



# Urban Sustainability Strategies: Lessons from Cuba to Camden

## My Presentation Today

- Provide context for community development in Cuba
- Address development in Havana (an urban setting) and Pinar del Rio (a rural setting)
- Share opportunity to travel to Cuba over Spring Break 2016



## My Biography

- Board of Governors Distinguished Service Professor of Public Policy and Administration at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
- Director of the Community Leadership Center (CLC)
- Board Chair and Founder of LEAP Academy University Charter School
- Author of 3 Books:
  - *The Miracle on Cooper Street, Lessons from an Inner City*
  - *Breaking Ground and Barriers: Hispanic Women Developing Effective Leadership*
  - *Organizing Puerto Rican Migrant Farmworkers*





Visited Cuba since I was 18 years old

## History of Community Development in Cuba

- Beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Havana had new infrastructure of streets, sewers, water supply, and electricity



## History of Community Development in Cuba

- Before revolution in 1959, few planning and development initiatives; private funding made minor renovations
- After revolution, some money provided to fix old buildings, but government focused on rural and human development



## The Soviet era from mid-1960s – 1990s

- Cuba's economic environment was characterized by a top-down model in which state agencies were the principal economic and development actors.
- Planning was autocratic and inflexible;
- Trade depended primarily on the socialist bloc countries;



## The Soviet era from mid-1960s – 1990s

- Financial capacity was centralized in the national budget; and
- There was no tax system.
- Legal, financial and economic reforms implemented since 1990 have helped to create an institutional environment more conducive to economic efficiency and to allow Cuba's participation in the global market



Nuñez, Ricardo; Brown, H. James and Smolka, Martim (2000). "Using land value to promote development in Cuba." *Land Lines* 12(2).

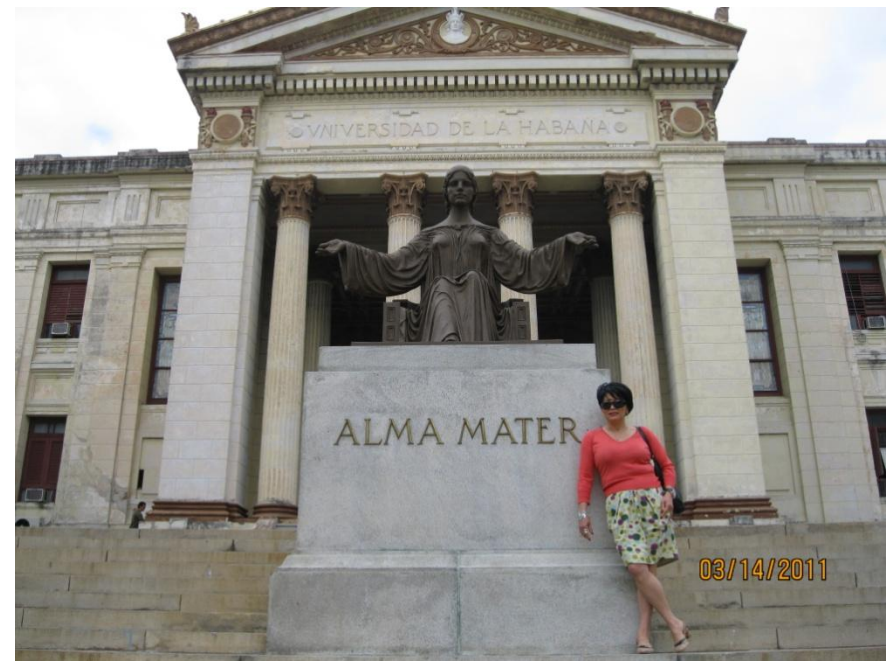


# Context of a new form of community development

*Community development movement shaped by  
the Office of the City Historian in Havana*

## 4 Stages:

- 1. Dr. Emilio Roig –**  
promoting Havana  
culture and heritage to  
preserve authenticity  
of monuments



## Context of a new form of community development

- 2. Eusebio Leal – 1964** – begins rehabilitation process of Old Havana through technical research and restoration of buildings; builds a team for momentum of architectural plan



