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## Book Review

# Sprawl Repair Manual

Galina Tachieva

*Island Press, Washington DC, 2010, 300pp., profusely illustrated. \$90.00, ISBN: 978-1597267311 (hardcover); \$45.00, ISBN: 978-1597267328 (paperback)*

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By now, most people familiar with or actively involved in the built environment – such as professional planners, designers, developers, regulators and concerned citizens – know that despite recognizing that sprawl is wasteful, inefficient and unsustainable, it continues to be the growth pattern across the United States and in many other countries. The obvious question arises: Is it possible to repair sprawling suburbs so that they become more livable and sustainable communities? This book addresses this question and the repair strategy is designed to achieve communities based on the neighborhood unit, similar to the traditional fabric that was established in towns and cities before World War II.

The author identifies chronologically three types of suburbs: pre-war suburbs, post-war suburbs and the late-twentieth century exurbs. Although the pre-war suburbs are often complete communities, the latter two abandoned the pedestrian neighborhood structure in favor of dispersion that was facilitated by the automobile. This manual demonstrates how growing housing demand can be achieved by the intensification of sprawling developments in the second and third types of suburbs, especially near places with the potential for transit. The sprawl repair method presented in the book comprises of urban design, regulatory and implementation techniques.

The manual addresses repair at successive scales: the regional, community, block, and building, and also covers repair of thoroughfares and parking. It is profusely illustrated by very clear and instructive images and drawings in color, as well as tables and charts and illustrative applications of repair suggestions.

As the author is an architect and urban designer, as well as the director of town planning at the central office of Duany Plater-Zyberk and Company in Miami, Florida, she brings a wealth of knowledge, insight and pragmatism to the contents of the manual, and the techniques for repairing sprawl at all levels of the built environment. This is an important book for anybody who is contemplating being involved in the task of repairing sprawl. Its strength is in the compelling urban design ideas and proposals that are communicated via the wealth of illustrations in the book. In fact the layout and sequencing of the illustrations makes the manual easy to use and a reference that can be consulted at the scale of the sprawl problem that is under consideration. An 'Implementation Protocol' is located at the end of each section of Chapter 4 that addresses sub-divisions at the rural, single-family and multifamily scales, as well as shopping centers and malls, commercial strips and business parks. The protocols could have been supported with more detail in appendices, particularly covering implementation details from the expertise that DPZ & Co. has acquired over the years of projects that are similar to those presented in the book. Nevertheless, the author and the firm have to be congratulated for publishing this book at this time that clearly inspires and illuminates the potentials for sprawl repair.

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