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## **Sarasota County hires smart growth director**

Peter Katz, a founding member of the Congress for New Urbanism and an advocate for better community planning, has accepted a position with Sarasota County Government. Katz will start in mid-February as director of Smart Growth/Urban Planning and focus on working with the community to implement smart growth principles in development and redevelopment within the county's urban service area. Day-to-day operations will be directed by Tom Polk, a veteran county planner with experience in development agreements and developments of regional impact.

"Peter has vast experience in helping both the public and private sectors and in the building of special places," said Rob Lewis, executive director of Planning and Development Services. "He brings talents that will enable him to network across the county as we endeavor to create more robust communities and to strategically position the county to take advantage of economic development opportunities."

Katz is no stranger to Sarasota County. In 2006, the county hired Katz, the founding president of the Form-Based Codes Institute, to assist in the development of the county's innovative Planned Mixed Use Infill districts, which incorporate elements of form-based codes, a promising new approach to development regulation.

In 1993 Katz wrote "The New Urbanism: Toward an Architecture of Community," the book that initially defined the movement he helped start two years earlier. The New Urbanism movement focuses on sustainable community-building practices as opposed to sprawling subdivisions. In 1991, on behalf of the Local Government Commission, Katz initiated and co-edited the Ahwahnee Principles, a comprehensive statement of sustainable community-building practices that has since been adopted by over 120 cities and counties in the western United States.

As a strategic consultant to government, public agencies and private-sector clients, Katz has played a key role in shaping and implementing a range of nationally significant community design and development projects. These projects include the master plan and codes for the Pleasant Hill, Calif. BART station, now under construction after facing significant community opposition for almost 20 years, where Katz served as lead advisor to Contra Costa County. Other major projects where Katz acted in an advisory role include the Columbia Pike corridor redevelopment in Arlington, Va., and the Upper Rock district in Rockville, Md. Recently, the city of Oceanside, Calif., employed Katz to work with a citizen task force in crafting a vision for the revitalization of a new light-rail transit corridor.

Katz studied architecture and graphic design at The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art in New York. He received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree and the Royal Society of Arts (London) Honor Award upon graduation in 1976.

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