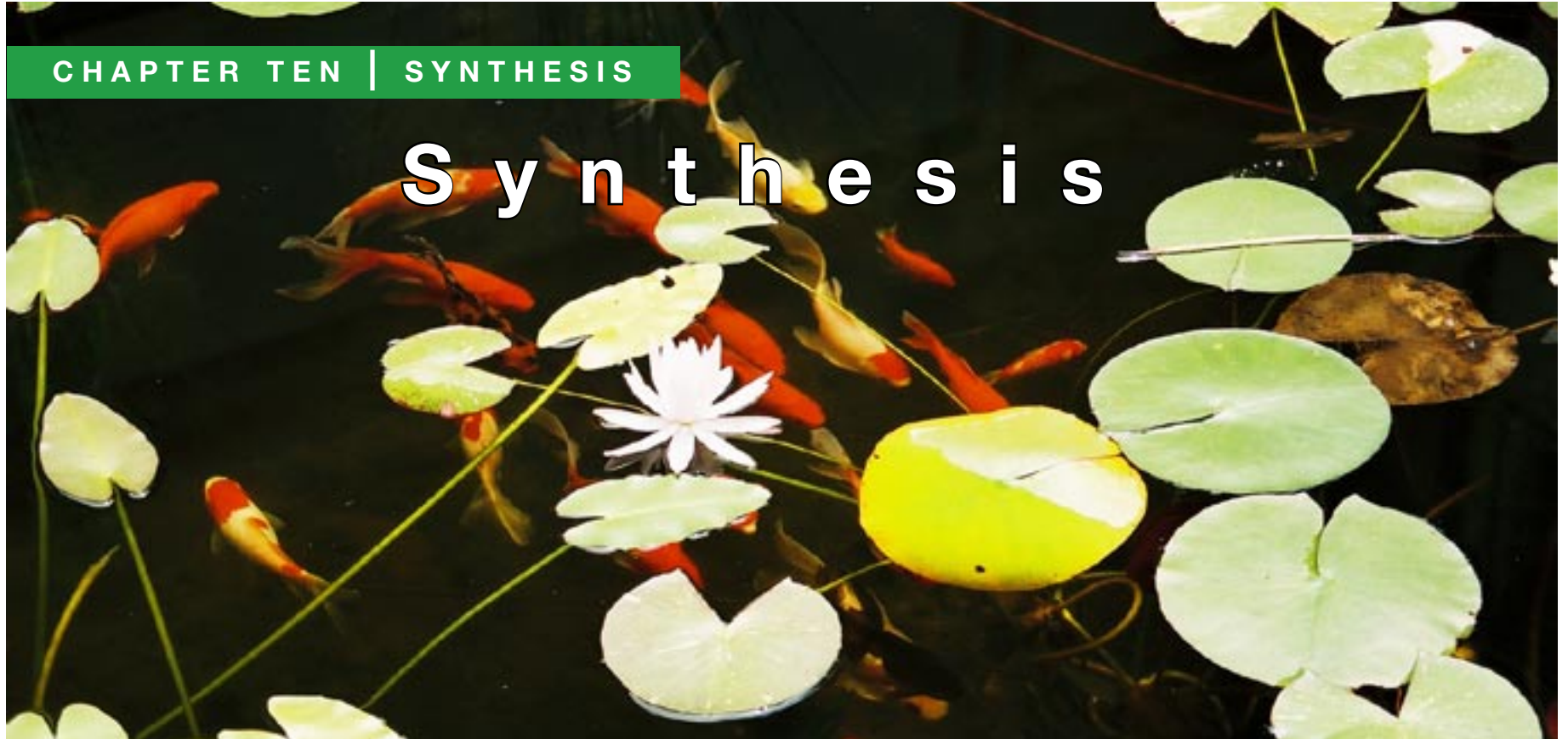


Synthesis



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“We abuse the land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see the land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.”

— Aldo Leopold



The New American City: The Noisette Community of North Charleston, South Carolina

This Noisette Community Master Plan begins with a vision for the New American City: A vibrant, healthy city, embracing its heritage and celebrating its role as community, ecosystem, and marketplace. The vision is based on the Triple Bottom Line – a balance among people, planet, and prosperity – embodying the belief that sustainable cities must be equally responsive to social needs, environmental responsibility, and economic vitality.

The Master Plan responds to many of the goals set out in the 1996 City of North Charleston Comprehensive Plan, and to the City’s Pledge to its Citizens, a set of principles that underpins a future of prosperity, opportunity, social harmony, educational excellence, and ecological restoration.