3. In 1981, state invested in the restoration process safekeeping the historic value of Old Havana declared by UNESCO



4. Decree Law 143 – 1993 – declares priority of preservation; expands priorities of Office of City Historian to do **housing development, tourism, and commercial economic development**; received a lot of economic autonomy to solve economic crisis



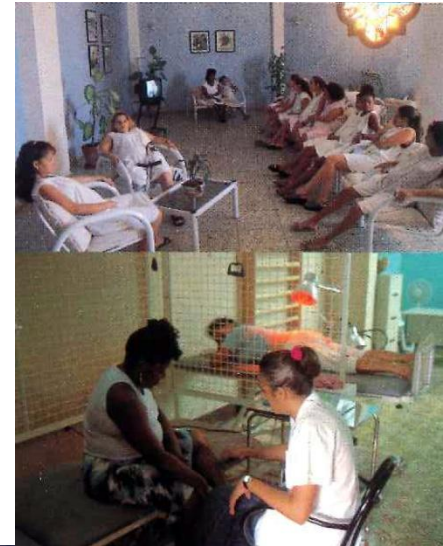
## Comprehensive Development Plan for Historic Centre of Old Havana

- A city-wide plan to revitalize and restore the physical beauty and social vibrancy of Old Havana
- A comprehensive, multi-faceted approach to build capacity and unite community:
  - Restored buildings and streetscapes to showcase cultural monuments and icons

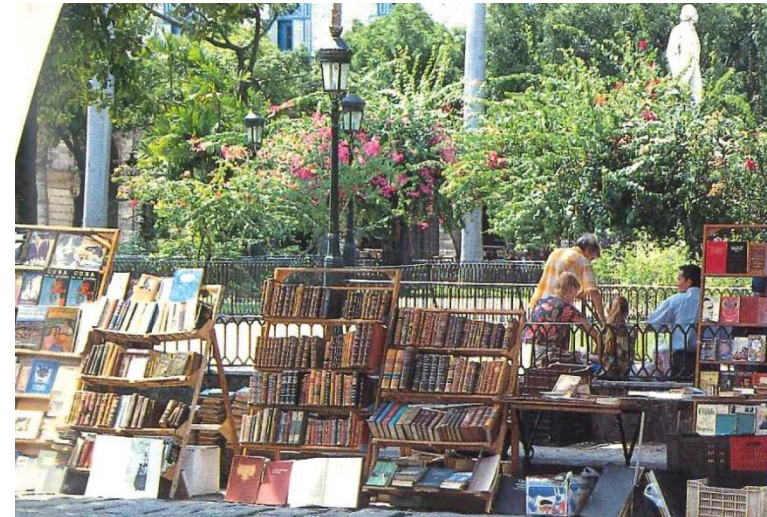


# Comprehensive Development Plan for Historic Centre of Old Havana

- Revised schools, playgrounds and outdoor spaces for children and families
- Established health and wellness centers for young children and the elderly



- Recovered traditions of professional class of workers by creating micro-enterprises of artisans, retired people, women, and the elderly
- Established early childhood centers to treat trauma in infant population
- Created open air libraries
- Increased tourist capacity and infrastructure



- Established an economic management group (Habaguanex) that collected taxes and managed investments
- Interdisciplinary -> involved diverse group of professionals

