

ARCHITECTURE SARASOTA

Architecture Sarasota launches six-week speaker series exploring the evolution and future of downtown Sarasota

Presented in four parts at the Art Ovation Hotel, the series will feature distinguished speakers such as Andrés Duany, David Houle, Mitchell Silver, and Victor Dover



(Sarasota, Florida — December 12, 2023) — **Architecture Sarasota** is excited to announce the launch of ***Downtown Sarasota: Hindsight, Insight and Foresight***, a four-part speaker series conceived to spark an informed and constructive community-wide discussion about downtown's future. Beginning on **January 24th, 2024**, at the **Art Ovation Hotel**, the six-week series will explore downtown Sarasota's evolution over the last two decades with a group of four distinguished speakers—**Andrés Duany, David Houle, Mitchell Silver, and Victor Dover**. Speakers will address vital topics, including the current downtown master plan and how it was shaped two decades ago, how downtown has developed since then, the macro-level forces affecting the city, effective current downtown planning practices, and insights drawn from successful urban planning in other locales.

Each of the speakers will arrive early in Sarasota to become familiar with the current state of downtown and meet with public officials, members of the wider community, and the press. This will allow them to tailor their presentations, synthesizing their observations of the lived realities of the with their own expertise and experience.

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The first installation of the series, which will take place on January 24th, will feature Andrés Duany, Founding Principal of DPZ CoDesign, the principal consultants responsible for the current downtown master plan (*Downtown Sarasota 2020*). In his presentation, Duany will offer an overview of downtown master planning in Sarasota that occurred between 1999 and 2000, outline the conditions under which the *Downtown Sarasota 2020* plan was developed; detail the decision-making process and the rationales behind it; assess which of those decisions were successful, and which didn't quite pay off; identify the lessons DPZ learned from working on the Sarasota plan project, and how a master plan prepared today would differ.

On January 31st, David Houle, renowned futurist and former Resident Futurist at Ringling College, will address the demographic, economic, political, and environmental macro-factors that have shaped Sarasota over the past 20 years. By analyzing the experiences of peer cities, paired with trends observed in Sarasota's own recent history, Houle will also offer his perspective on the city's future development.

Urban planner Mitchell Silver, who has held the posts of Planning Director of Raleigh, NC; President of the American Planning Association; and Commissioner of New York City Parks & Recreation, will present on February 14th. He will provide an overview of how downtown master-planning practices have evolved over the last twenty years, outlining new planning processes and the new sets of concerns facing city planners today, both in general and in Sarasota specifically.

The final presentation, scheduled for February 28th, will feature Victor Dover, Founding Principal of Dover, Kohl & Partners, a firm emphasizing New Urbanism principles as the foundation for sustainable town planning. Victor's presentation will focus on effective master planning in Florida, including the special opportunities and constraints of planning in the state and how to create effective, meaningful master plans.

"Sarasota is experiencing a period of rapid growth and expansion," says **Morris [Marty] Hylton III, President of Architecture Sarasota**. "We believe this lecture series will provide a forum for the community to pause and reflect on how we got here, examine what is happening currently, and discuss the future of downtown Sarasota. Architecture Sarasota's goal is to engage as many residents as possible as these four leading experts present compelling ideas and observations to spark a thoughtful conversation about the future of our community."

For more information and to purchase tickets for the *Downtown Sarasota: Hindsight, Insight, and Foresight* speaker series visit www.architecturesarasota.org