

VISION

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Avondale Students Participate in National Community Planning Month



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Jon M. Froke, AICP, APA Arizona President



Hard to believe that 2011 is winding down. The year went by quickly and for APA Arizona, it was a successful year on many different levels.

A summary of board of directors and chapter activities reveals an active 2011.

Chapter Membership: As we have reported in past editions of Vision Magazine our membership level continues to be stable and is increasing slightly. Based on current data our membership sits at 1,280 members, up from 1,203 as reported this past summer. Of this figure the number of AICP members is 373. AICP levels have hovered in this range for the better part of 2011.

Annual Budget: As is the case with our personal households, our places of employment and friends and family, APA Arizona's annual budget has been and will continue to remain a concern over the next year. The Board of Directors closely monitors income and expenses. We continue to look for ways to deliver services to the chapter with limited resources. I firmly believe that we have done a good job of adjusting to the "New Normal."

Marketing / Public Information & Outreach: Work continues on our efforts to enhance and increase the exposure that APA Arizona has with the public. The Marketing / Public Information & Outreach program was chaired by Matt Klyszeiko, AICP, of RBF Consulting. Matt's tenure on the Board of Directors is ending; he did an excellent job in this endeavor and is wrapping up some final details. The mission and goals of the program focuses on increased media interaction, partnering with other organizations, creating an APA Arizona Ambassador, expanding our membership base and continued work on publishing the Vision Magazine and use of social media.

In conjunction with these efforts APA Arizona partnered with the Sonoran Institute and implemented the Sustainable Communities on-line Tool Kite or "SCOTIE." Check out available resources at <http://www.sonoran-institute.org>.

Student activities at the three state universities are providing new opportunities to mentor and expand membership of a new generation of planners.

Planners' Day at the State Capitol: We had a good turnout on March 3rd as Arizona planners descended on the Arizona State Capitol. With assistance from Dorn Policy Group APA Arizona was able to meet elected officials from both the State Senate and House of Representatives.

Planning Accreditation Board: In March the Planning Accreditation Board (PAB) visited the campus of Arizona State University as part of the accreditation process for undergraduate and graduate planning programs. PAB was interested in learning how local APA chapters (or sections) interact with the planning program under review. Various planning professionals from the public sector and private sector participated

in the on-campus visit and completed a survey as one method for the chapter to assess those relationships. I am pleased to report that PAB made a finding that ASU will remain an accredited planning program.

American Planning Association National Conference:

A handful of Arizona planners traveled to Boston to attend the 103rd National Conference in April. APA Arizona was well represented at the Chapter Presidents Council (CPC) events and other activities to make our voice known at the national level.

American Planning Association Fall Leadership Meetings:

This year's Fall Leadership Meetings were held in Washington, D.C. in September. Kelli Sertich, AICP, and Noel Griemsmann, AICP, represented the chapter. The event consisted of three elements: board and component business and training meetings, the Federal Policy & Program Briefing, and Planners' Day on Capitol Hill. Again, this was a good opportunity for the Chapter to be recognized at the national level.

APA Arizona Elections: At the Annual Retreat in Glendale on December 9th we said goodbye to outgoing board members and welcomed incoming board members who were elected this fall. We have an excellent make up on the board, and we are positioned for continued success as a chapter in 2012.

State Conference: As reported in the last edition of Vision Magazine, we had another excellent state planning conference in Tucson. This was our first visit to the Old Pueblo since 2004, and we hope to be back again in a few years.

FAICP: Every two years The College of Fellows of the American Institute of Certified Planners (FAICP) seeks nominations for the next class of FAICP candidates. Unfortunately, no Arizona planners were selected in the last cycle. Earlier this fall the chapter endorsed six AICP planners as nominees to FAICP. The chapter candidates being considered this time around are very strong and possess an impressive body of work. Good luck candidates! The 2012 Class of Fellows will

be announced by APA in 2012 with a reception at APA National in Los Angeles in April.

Partnerships: APA Arizona continued our efforts to partner with member agencies in 2011. The chapter enjoys a robust relationship with other groups who wish to seek our support on various initiatives. This past year the chapter supported the following initiatives:

- Arizona Centennial. Arizona celebrates 100 years of statehood in 2012. The chapter is exploring ways to partner with the Arizona Centennial Conference on activities in April. More details on the program will be announced once the partnership has been finalized.
- Working with ULI on a related planning curriculum and an outreach plan to introduce the planning profession to high school students.
- Supported the State Rail Plan through ADOT.
- Supported the CDC's Community Transformation Grant through the Arizona Department of Health Services.
- Supported the Sonoran Institute | Arizona Wilderness Coalition with respect to concerns regarding a proposed general plan amendment in Cochise County.
- Supported the Phoenix Bicycle Center through Maricopa County.
- Supported the City of Phoenix in their efforts for securing a Community Challenge Planning Grant through the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- Again supported ULI on their efforts to obtain a 75th Anniversary Urban Innovation Grant.

I wish to thank our membership, fellow board members, Patti King's office and Dorn Policy Group for a successful 2011, and I look forward to many good things in 2012.

Best wishes and Happy New Year!

EditorNOTES

National Community Planning Month – In this edition of VISION Magazine, the lead article provides an overview of how the planners with the City of Avondale celebrated National Community Planning Month. For the 4th year they have outreached to local schools and shared their knowledge and skills with 7th & 8th graders in Avondale elementary schools. The theme for the project this year was “New Ideas for America’s Future.” This is a great project and an excellent example of the role planners can play in nurturing the next generation of city planners.

Healthy Community Design Professional Development Workshop – The APA Arizona Healthy Community Design Professional Development Workshop is scheduled for Friday, January 27, 2012. The workshop will focus on collaboration between the planning profession and public health professionals, incorporating healthy community design policies into General/Comprehensive Plans, and a discussion of planned HIA training scheduled for the March/April 2012 timeframe.

REGISTRATION: More information and registration is available at: <http://www.azplanning.org/workshops/2012/creatinghealthycommunities.html>

Healthy Community Design – As a member of APA Arizona, you received a copy of a draft for the General Plan Update Healthy Community Design Toolkit. This is a product of collaboration between the APA Arizona MAC21 Project, St. Luke’s Health Initiatives (SLHI), Maricopa County Department of Public Health (MCDPH), and the Livable Communities Coalition (LCC).