Escuela Mariano Martí





## Architects of the Comprehensive Plan



Mario Coyula-Cowley  
*Distinguished Professor  
of Architecture*

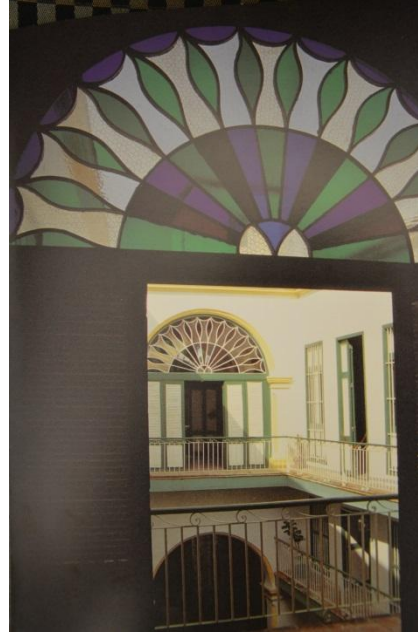


Eusebio Leal Spengler  
*Havana City Historian*

## Mario Coyula-Cowley

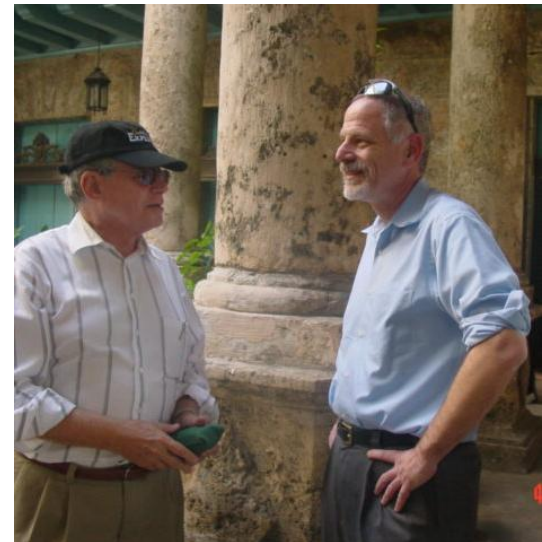
- Famous article: “The Neighborhood as Workshop”
- Lays philosophical groundwork for new Cuban initiatives in decentralized, sustainable community planning and development

Casa de los Arabies



## Mario Coyula-Cowley

- New approach to built environment that is more decentralized, ecologically sound, and economically feasible
- Model meets cultural, social, and economic needs
- Affirms identity and historical continuity of neighborhoods by preserving the built environment and reformulating traditional planning models



## Eusebio Leal Spengler's Influence

- Historian for the City of Havana
- Director of the restoration program in Old Havana (Havana Vieja) – declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site



- Leal restored the Palace of the Captains General into the City Museum in the 1970s and convinced Castro to support city revitalization projects
- After breakup of Soviet Union in 1990s, Leal received authority to generate own revenue in restoring buildings



- With \$1 million, first major project was restoring the Ambos Mundos hotel, famous for where Hemingway wrote *For Whom the Bell Tolls*



## Habaguanex Planning Group

- Evolved out of the Office of the City Historian
- Became the vehicle for the development
- A network of 100+ businesses that became the vehicle for community development
- Income generated by the enterprise used to restore the historic center and to improve living condition of local population



- Consisted of various groups:
  - Planning
  - Management
  - Social economic
  - Economic legal group
  - Research
  - Documentary and publishing information group (specializing in libraries and archives) and
  - Intervention control group





# Components of Comprehensive Development Plan for Historic Centre of Old Havana

A single community plan that is a dynamic and flexible entity that does not limit itself to one stage of study, but is rather a continuous process whose development is based on the capacity to satisfy both operational capacity of the investment and of generating instruments capable of managing it in a more efficient manner.



## Concepts of the Comprehensive Development Plan for Historic Centre of Old Havana

- Conceives area of high value as a system of relations whose parts or subsystems require revitalization and/or adaptation



Plaza Vieja



## Comprehensive Development Plan for Historic Centre of Old Havana

- Obtain comprehensive sustainable development; grant equal priority to everything related to social, economic, and physical means through participative planning



Restaurante Don Giovanni

# Comprehensive Development Plan for Historic Centre of Old Havana

- Strengthens capacity for self-transformation of inhabitants' conditions of life and family environment → become beneficiaries and protagonists of revitalization



## Comprehensive Development Plan for Historic Centre of Old Havana

- Incorporating all citizens to validate all concerns in a co-managing framework
- Gave power to own houses, work and live in Old Havana
- Technology-driven
- Environmentally friendly



## Areas of Focus

- Make local economy more dynamic by a more efficient management
- Modify profile of a zone given priority for preservation, with diversification of activities and gradual variation in structure through application of co-management schemes that favor participation of inhabitants in sustainability of project



