

Enjoy when you can, and endure when you must.

- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

CAIRO AND LAS VEGAS: WALKABLE COMMUNITIES? BY: MATT DURHAM



Over the past 7 months I have had the opportunity to live in Cairo, Egypt. With around 18 million residents, 7 million of which live in the dense urban core, Cairo is a busy, lively city. Living my whole life in the southwestern United States, I have grown accustomed to life revolving around the car. When I go to the grocery store, I drive. When I go to work, I drive. When I go to the bank, I drive. Imagine finding all of these daily activities within a ½ mile walk of your front door.

In Las Vegas we have miles and miles of safe, ADA accessible sidewalks. There are crosswalks, landscaped buffers, and wheelchair ramps. The only problem is you are lucky if a ½ mile walk gets you out the gate of your community.

While everywhere you would need to go is close by, sidewalks in Cairo are not usually large enough to accommodate the crowds of people getting to their destinations. The sidewalks can be hard to navigate with shops and restaurants overflowing onto the bustling sidewalks. It is not uncommon to find the first lane on each side of the street filled with pedestrians rather than cars.

If only we could have the best of both worlds. As designers we should take note of our lives and our surroundings, to see what works and what does not. By combining the lessons learned with new ideas and technologies, our designs can always be improving. Next time you take a drive to run an errand ask yourself, wouldn't a short walk be more enjoyable? See if it's possible!

NCI ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

This LEED certified building is part of a larger campus for the Nevada Cancer Institute, so coordination between the new and the existing building had to be taken into account.

Surrounding the entryway are two palm trees on either side of the curved awning. At their base lie flower gardens and benches providing an inviting space to stop or continue on and enter. A remarkable medallion in the hardscape was designed for this same space. Laid in a circular pattern, the medallion is filled with vibrant colors and generally displays the shape of a long-petal flower.

Working with Summerlin to fit the design into their Garden Village Theme, the NCI Administration Building contains an assortment of garden sections throughout the perimeter of the building. Different rock types divide up the plant segments into blocks and rows giving the spaces a garden feel. Plant material is strategically placed to allow the segments to flow together. A healing garden is located just outside of the main entryway. It is laid out with stepping stones, pavers and a surrounding wall to provide benefactors with a sense of seclusion. Planters and benches add variety and serenity to the garden. A putting green was included to provide an escape from reality.



FAVORITE FLORA:

ROSEMARY OFFICINALIS - ROSEMARY



You may have noticed the flowers that are beginning to pop up everywhere. Trees and shrubs are starting to add their spring color to the landscape too. The most noticeable blooming shrub is *Rosmarinus officinalis* (Rosemary). With its needle-like leathery, dark green leaf color and blue flowers it is attractive to humans as well as many of our desert wildlife such as birds, butterflies and bees.

Rosemary thrives in our dry, hot environment with watering every month or two possibly more during the growing season. Growing to 3 to 6 feet high and 3 to 8 feet wide be sure to plant in full or reflected sun and heat. This plant needs to be pruned back when it starts to become woody and open. It flowers intermittently throughout the year but most abundantly in the spring.

This plant is a great foundation plant, border or hedge. The leaves are often used in cooking but the flowers are also edible. Due to the attractiveness of the flowers to the desert wildlife, it is best not to use this plant too near swimming pools.

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



SUNSET OVER THE PHAROHS
CAIRO, EGYPT
MATT DURHAM