Based on your comments and comments from a number of other individuals, the final version of the toolkit has been completed and will be hosted on SCOTie, the Sonoran Institute resource website. Watch for an announcement for the Healthy Community Design webpage launch date when the Toolkit will be available on SCOTie. In the meantime, check out SCOTie at: <http://scotie.sonoraninstitute.org/home.html>

EDITOR NEEDED – The Chapter Board of Directors is looking for a new editor for VISION Magazine. I will be stepping down as soon as a new editor is selected. If you are interested and would like more information, please contact me at 480-390-9185 or at dbrennan.plc@cox.net.



AVONDALE PLANNERS CELEBRATE NATIONAL COMMUNITY PLANNING MONTH

By Tracy Stevens

The City of Avondale Planning Division has completed its 4th Annual Build a City Program. The program began in the fall of 2008 in an effort to enhance partnerships with the local school districts, educate students on the importance of urban planning and community development, and engage the community through public outreach.



Above: A "future planner" describes the student design of a city.

Each year in October in recognition of National Community Planning Month, the Planning Division partners with a local school to participate in the program. The theme this year was called "New Ideas for America's Future."

For this year's program Avondale Planners partnered with two Elementary Schools – Littleton Elementary 8th Grade Gifted Class, and Quentin Elementary 7th and 8th Grade Gifted Class.

As part of the program City Planners provided instruction on planning and land use principles, community and economic development, sustainability, transportation, public participation and consensus building.



Students celebrate community completion.

The students - following instruction from the Planners, engaged in design and development of a built city made out of cardboard boxes and other recyclable materials. Some classes elect a Mayor, council members, community activists, business leader, etc. to make decisions on what type of city they want to live in. Students decided where buildings should be



A detail of the student-built city.



COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY

In recognition of this program and Avondale as a Tree City USA – a Palo Verde Desert Museum tree was planted on the Littleton Elementary School campus to represent the 8th Grade Class and the Sustainability Element of the project.

This program, in its 4th year of programming, continues to bring awareness to young adults as they prepare themselves for high school and college level academics. As planners we continue to look for ways to engage the community and public schools into thinking about becoming active citizens who



Students stand in front of the newly planted Palo Verde Desert Museum tree on the Littleton Elementary school campus.

can intelligently contribute to shaping the future of our communities. As our communities continue to evolve and grow our hope is that our young adults will take an active role in shaping the community and contribute to positive changes. Additional photographs of the built cities can be seen on the Avondale Planning Division webpage.

To receive additional information and the curriculum for this program please contact Tracy Stevens, Planning Manager at 623-333-4012 or tstevens@avondale.org.

placed, whether their city will be completely reliant on public transportation and pedestrian mobility, or if their city should be featured with plentiful parks and open space. Decisions are made and students debate on where the best place should be for a city center, school, airport, shopping, office buildings, police and fire station, and places of worship. After participating in this activity, students are able to describe the process of development, understand how land use decisions are made, analyze the positive and negative effects of a proposed project, list several positive effects of proper planning, understand the importance of balancing economic development with big box retail and small business, and discuss and decide as a group whether or not a project should proceed and in what form.

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2012 APA NATIONAL CONFERENCE MOBILE WORKSHOP (W045)**SANTA CATALINA ISLAND:
A MICROCOSM OF SMALL TOWN
PLANNING ISSUES IN THE WEST**

By Dale Powers, AICP

As many of you know, different parts of the country face unique planning challenges not experienced elsewhere. In the American West, there are several planning challenges:

- In resort communities with upscale housing, a struggle for affordable housing for residents who work at the resort exists.
 - Transportation is a big issue for residents of island communities with limited opportunities to work and shop.
 - Water is a BIG issue in the American West, with interstate compacts determining how much water each state can use, as well as controversy over agricultural vs. residential usage.
 - Balancing good land stewardship with property rights and creating economic opportunities for residents.
- Accommodating growth in resort communities with geographic limitations for outward expansion.

Each one of those challenges would make a great topic for a mobile workshop – especially with the 2012 National Conference being held this coming April in Los Angeles. To have all of those topics covered in one mobile workshop is a good use of your agency's training dollars.

“Santa Catalina Island: A Microcosm of Small Town Planning Issues in the West”, on Tuesday, April 17, does all of that and more! For much less than the cost of several mobile workshops, you will experience firsthand how Santa Catalina Island and the City of Avalon have addressed these issues. As well, your learning experience will be enhanced by the breath-taking beauty of Santa Catalina Island:



(left) Avalon, California – on Santa Catalina Island; (right) Catalina Casino



(left) Catalina Island Country Club; (right) Triana of Avalon – affordable housing

In addition to actually seeing how Santa Catalina Island addresses each of the five challenges listed above, you'll also be intrigued by learning more about:

- Why there is freshwater and saltwater service to each structure serviced by City sewer and water.
- Why there is a 17-year wait to own a car on the island.
- Why the Casino is not a gambling casino and what it is used for.

This all-day mobile workshop is hosted by Siri Eggebraten, Associate Planner for the City of Big Bear Lake, California; Anne Krieg, STaR Vice Chair of Programs; and Dale Powers, STaR Immediate Past Chair. Attendees will experience several learning modules during the workshop. En route to the island, Siri will give an overview of California planning law, including the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and the role of the California Coastal Commission in land use decisions.

After landing at Avalon, attendees will be welcomed by Amanda Cook, Planning Director for the City of Avalon. The group will be taking trolley cars up to Wrigley Memorial Gardens. During the trolley ride, Amanda will share with the group the historical context of Santa Catalina Island and how that has influenced land use planning. At the Memorial Gardens, Mel Dinkel of the Catalina Island Conservancy – which controls over 80% of the land area of the island – will present the Conservancy's role as steward of the undeveloped land and the role of eco-tourism in business development.

