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BOOK REVIEWS

Weiming Lu. *The Tao of Urban Rejuvenation: Building a Livable Creative Urban Village*. Edina, MN: Beaver's Pond Press, 2013, 207 pp., including appendix and index, 515 illustrations (photographs, drawings, charts, and calligraphy), hardbound, \$40.00 plus shipping, ISBN: 9781592985616.

When the planner Weiming Lu was asked by the board of the Lowertown Redevelopment Corporation in St. Paul, Minnesota, to write about what he had learned working with them, drawing on his fifty years of practice he embraced the idea with a thoroughness that few professionals could match. The result is an extremely well illustrated compendium that demonstrates a wide range of public-private projects. With more than five hundred photographs, perspectives, plans, flow charts, and the author's calligraphy, the text demonstrates not only how the projects were executed, but also how "building community" remained a goal for the corporation and the city.

The Tao of Urban Rejuvenation is unusual, then, for being the product of a thoughtful senior professional's view of what worked and what didn't, and he explains why. The Lowertown Redevelopment Corporation (LRC), begun in 1978 by the McKnight Foundation and the city of St. Paul, faced disinvestment and social challenges typical of many cities in the region. As the author explains, his Asian heritage led him to approach his responsibilities with a longer view than that of many Americans.

The chapter sequence suggests the topics that are covered. The Tao of City Design, Balancing Change and Continuity; Empty Warehouses to Urban Village: Marketing from Vision to Reality; Gap Financing and Urban Reinvestment, Risk and Discipline; Building a Creative Community: Vision and Persistence towards an Arts District and Cyber Village; Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary: Empowerment towards a Community Dream; The River Garden: Restoring Union Depot and Reclaiming the Riverfront; and The Tao of Urban Regeneration: Determinants for a Livable Creative Urban Village.

One of the most appealing aspects of the book is the number of case studies in each chapter. In Chapter Two, the case histories are followed by a "strategy summary," and sometimes by an update regarding the latest activities. In Chapter Two, for example, ten cases are presented, from the designation of the historic district to the development of artists' housing. The chapter concludes with seven lessons learned in the execution of these projects. In Chapter Four, seventeen projects demonstrate the importance of gap financing, most of which involved the federal rehabilitation tax credit program. This chapter concludes with nine lessons for those who would follow these examples. In Chapter Six, the focus on the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary concludes with ten lessons, important for those wishing to extend and improve parks and riverfronts.

The importance of a broad vision for the urban environment is repeatedly demonstrated, as are the economic and social goals of the LRC. These included enlarging the tax base, increasing the number of affordable housing units, adding jobs, expanding the arts community, and avoiding gentrification.

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