Students that have identified themselves as New Urbanists need access to professionals in the top New Urbanist firms and the best resources available.

The Next Generation provides for a natural collaboration of young professionals with students, in which any student that wishes has the opportunity to be mentored by young professionals. Although young professionals are still learning, they have valuable insight to offer students who are just starting in the world of New Urbanism.

While it is important for the Next Generation to have the initiative and drive to advance the New Urbanism, an important component of the Next Generation is collaboration with the current leaders and practitioners. It is imperative that the founders and pioneers, our bosses and

colleagues, recognize the importance of the Next Generation and share their knowledge, experience and ideas while working closely with the Next Generation to advance the New Urbanism. The success of the Next Generation will be accelerated by those with more experience and wisdom providing guidance, advice, challenges and assistance in opening doors.

The Next Generation looks forward to support from the [CNU](#) and its Board of Directors. The Next Generation believes that there should be a member of the young professional constituency of the Next Generation on the CNU Board. This new board member would offer the unique perspective of the young professional, provide visibility for this important element of the CNU and act as a liaison between the Board and the young professionals. In the same way that it is important for the CNU student board member to represent the student component, it is equally important to have representation of the young professionals. We trust that the CNU Board and membership will take an interest not only in the ideas that the Next Generation can offer but also in the opportunity it presents for the Founding Generation to groom the Next Generation.

III. The Goals

The ultimate goal of the Next Generation is to ensure the continuing success of the New Urbanism and its Charter by preparing its members for the future. The Next Generation will become well equipped to take on this responsibility by following the Charter and the models provided by the Founding Generation. It is the intention of the Next Generation to advance the New Urbanism through scholarship, advocacy, educational efforts, hard work and tireless championing of the cause, continuing the positive and open working environment that is prevalent among New Urbanists today.

IV. The Implementation

An email Listserve has been established through which national and international exchange of ideas, planning and organizational matters can be communicated and discussed. The Next Generation intends to utilize to its advantage all of the high tech capabilities for which it is known, such as web pages and teleconferencing, to spread its message and attract new young professionals and students to the New Urbanism. There will be an annual council of the Next Generation, at which young professionals and students have an opportunity to present their work, ideas and vision for the future. This council will be open to participants of all levels of experience, with the Founders and Pioneers in attendance for support, mentoring, interaction and to learn what the Next Generation is thinking and doing.

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from Auburn University. Brian and his wife Emily lived in Kentlands for a year before moving to the adjacent community of Lakelands, both DPZ projects.