Lunch will be at the beautiful Catalina Island Country Club. During lunch, a representative of Hamilton Pacific LLC will share with attendees the challenges of constructing affordable housing on the island, where the scarcity of available buildable land drives up housing costs; Audra McDonald of the City of Avalon will discuss transportation grants that help offset the high costs of travel to the mainland; Wayne Griffin of



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the Catalina Island Chamber of Commerce will talk about the impact of tourism on the local economy; and a representative of Southern California Edison will share with the group how saltwater is converted to freshwater, and a representative of Environ Strategy will present why saltwater is run into structures on the island.

Of course, it wouldn't be a STaR mobile workshop without some interesting wrinkle. After the formal presentations, attendees will have 90 minutes to either partake in a special investigative exploration of Avalon (on foot or golf cart) based on what was presented at the workshop; visit the Casino with its unique architecture and history; visit the various tourist attractions of the area; or simply walk around and enjoy the beauty and unique architectural styles of the City of Avalon. Finally, on the trip back to the Convention Center there will be a trivia contest based on a combination of learning experiences and just plain fun! Prizes will be awarded – and all attendees are guaranteed to win a memento of their experience on the island.

The all-day workshop begins at 7:00am from the Convention Center and arrives back at the Convention Center at 7:30pm. There is a fair amount of walking on this workshop, so bring good walking shoes!

While this mobile workshop is more expensive than others, the awarding of 8.0 AICP CM credits makes the experience well worth the expense. It's like participating in 5 different workshops without paying for 5 different workshops.

If you have any questions about this mobile workshop, contact Dale Powers at 320-493-8930 or dalepowers@ziaplanning.com.

Thanks – and I look forward to seeing you in April!

Dale Powers, AICP, is the Immediate Past Chair Small Town and Rural Planning Division (STaR) American Planning Association



(left) Unique architectural styling; (right) Avalon business district

AZ PLANNING NEWS

ASU SCHOOL OF GEOGRAPHICAL SCIENCES AND URBAN PLANNING

The School of Geographical Sciences and Urban Planning learned on October 27 that the Planning Accreditation Board granted a 7-year accreditation to the Master of Urban and Environmental Planning (MUEP) program. This is the longest term possible under the Board's rules, and is based on the program's "exemplary record", according to Isaac Heard, Jr., AICP and Chair of the Planning Accreditation Board.

On the same day, the ASU administration informed the school that its proposal to offer a Ph.D. in Urban Planning had been approved. Application to the program will be available very soon, with a goal of admitting doctoral students in fall 2012.

"These are both very exciting developments," says David Pijawka, planning professor and director of the school's planning program. He feels that the positive decision of the Planning Accreditation Board can be attributed to the quality of its students and their satisfaction with the program, the faculty's productivity in research and scholarship, outreach with the

professional community, and collaboration between the planning program and other groups within the University.

The program's accreditation review has been a year-long process that included an extensive self-study prepared by the planning program's faculty and staff, as well as a visit by a PAB-selected review team that met with faculty, administrators, students and local planning professionals. As the final step, Professor Pijawka and school Director Anselin met with the Planning Accreditation Board in October. The accreditation decision "reflects that we are producing the next generation of top-notch planners who will be leaders both locally and nationally," comments Pijawka.

Dr. Pijawka feels that the integration of the planning and geography programs into the School of Geographical Sciences and Urban Planning, created in May 2009, is bringing valuable synergies. "The combined resources of the two programs will be a real asset to the new doctoral program," Pijawka says.



APA PLANNING NEWS

HOW WALL STREET CAN TRANSFORM THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

By Robert Steuteville, New Urban Network

In order for our economy to recover, financiers need to understand the benefits of mixed-use, compact real estate development models.

University of Michigan professor and Brookings scholar Christopher Leinberger has been talking for a decade about the 19 standard real estate development products that contribute to an automobile-oriented environment. Until recently, not many financiers paid much attention. Emily Badger wrote a [piece](#) *Atlantic Cities* about these types:

“Most people get that the housing collapse precipitated the recession. But Leinberger laments that we haven’t been talking about *which* housing, or *which* real estate products. Now the downturn – and the accompanying construction hiatus – may give developers and their backers time to think about this.”

These products include the grocery anchored neighborhood center, suburban detached starter homes, big-box anchored power centers, multi-tenant bulk warehousing, self-storage facilities, and other single-use types.

“They reflect almost exclusively what investors have been willing to finance for the last 50 years. And as construction picks back up following the recession, Leinberger says we’ll need to get away from every single one of them.” Badger reports. There’s hope that transformation is beginning to take place.

Speaking at the new urban council in Montgomery, Alabama, this month, Texas planner Scott Polikov reported that new urban planning tools, such as form-based codes, can give Wall Street financiers an edge

in portfolio diversification. Polikov says capital fund managers have expressed interest.

“I say it is time to go co-opt the system and educate the underwriting finance guys and gals about what it is going to take for them to take our neighborhood structure and diversify their risk profile to create a better investment strategy. A lot of people lost a lot of money, and I think we have one of the answers for them,” he says in a [video interview](#) with Ben Brown.

At the Congress for the New Urbanism in June it was [reported](#) that Wall Street is using Walk Score as an underwriting tool.

Washington, DC, “one of the few US cities largely immune to the real estate downturn,” provides a glimmer of hope, Badger reports. “Leinberger estimates that a good 90 percent of new development in the area has lately been planned for walkable, high-density living (see the [makeover of Tyson’s Corner](#) and the new [Navy Yard development](#) around the Nationals’ ballpark). These are the real estate products Leinberger believes we’ll need going forward: ground-floor retail with rental apartments on top, hotel/convention centers with condos above and a subway corridor below. These models may very well become standardized, too.”

We’ve always had standard real estate types, notes Leinberger. Main streets don’t look that different from California to New Jersey. It’s just that these mixed-use, compact types are more benign and meet the needs of today’s market.

AGENDA 21 AND OTHER WACKY THEORIES

By Robert Steuteville, New Urban Network

Anti-smart growth ideologues have never shied away from half-truths and dubious arguments, but recent references to Agenda 21, Portland, Detroit, and Denver are unusually strange.