## Four fundamental policies

1. Protect the heritage, rehabilitating the territory through a comprehensive and continuous plan that reconciles the preservation of cultural values with the needs of the socio-economic development



2. Preserve the residential nature of the historic center, guaranteeing the perpetuation of the resident population according to the most appropriate parameters of habitability, densities, and quality of life



Restaurante La Mina

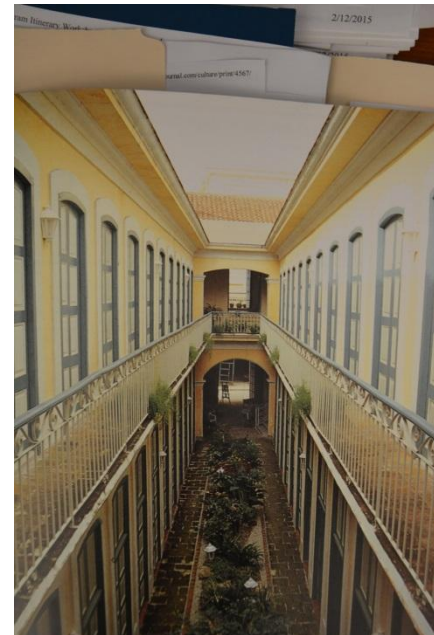




3. Provide the territory with an efficient technical infrastructure to resolve the continuous opening and consequent deterioration of the street network



4. Obtain self-financed comprehensive development that makes the investment in the restoration of the heritage recoverable and productive, boosting a local economy that guarantees sustainable development



Casa Asia en Mercaderes

# Sustainable Agriculture

- When Soviet Union collapsed and embargo was established, Cuba experienced food shortages and malnutrition
- Petroleum and other international resources became scarce and expensive
- Individuals and communities developed gas-and petrochemical-free food production which sparked movement in autonomous food provisions



Smith, B.D. (2014). *International Perspectives on Sustainable Agriculture in Cuba*. University Honors Theses. Paper 84.

## Sustainable Development in Havana

- Havana's generous allocation of green and sports area space per habitant (10.4 meters per inhabitant) lends itself to what some analysts call "green social theory," where a low population density (under 300 persons per hectare) enables local government to plan and "design with nature."

Scarpaci, J.L., Coyula-Cowley, M. (2003). *Urban sustainability, built heritage, and globalization in the Cuban capital*. Human Settlement Development (1).



## Agricultural Cooperatives

- Agricultural cooperatives have emerged as one of the most visible and successful examples of Cuba's emerging Social Solidarity Economy (SSE), a strategy designed to address the shortcomings of socialism without fully embracing capitalism



## Three Types of Cooperatives

1. Basic Units for Agricultural Production (UBPC)  
– state-owned worker cooperatives
2. Agricultural Production Co-ops (CPA) –  
members contribute land and equipment and  
work together collectively



## Three Types of Cooperatives

3. Credit and Service Cooperatives (CCS)
  - consist of individual private farms that join forces to leverage credit and services



## University Partnerships

- The University of Havana established a school for community development, influenced by the enterprise zone of practice





## University Partnerships

- In 2002, Rutgers-Camden and the University of Havana signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to formalize research and exchange opportunities for students and faculty



## Types of Exchanges

- Faculty research in public health and medicine
- Student internships in the Habaguanex office
- Frequent trips led by expert faculty and staff









Urbanism and Sustainable Development  
Spring Break Trip

March 11-18, 2016

- 8 Day trip to experience these unique Cuban models, learn from scholars and artists, and explore social and cultural landmarks in Havana and Pinar del Rio
- Must register for course 50:975:352/56:834:532, meeting throughout spring semester, concluding with public events to share trip experience
- Register on **November 2:**  
[learningabroad.camden.rutgers.edu/urbanism-and-sustainable-community-development](http://learningabroad.camden.rutgers.edu/urbanism-and-sustainable-community-development)