This Master Plan also acknowledges the Partnership Agreement between the City of North Charleston and the Noisette Company, in which the City recognizes the necessity to move to a 21st Century infrastructure that is more economically and environmentally self-sustaining, to reclaim its natural resources, and to create not only growth, but a wise and sustainable redevelopment of its community. In this agreement, the Noisette Company pledged to develop this Master Plan, and to be the community developer that will transform the northern end of the former Charleston Naval Base, and a large portion of the surrounding city, into a sustainable City Center for the 21st century.

To achieve this vision and these goals, this Master Plan sets forth specific recommendations and guidelines to create the elements of this New American City:

- A **Regenerative Land Use** plan to create a mixed-use pattern, promoting a Live/Work/Play environment, revitalizing key portions of the City, and selectively increasing density. The plan includes elements to enhance the sense of neighborhood identity, while linking the diverse neighborhoods throughout the community. This master plan recommends specific tools to develop and implement these changes, in concert with existing land use ordinances.

- A plan for **Restoring Natural Systems** so that they are integral to the functions and aesthetics of this place, and linking the roles of individuals, neighborhoods, and the community as stewards of the natural environment. This Master Plan is based on fundamental environmental principles for ecological restoration, conservation, native landscaping, and water management. A central element will be the Noisette Preserve, serving as a recreation area and education center for the citizens of the City and the greater region.
- A plan for **Restoring Connections** of the community through sustainable infrastructure improvements in transportation systems, open space and recreation, and utility systems. The Transportation plan is designed for diversity, inter-modal connectivity, adaptability to change, and multiple uses of transportation elements. The Open Space plan provides a range of recreation options and reconnects the City to the Cooper River. The Utility plan proposes integrated utility systems, designed for stewardship of natural resources.
- Implementation of this plan based on **Neighborhoods as Catalysts for Change**. Each neighborhood should have a vital center, support a mix of uses, be pedestrian- and bicycle-oriented, and have its own character and beauty. This master plan recommends specific changes on major corridors serving the City and revitalizes Park Circle as the historic symbol of the original garden city. Schools should become the centers of their communities, offering services, resources, and amenities to all the residents of a neighborhood.
- Creation of a new community, the **River Center at Noisette**, utilizing a major portion of the former Charleston Naval Base. This vibrant new urban center will have a mix of uses, a range of density, a link to the history of the place, and a strong connection to the natural ecological systems. Art will be infused

throughout the community in both traditional and impromptu forms. The sustainable design, construction, and operation of the built elements will make this a manifestation of the Triple Bottom Line, unifying social, environmental, and economic goals.

- A recommendation for **Project Phasing** over the next fifteen years, and beyond. This plan addresses the important first steps that will be catalysts for further development. It also considers diversity of housing opportunity, business incubation, transportation elements, recreational enhancements, and environmental restoration as key elements of creating a vital, robust urban center.
- **Initiatives and Strategies** that are essential for sustainable change. The plan creates an institutional framework for sustainable community development, life-long learning, and restoration of natural resources. It also proposes strategies for arts integration and museum initiatives, high performance schools, housing for all, and historic preservation/restoration. Finally, it sets out initiatives for economic revitalization and tax increment financing.
- **Benchmarks for Success**, presenting standards for measuring, reporting, and learning from results. The Noisette Quality Home Performance Standards have been created specifically for the climate and geographical conditions of the South Carolina Low Country. The LEED Green Building Rating System is the definitive consensus performance standard for commercial and high-rise residential buildings. The Noisette Rose is a flexible tool developed to establish and measure specific sustainable goals for projects within the community.

This plan is the product of a five-year collaborative discovery process. The citizens, leadership, and professionals of North Charleston have contributed their wisdom and vision. The team of national expert planners, architects, urban designers, landscape architects, engineers, ecologists, educators, and artists assembled by the Noisette Company has been inspired by the culture and history of North Charleston and impressed by the level of interest and contributions from community leaders and residents during this remarkable five-year journey of discovery.

The team has built this plan on the vision, rich history, and culture represented by the community, and utilized the history of the natural systems and the evaluation of their current conditions. All of this and their collective experience of restorative community designs have informed these recommendations. It is unique. This plan holds enormous potential for the future of this community and its citizens.

Taken together, these elements form the integrated planning basis for establishing the Noisette Community of North Charleston as the leading sustainable redevelopment of an urban environment in the US.

The City of North Charleston and the Noisette Company should expand their working partnership to include other government entities, NGOs, business organizations, and citizens groups, to develop the mechanisms for implementing this Master Plan. The core partners must recognize that profound change is not easy, and will be resisted by some, but that it has the power to transform this City and the lives of its citizens.