This article co-authored by Wendell Cox and Ronald Utt focuses on the United Nation's Agenda 21, adopted in 1992, and its supposed connection to the smart growth movement. I guess the point is that if the UN issues a proclamation — in this case in favor of sustainable development — then any related activity must be part of some kind of world-government plot. The UN is also in favor of economic growth, peace, diplomatic relations, and education, and for programs that fight hunger, disease, and tooth decay.

According to my unscientific estimate, 99.9 percent of smart growth advocates don't even know what Agenda 21 is. The only reason why they may have heard of it at all is due to conspiracy theories from the fringe of the Tea Party. It's remarkable to me that nationally known smart growth critics — albeit the most strident ones — are making the case under the banner of the Heritage Foundation that smart growth is built upon a UN agenda. Utt and Cox summarize Agenda 21:

These policies are presented in four sections:

- *Social and economic dimensions (e.g., international cooperation to accelerate sustainable development in developing countries, combating poverty, changing consumption patterns, promoting sustainable human settlement development);*
- *Conservation and management of resources for development (e.g., protection of the atmosphere, planning and management of land resources, promoting sustainable agriculture and rural development);*
- *Strengthening the role of major groups (e.g., women, children, indigenous people, workers and trade unions); and*

- *Means of implementation (e.g., financing, technology transfer, promoting education and public awareness, international legal instruments).*

The authors explain:

It is the policies endorsed by Agenda 21 that are of most concern, and these policies are not confined to Agenda 21. On the contrary, those policies undergird the smart-growth agenda that has gained widespread acceptance in many parts of the US to the detriment of local economies.

The authors contend that smart growth began in California and Oregon in the 1970s (well before Agenda 21, it should be noted). This contention is, first of all, highly questionable with regards to California. Despite recent policies that should move the state towards smart growth, California has historically been a world leader in sprawl, and many of its government actions over the last three decades have promoted the construction of automobile-oriented subdivisions and highways over other forms of transportation. A few California cities adopted urban growth boundaries starting in the 1970s, but that policy in isolation is not to be confused with the birth of smart growth.

Oregon's leading city, Portland, has been progressive in adopting smart growth policies and is an icon in the movement. (In addition to its urban growth boundary, the city has also built light rail, promoted transit-oriented development and mixed-use planning, built the nation's largest bicycle network, calmed streets, reduced off-street parking requirements, and much more).

These policies got underway in earnest in Portland in the 1980s and 1990s — before the term "smart growth" was coined. If, according to Cox and Utt's way of thinking, Portland's growth management policies were economic killers, surely the city would have suffered severely in the last 30 years. Yet Portland has

undergone one of the most notable renaissances of any American city. Portland's population was stagnant from 1950 to 1980, but took off since 1980 — surging 59 percent.

Anyone who has been to Portland in recent years can attest to the thriving cultural and economic activity. Portland has a strong arts and music scene, is home to more breweries than any city in the world, has a strong knowledge of economy, and is a “foodie” town with varied and lively restaurants. The Metro region — which has been subject to smart growth policies — is home to or has significant operations of a long list of sizable corporations. All the while, Portland has cut its greenhouse gas emissions per capita by 16.2 percent since 1990.

While Cox and Utt are peddling these strange ideas, another pro-sprawl voice, Randal O'Toole, was warning the City of Detroit on Friday that if the city builds light rail, it would end up like Portland, Oregon, and Denver, Colorado. Detroit has lost more than 60 percent of its

population since 1950, including more than 237,000 people in the last decade, and is internationally known as a city in freefall. Detroit incidentally has the worst public transit system of any major US city. It has also arguably invested more public funds per capita in roads, for a longer period of time, than any city in the US — starting with the first concrete road paving in 1909.

I'm sure Detroit is terrified of repeating the mistakes of Portland and Denver — another city that was in decline in the 1970s and 1980s but has turned things around in a big way.

I've been told that in 1990, you could bowl ten-pins on many Denver downtown streets without disrupting traffic. Due to revitalization and smart growth, Denver's downtown has become one of the livelier urban cores in the US. Meanwhile, the city's population has surged by more than 130,000 in the last two decades — a 28 percent rise. By all means, Detroit, don't make the mistakes that Portland and Denver have made.

A. INFRASTRUCTURE

DIG, BABY, DIG

By Charles Marohn, New Urban Network

Our systems for funding new infrastructure are stuck in the 1950s. Our systems for funding maintenance of existing infrastructure are not serious. Combined, these approaches create outcomes that can't be justified by people considering themselves rational, let alone great.

Transportation for America has released a report on the state of bridges in the United States. It should be eye-opening for anyone even mildly engaged in the debate over the future of America's infrastructure. Titled “The Fix We're In For: The State of Our Bridges”, the report details, in a state-by-state, county-by-county breakdown, exactly where we stand.

For example, in my home state of Minnesota, we

have 1,149 bridges that have been determined to be structurally deficient, meaning they require significant maintenance, rehabilitation or replacement. According to Transportation for America, the cost to address all 1,149 bridges is \$500 million. But we're not going to focus on this sad fact; others have that covered just fine. Today we're going to look again at the Old Economy Project that Refuses to Die, also commonly called the St. Croix Bridge.

The St. Croix bridge is a proposed \$670 million crossing of the St. Croix; a river forming the border between Minnesota and Wisconsin. The city of Stillwater has long advocated for the new bridge as a way to address their congestion problem (the current bridge, which is deficient, runs right through town), to

the point where their council gave money to a group promoting the bridge, a contribution which turned out to be illegal. The nearest high-capacity bridge is eight miles away to the south.

Let's stipulate for the sake of this conversation that the new St. Croix bridge is a worthy project (it's not, but let's pretend that it is). At a time when Americans are being forced to make some really difficult financial decisions, particularly about infrastructure spending, the reason why this project is likely to proceed while 1,100+ of our deficient bridges receive little funding is important to understand. Understanding that reason will illuminate why we are in such a dire financial situation, why our infrastructure is failing and why nothing we are likely to do will make the problem better.

The St. Croix bridge is a very expensive project. It is projected to cost more than the estimate for fixing **ALL** of the 1,149 structurally deficient bridges in Minnesota.

