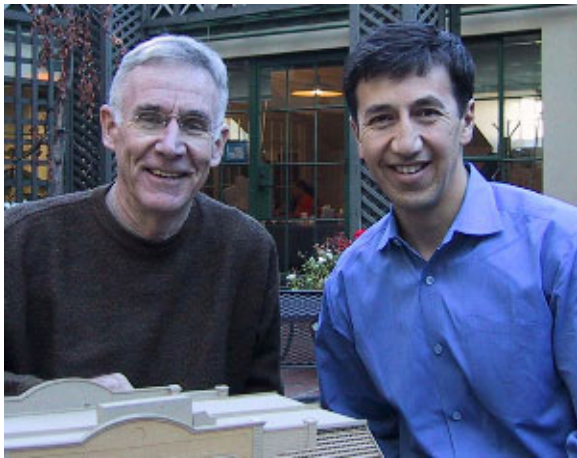


Portland Firm Beats National Competition

11/5/2002 Rich Riegel www.djc-or.com



George Crandall, left, and Don Arambula, principals of the Portland urban design firm Crandall Arambula, represent the best of what city planning can be all about.

Portland-area residents know the city is considered a leader in urban planning. Proof of that idea was given veracity recently. In a bold move, downtown Knoxville, Tenn.'s task force, called Nine Counties One Vision, selected Crandall Arambula, the Portland urban design firm, to prepare a plan to revitalize its downtown.

The buzz about Portland comes from myriad sources. One source, Metro Pulse, a Knoxville online alternative publication, lightheartedly warned Knoxville citizens to be careful since, "it's illegal in Portland to spit in the gutter, smoke cigars in public, chew gum anywhere, or criticize a downtown planning consultant who 'means well.'" It is clear that Portland's reputation as a well-planned, livable community is far reaching, not far out.

The Downtown Knoxville Revitalization Plan will be based on Nine Counties One Vision's guiding principles. The principles address the following design ideals:

- Creating a regional destination.
- Respecting the natural and historical setting.
- Creating a vibrant social environment.
- Developing quality downtown districts.
- Developing downtown housing opportunities.
- Restoring the downtown commercial areas.
- Balancing uses.

- Making downtown pedestrian friendly.
- Creating a balanced transportation system.
- Connecting downtown with the surrounding neighborhoods.

With these goals in mind, Portland becomes the perfect role model.

Portland's TriMet MAX light-rail transit and streetcar system, Tom McCall and Eastbank waterfront parks, and the historical renovation of numerous buildings represent many of Portland's qualities that Knoxville would like to emulate. Portland's living room, Pioneer Courthouse Square, 23rd Avenue and the recently expanded retail center Pioneer Place also serve as models, making downtown Portland and its surrounding neighborhoods vibrant and livable. Portland's housing opportunities have also increased dramatically with many new downtown and Pearl District developments.

"It's important to step back and realize all that we've accomplished," said Principal George Crandall. "Our city leaders have successfully created one of the most livable cities in the country. However, we still have many issues ahead that must be addressed head on. We can't become complacent. We must keep pushing forward."

Crandall and Don Arambula have been involved in projects that make Portland and Oregon national models for city planning. Recently, Crandall Arambula worked with the Portland Development Commission and the Portland Business Alliance on the Portland Downtown Retail Strategy. In addition, the firm completed the Interstate MAX Station Area Revitalization Strategy and the city of Milwaukie Downtown and Riverfront Plan, which both won 2002 Professional Achievement in Planning awards from the Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association. Crandall Arambula is also completing the Northwest Broadway Master Plan project that looks at protecting the view corridor to and from Union Station and connecting the area to downtown Portland and the Pearl District. Another recent accomplishment by Crandall Arambula includes the Downtown Racine, Wis. Development Plan that won a 2001 National Honor Award for Regional and Urban Design from the American Institute of Architects.