



# Walt Disney and the Quest for Community

By Steve Mannheim

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During the final months of his life, Walt Disney was consumed with the world-wide problems of cities. His development concept at the time of his death on December 15th, 1966 would be his team's conceptual response to the ills of the inner cities and the sprawl of the megalopolis: the Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow or, as it became known, EPCOT. This beautifully written, instantly engrossing volume focuses on the original concept of EPCOT, which was conceived by Disney as an experimental community of about 20,000 people on the Disney World property in central Florida. With its radial plan, 50-acre town center enclosed by a dome, themed international shopping area, greenbelt, high-density apartments, satellite communities, monorail and underground roads, the original EPCOT plan is reminiscent of post-war Stockholm and the British New Towns, as well as today's transit-oriented development theory. Unfortunately, Disney himself did not live long enough to witness the realization of his model city. However, EPCOT's evolution into projects such as the EPCOT Center and the town of Celebration displays a remarkable commitment by the Disney organization to the original EPCOT philosophy, one which continues to have relevance in the fields of planning and development.

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## **Editorial Review**

### Review

"...solid academic historical research and a "great read" about one of the most fascinating people of our century." -- *Richard Peiser, Michael D. Spear Professor of Real Estate Development, Harvard Design School, Massachusetts, USA*

"Mannheim does a remarkable job in detailing the Disney's revolutionary urban planning contributions that shape most of the modern world." -- *Edward J. Blakely, Dean, Milano Graduate School of Management and Urban Policy, New School University, New York, USA*

"The book is the first to reveal Walt Disney's deep personal concern for the urban "crisis" of the time..." -- *Gerald Gast, Associate Professor, Portland Urban Architecture Program, The University of Oregon*

"...a well-documented historical account of the decision-making processes regarding EPCOT...an indispensable resource." -- *Jeffrey Sasha Davis, Pennsylvania State University*

"For professionals, practitioners, and students of community development...Walt Disney and the Quest for Community provides a nugget of unique information." -- *Roger L. Galatas, Urban Land*

### About the Author

Dr. Steve Mannheim holds a doctorate in planning and development from the School of Urban Planning and Development at the University of Southern California. He serves as an adjunct instructor at California State University, Northridge and consults in the area of real estate economics.

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