# Fuster Art Project



# Finca La Vigía – Hemingway's House









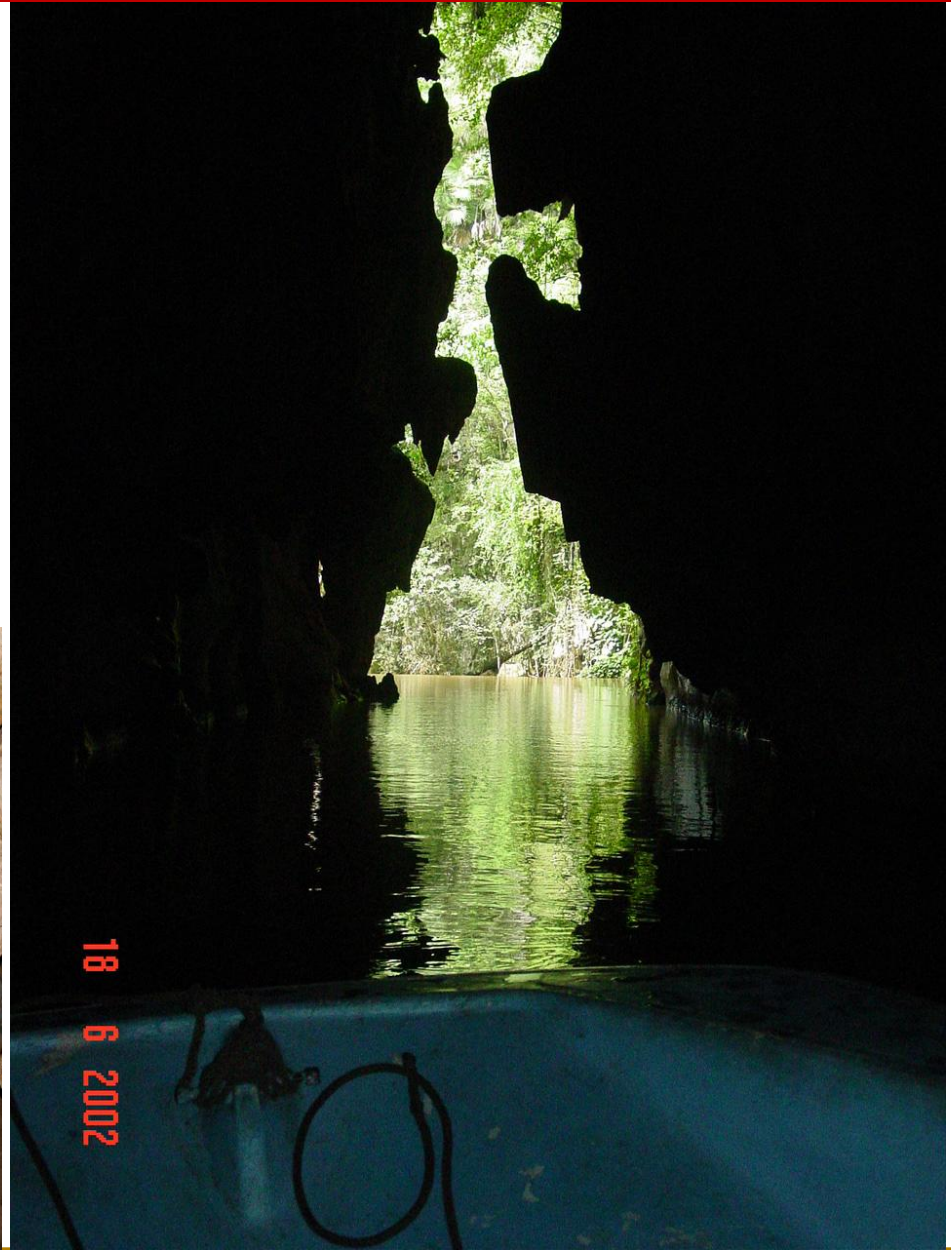
## Tobacco Plantation – Pinar del Rio





18 6 2002

# Moka







# Morro Castle

# Museum of the Revolution



# Museo de Guanabacoa





# Convento de Santa Clara