Without knowing the numbers, it would be fair to assume that the St. Croix bridge is really critical in terms of traffic volume. Not so. The bridge is projected to carry 16,000 vehicles per day. For comparison, Minnesota's 1,149 structurally deficient bridges carry a combined 2.4 million vehicles per day.

This seems insane, and it is. Why would a state full of rational people spend \$670 million on one bridge to carry 16,000 cars when we already have 1,149 bridges carrying over 2.4 million cars that are in a state of critical disrepair? Why would we not spend the money first on maintaining the bridges that we have? What business do we have adding more bridges to the inventory when we do not have the resources to maintain our existing ones?

The answer is so simple and it is the key to understanding why our national infrastructure systems are in such miserable shape.

We can get money from Washington to build new infrastructure, but it is really difficult – if not impossible – to get

money from Washington to maintain existing infrastructure.

Put simply, maintenance is a local issue. Building new – expansion – is something we fund out of Washington D.C. through any number of programs or appropriations. But the catch is always that the drudgery of maintenance falls lower on the government food chain. In other words, it is up to Minnesota to maintain its bridges. There is some federal money there that it can go after, but largely the existing bridges are the states's financial responsibility. The fact that there are 1,149 bridges in critical disrepair points out that this system is not working real well.

Minnesota can say no to the St. Croix bridge money, but in doing so, it will not receive an equivalent amount of money that it can use to maintain its existing bridges. If Minnesota says no, the St. Croix bridge money will just go to some other state. Neither the congestion problem in Stillwater nor the problem of the 1,149 deficient bridges will be solved. A pragmatic local politician, understanding that a new bridge solves Stillwater's problems and won't create any significant liabilities for the state for 50 years or more, makes a rational decision and supports the project. Only a handful of people reading this blog right now will be around to bear the financial burden of fixing this bridge when it someday becomes deficient.

Think that through for a second and put yourself in the place of the person fifty years from now. There will be a deficient bridge in Stillwater that will then be in need of maintenance. It will serve only a small number of

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cars, but the cost will be astronomical – far more than can be afforded or that can be justified by the traffic volume. Do our grandchildren and great grandchildren put up the money to fix this bridge or do they just ignore the problem?

Well, if they follow in our footsteps, they will ignore the problem. Today we have 1,149 bridges just in Minnesota that were built generations ago that are now ours to maintain. We're not maintaining them.

And why would we? I don't ask that lightly, but simply point out that few of these bridges are high-return investments. The same thought process that is pushing the St. Croix bridge project forward was used to justify all of these other investments. We've not created any systems to ensure that these investments could be financially justified or to capture any value out of them once they were built. With the gas tax, our only incentive at the federal level is to encourage people to use

more gas. Building more bridges whenever there was a congestion problem, regardless of whether or not it could be financially justified, responded to this incentive perfectly.

We're two generations into this folly. Look around and see what we've created. We have failing infrastructure everywhere. The cost to maintain it all far outstrips our ability to pay, let alone any amount we could justify spending based on the value created. We've put ourselves into enormous debt not only in government but especially at the household level just trying to keep this system going. So what do we do now?

Apparently, at least for the time being, we just keep digging the hole deeper. Dig, baby, dig.

Charles Marohn is a Professional Engineer licensed in the State of Minnesota and a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners.

B. HEALTHY COMMUNITY DESIGN

TAKING HEALTHCARE TO STUDENTS

By Anna Gorman, Los Angeles Times

Clinics at schools are becoming a key part of the nation's medical safety net.

As soon as the school day ended, the rush at the health clinic began.

Two high school seniors asked for sports physicals. A group of teenagers lined up for free condoms. A girl told a counselor she needed a pregnancy test.

The clinic at Belmont High School near downtown Los Angeles is part of a rapidly expanding network of school-based centers around the nation offering free or low-cost medical care to students and their families. In California, there are 183 school health centers, up from 121 in 2004. Twelve more are expected to open by next summer, according to the California School Health Centers Association.

The centers have become a small but important part of the nation's healthcare safety net, experts say, treating low-income patients who might otherwise not have regular medical care. Now, they add, campus clinics are serving as a model for health officials trying to reduce costs.

Academic research has shown that school-based health clinics, which typically promote prevention and provide comprehensive services, reduce emergency room visits and hospitalizations. They also improve students' school attendance, reduce Medicaid costs and promote more healthful eating, according to studies.

Recently, school-based health centers got a fiscal boost from the healthcare reform law, which allocated \$200 million nationwide. California won \$14 million in grants this summer to open new clinics and expand existing ones. Los Angeles County received about \$4.3 million of that.

Most centers are based in low-income neighborhoods and staffed by doctors and nurse practitioners. They offer a range of healthcare services, including checkups, physicals, immunizations, mental health treatment, dental care and drug counseling. The clinics also monitor students' chronic diseases, such as asthma, and treat their illnesses so they don't miss school.

"There are so many reasons why students are not really ready to learn," said Serena Clayton, executive director of the California School Health Centers Association. "Teachers, principals and staff members are recognizing they are not going to be successful with kids if they don't address these underlying health issues."

Clinics on school grounds are uniquely placed to find and treat those health issues. There may be a shortage of food in the house that causes stress and physical problems, or drug use that leads to frequent absences.

"You just cannot ignore the reality of the patients' lives," said Julia Lear, senior advisor for the Center for Health and Health Care in Schools at George Washington University. "You step out into the hallways and there it is."



Medical assistant Ambar Trujillo measures Angel Zamudio, 4, at the Elizabeth Learning Center Medical Clinic in Cudahy. (Francine Orr, Los Angeles Times / November 16, 2011)

On a recent afternoon at Belmont Health Services, Henry Quiroz, a senior at nearby Miguel Contreras Learning Complex, wanted a physical for soccer. "I need it as soon as possible," he said. "The season has already started."

Marco Perez, 18, walked into the clinic to get free condoms. On the wall were containers with brochures on anxiety, sexually transmitted diseases and alcohol.

Perez said that friends told him about the center and that he liked the privacy of it. "The parents don't have to know," he said.

Belmont Health Services opened to students in 2009 and to the community last year. Though it is operating out of a portable classroom and a mobile van, the L.A. Unified School District plans to open a new center on campus next year, with five exam rooms and space for counseling and recreation.



There are 35 clinics on L.A. Unified campuses, which opened its first clinic more than two decades ago. The district plans to build 14 new centers, using school construction bond money.

For many youths, the centers fill a gap in care, said Dr. Kimberly Uyeda, the school district's director of medical services. "Adolescents are notorious for not receiving timely healthcare," she said.

Generally, school districts provide the facilities and community clinics or hospitals run the centers, paying for care with a mix of Medi-Cal, private insurance and government funds.

But even with the extra federal dollars, clinics still struggle to recoup their costs because many of the patients are uninsured and some of the services aren't covered. That partly explains why there aren't more centers, given that there are more than 6 million students in California.

"The challenge overall is funding," said Adolfo Lagomasino, spokesman for the Northeast Valley Health Corp., which operates four health centers in the county. "With these kind of tumultuous political times, to put it lightly, there is sort of an ongoing battle to maintain the safety net."

One of the most recent clinics to open is at Elizabeth Learning Center in Cudahy. Students can see a doctor on their own to be treated for such ailments as pink eye or a sore throat, as long as they have a consent form. That way, parents don't have to take a day off work, said clinic manager Sandy Wooten.

Elizabeth Madrigal, 18, a senior at the school, said she takes her 1-year-old daughter, Ezra, to the clinic regularly. After school one afternoon, Madrigal, still wearing her backpack, brought Ezra for her shots and a checkup.

Madrigal said the clinic is convenient. "The school is right there, so if I ever need anything, I can come over," she said.

Since opening in May, the Elizabeth Health Center, run by Northeast Community Clinics, has also reached out to parents and community members, and word is starting to spread.

On a Wednesday afternoon, Phillip Zamudio, 23, a restaurant worker who lives nearby, brought his two sons in to check on their anemia. And Rocio Cetina, 39, who attends the adjacent adult school, came in with her daughter, who had been coughing and sniffing. "It's a one-stop shop for everybody," Wooten said.

MOVERS AND SHAKERS - HAVING A RUN OF IT

Kilometer Kids helps kids get to 26.2 miles, one run at a time.

Pop quiz: On average, how long does it take most people to run a mile?

What's your guess? Ten minutes? Maybe 12?

According to Tina Klein, the answer is zero. Most people don't bother to run at all, let alone a mile.

Klein is hoping to change that by inspiring a new generation to hit the pavement. She oversees Kilometer Kids, an Atlanta-based program that guides

young people ages 7-12 as they run 26.2 miles over an 11-week period.

"To me, it's very personal because I want each and every child to succeed and excel," she says. "I know running is a sport that will help them get there, and running is the one sport they can do their entire life."

Kilometer Kids participants learn the fundamentals of training for a race and track their distance online. As the kids reach select mile markers, they earn prizes such as watches, shoe laces and even tennis shoes.



The Kilometer Kids website allows runners to track their miles online and includes helpful resources for their training.

The program is designed to instill a lifelong love of running into the youngsters, showing them that the sport doesn't have to be a punishment, as running often is viewed.

"You don't have to be a fast runner to have fun," Klein says. "You don't have to be first to have fun. You can still run and love the sport... It doesn't matter what socio-economic background you come from. It brings people together. Running forms a common bond."

A project of the *Atlanta Track Club*, Kilometer Kids launched in 2007 with 38 kids. Today, more than 3,000 students participate, as Klein and volunteer coaches and parents teach them the basics of training and eating healthy.

The kids train by playing fun games, and are served healthy snacks after training sessions. "They weren't used to getting the healthy snacks. It's a reward for them," Klein says.

Toward the end of the program, participants take part in an actual road race. Recently, students hit the pavement to run the last mile of the Atlanta Half Marathon, for example.

But since some of the runners live in low-income neighborhoods and aren't able to travel to the road races, the program comes to them. Kilometer Kids frequently holds mid-week fun runs in the communities it serves, which are set up just like a real road race — digital clock, finish line and finisher's ribbon included.

Along with inspiring the kids to get active, the fun runs also inspire parents, Klein says. Many moms, dads, grandparents and other guardians volunteer during the big event, which in turn gets the entire family moving.

Klein recalls that she worked with one young overweight boy, helping him shed pounds through running. But she also talked to his mom about healthy food options, which reshaped the entire family.

"His mom came to me and told me, 'I had no idea I wasn't supposed to be feeding him this until you told me,'" Klein recalls. "It's transformed his mother's life — and his brother's life as well."

PULSE OF THE MOVEMENT - THERE'S (GOING TO BE) AN APP FOR THAT

Surgeon General announces "Healthy App Challenge."

We already know that Surgeon General Regina Benjamin is hip — she knows how to do the Cupid Shuffle, after all — but it turns out she's also tech-savvy.

The Surgeon General's office announced this week the "Healthy App Challenge," a competition for software developers to create applications that will help people lead active lifestyles.

Entries can be submitted in three categories: "Fitness/physical activity," designed to get people who aren't active exercising; "Nutrition/healthy eating," focused on helping people prepare nutritious meals and eat well when dining out; and "Integrative health," which would integrate multiple parts of wellness such as sleep

habits, spiritual health, lifestyle behaviors and community health.

Submissions will be accepted on the contest website through Dec. 31, and winners are scheduled to be announced on Jan. 31, 2012. Click here to find out more information and view the contest rules.

The "Healthy Apps Challenge" follows the "Apps for Healthy Kids" challenge, a similar competition sponsored by the Department of Health and Human Services and the Let's Move! campaign in 2010. That challenge awarded \$60,000 in prizes to developers who created software apps designed to help children lead healthy lifestyles. The winners of that contest can be found here.

IT TAKES A WALKABLE VILLAGE

By Petra Spiess, New Urban News

How New Urbanism Makes Parenting Easier

The first week I was at home with my newborn daughter in my standard sprawl neighborhood located in Fort Collins, Colorado, I felt like I was stranded on the moon. In the morning, I would see cars leave and then I would see no activity on the streets in that neighborhood the rest of the day, with the exception of an occasional clichéd tumbleweed blowing through.

There are few occupations more lonely than suburban sprawl stay at home parent.

Americans currently spend so much time getting to, from, and at work that we

tend to get a significant amount of our daily socialization there, something I really didn't realize until I was no longer working. As a stay at home parent in sprawl suburbia, I usually didn't speak to another adult the entire day until my husband came home from work. If you want the fast train to crazy town, this is a good way to get there.

I couldn't take the baby anywhere without many minutes of car seat orientation and buckling, and then had at least a 10 minute drive to get anywhere of interest, like the bookstore or coffeehouse. On arrival,



Photo courtesy of Petra Spiess

minutes of baby unloading and baby stuff inventorying would commence. I already wasn't getting much sleep and was covered in baby barf so my patience for anything was near zero and this dance to get anywhere was exhausting. I had no friends or family nearby and I knew none of my neighbors. I was miserable.

Not all of that was my neighborhood's fault of course—it after all, wasn't responsible for keeping me awake at night—but the sterility and loneliness that resulted from my neighborhood's design sure made enduring those awful parenting times significantly more trying. Moving to a New Urbanist neighborhood when my daughter was two saved my sanity.

PEOPLE—FINALLY!

Whoever said hell is other people was not a stay at home parent living in the suburbs. I needed adult human interaction in a bad way and I needed it close and convenient so I could run back to home base in case of a diaper blow-out. The first thing I noticed when we moved to Bradburn Village, a new urbanist neighborhood in Westminster, Colorado, was there were people out walking around all the time—even in the middle of the day. Even just seeing other people made me feel less lonely.

I found that I met people easily when my daughter and I were out walking around the neighborhood or playing in one of the parks. In my first month in Bradburn, I met more people than I had known the entire four years living in my old neighborhood. Over time, I made many good friends as did my daughter. If we were bored at home, we could walk outside and almost always run into someone and have a nice chat, and my daughter could play with other kids without having to arrange a formal date, time, and place to do so.

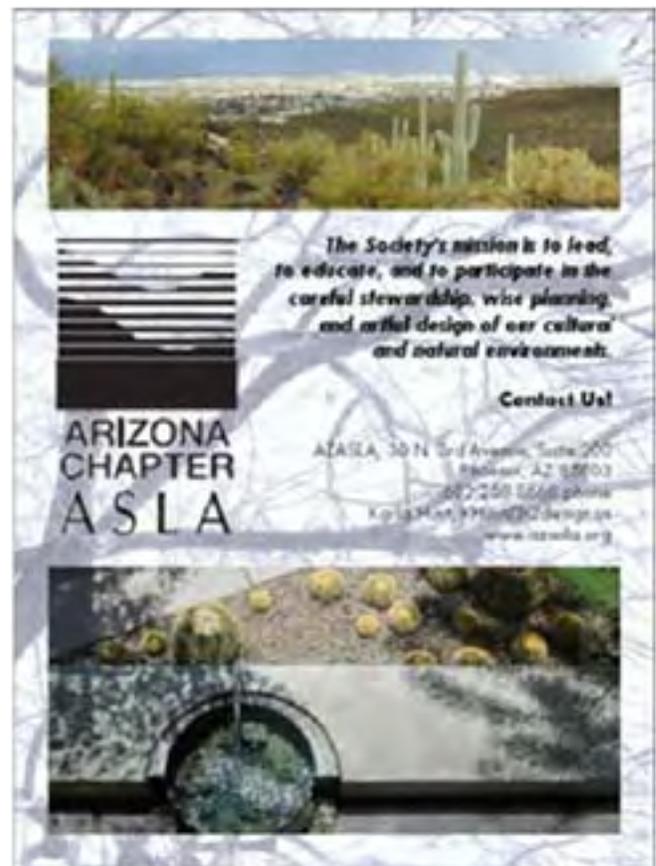
Now that my daughter is older, she can just open our front door and walk down the street to play with her friends—their homes are very close and the walk is safe. Bradburn was designed to encourage walking in many different ways and it works; it draws people out

of their homes and into the social realm and creates a nearly effortless sense of community.

EYES ON THE STREET

Because people are so frequently outside in Bradburn, they meet and get to know their neighbors and their neighbor's kids. It also means that there are many people watching any neighborhood activity and they know what is normal, what isn't, and whose kid just threw a dirt clod through another neighbor's window and ran away. This phenomenon is called "eyes on the street" and it comes in especially handy for parents.

One day one of my neighbors was driving back into the neighborhood when she noticed another neighbor's son (age 5) riding his bike quite far away from his house headed to a nearby shopping area. She thought this was odd but assumed one of his parents was on a bike behind him until she got home and heard that neighbor's son was missing. They had been having a party with a lot of people and their son had decided he wanted something from Walgreens right now and



had slipped out unnoticed. The neighbor who had seen him ran over and told his parents who hot-tailed it to the shopping area and discovered their son's training wheeled bike in Walgreen's bike rack and their son inside.

The only potential downside of eyes on the street is predicted to hit when the largest number of kids in Bradburn get to their teenage years. Neighbors often joke they will get away with nothing and will have to go to the beige large lot neighborhood next door to do any partying.

INTERESTING PLACES TO WALK TO

There are multiple services, restaurants, shops, and parks in 5-10 minutes walking distance from my home because of Bradburn's design. It's such a delight when you have kids to walk through a beautiful neighbor-

hood to a local ice cream store on a warm summer evening, seeing friends along the entire way. Once the kids are older, parents don't need to drive them everywhere—they can safely walk to stores themselves to buy candy or whatever takes their fancy. This promotes independence and exercise in kids and sanity in parents.

New urbanist neighborhoods with their pedestrian oriented design and promotion of effortless socializing are a boon for parents. Critics that charge new urbanist neighborhoods won't attract families because they don't have acreage sized yards are quite mistaken, as my neighbors and I can attest.

Petra Spiess has been resident of the new urbanist neighborhood of Bradburn Village for seven years and can't imagine raising her kid anywhere else.

BACKYARD CHICKENS: WWI-ERA SOLUTION TO ALMOST EVERYTHING

By Scott Doyon, New Urban Network

Over the course of the past six or eight decades, certain things have come to define, in part, our modern existence: Making a living out of your home has been increasingly restricted, especially in predominantly residential areas; the production of goods has fallen to fewer and larger hands; and we're now seeing the rise of what some call the helpless generation, with their legion of helicopter parents herding them about.

Now contrast that reality with this USDA poster from

just under a century ago, courtesy of online foodsteaders *The Icebox Chronicles*. In a simple, pragmatic way, the Fed somehow manages to address personal food security, childhood responsibility (the picture even shows them doing all the work), recreation, income potential, and patriotic duty all with a simple plea for backyard chickens.

But times have changed, you say. Today we live in a modern, convenience-driven world. That's fine, but are we so comfortably detached from the basic workings



of nature that we're now compelled to greet the prospect of a neighboring chicken (not even a rooster!) as though it were a landfill? Or a sex offender? (Like [this](#), or [this](#), or [this](#), or [this](#), or [this](#), or)

There's absolutely nothing revolutionary about a chicken. It's pretty much a cat with wings that pays you back in food and fertilizer. Which makes me wonder how something so simple, something once promoted by the US government as an easy, self-managed balm for a host of domestic (and national) challenges is now, less than a century later, a growing source of community angst.

They're fine. They're harmless. And they're a helluva lot quieter than a leaf blower.

Get over it.

Scott Doyon is principal, director of client marketing services with Placemakers, a planning, coding, marketing, and implementation firm. This article was also published on PlaceShakers and NewsMakers.

Uncle Sam Expects You To Keep Hens and Raise Chickens



Two Hens in the Back Yard for Each Person in the House Will Keep a Family In Fresh Eggs

EVEN the smallest back yard has room for a flock large enough to supply the house with eggs. The cost of maintaining such a flock is small. Table and kitchen waste provide much of the feed for the hens. They require little attention—only a few minutes a day.

An interested child, old enough to take a little responsibility, can care for a few fowls as well as a grown person.

Every back yard in the United States should contribute its share to a bumper crop of poultry and eggs in 1918.

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C. SUSTAINABILITY

SHAPE PUBLIC SPACE FIRST, THEN DESIGN THE BUILDINGS

By Philip Langdon, New Urban News

TREASURING URBAN OASES

"We've been so fixated on fancy new buildings that we've lost sight of the spaces they occupy and we share," *New York Times* architecture critic Michael Kimmelman argues in a long article about how the city is shaped.

Kimmelman presents a series of observations by Alexander Garvin, a New York architect and urban planner who has worked with five city administrations, beginning with Mayor John Lindsay (1966-73).

"What passes for public space in many crowded neighborhoods often means some token gesture by

a developer, built in exchange for the right to erect a taller skyscraper," says Kimmelman.

He starts his critique by accompanying Garvin to Lexington Avenue and 53rd Street in Manhattan, where they find two ill-coordinated public spaces: the sunken concrete plaza of Citicorp Center on the northeast corner and "a triangular patch of wind-swept sidewalk" on the southeast corner.

Kimmelman acknowledges that the Citicorp plaza has a few shops, trees, and building and subway entrances to draw people. But he laments that the public spaces in front of Citicorp and at the base of a high-rise just to the south suffer from having been conceived as "separate footnotes to skyscrapers."

Good public spaces are among the most fundamental elements of a successful city, Kimmelman observes. "Mr. Garvin argues that the city should reverse its approach, zoning neighborhoods like Midtown, Lower Manhattan and Williamsburg, Brooklyn, by thinking first about the shape of public space instead of private development," Kimmelman notes.

Americans might learn from the Dutch, says Kimmelman, who became the paper's architecture critic last summer. He observes:

The Dutch today put together what they call "structure plans" when they undertake big new public projects, like their high-speed rail station in Rotterdam: before celebrity architects show up, urban designers are called in to work out how best to organize the sites for the public good.

RESILIENCY: IT'S WHO YA KNOW.

By Scott Doyon, New Urban Network

Did the leisurely lure of the suburbs kill our sense of community?

If there's one thing the 20th century gave us, it's the luxury of not needing each other. It so defines our culture that it's physically embodied in our sprawling, disconnected landscapes.

That alone begs a classic, chicken-n-egg question: Did the leisurely lure of the suburbs kill our sense of community? Were our social ties unwittingly severed by the meandering disconnection of subdivisions and strip malls or was sprawl just a symptom of something larger? After all, for all their rewards, meaningful relationships take a lot of work. Perhaps, once the modern world elevated our prospects for personal independence, we cut those ties ourselves, willingly, lest our happy motoring be weighed down with excess baggage.

Sprawl: form following function.

Whether we're victims or perpetrators doesn't really matter. Either way, the land once described by Alexis de Tocqueville as a nation of associations, where

people look not to government but to each other to overcome the bulk of their challenges, is now described by Robert Putnam, in his groundbreaking 2000 book *Bowling Alone*, like this:

"Television, two-career families, suburban sprawl, generational changes in values—these and other changes in American society have meant that fewer and fewer of us find that the League of Women Voters, or the United Way, or the Shriners, or the monthly bridge club, or even a Sunday picnic with friends fits the way we have come to live."

It's who we are. And it's a problem.

WHAT? ME WORRY?

I can hear it now: "What problem? Thanks to the marvels of modernity, time once spent in negotiations with difficult people can now be applied towards something I find much more tolerable: Me."

I get it. The appeal is undeniable and it works just fine... until the party ends. And there's increasing indicators that that's exactly what's happening.

Today, the breakdown of local community has robbed us of our historic safety net. One in which half the population once belonged to a fraternal organization and from it received everything from fellowship and business opportunity to health care, lost-wage insurance and burial benefits. In its wake, we find a nation where the available support structures for the average person now number exactly two. At the one end, we have personal and family resources. You against the world. At the other, we have enormous institutions like the Federal Government or BP or United Healthcare. The faceless behemoths.

And in between? Our once robust networks of interdependent social, religious, institutional and commercial resources have largely withered on the vine, leaving currently en vogue cries for “less government” ringing a bit hollow. After all, when you strip away *big gubmint*, our primary source of support in a nation now devoid of Tocqueville’s admired communal unity, who’s gonna pick up the slack?

Oh, I remember. We’re a nation of rugged individuals who can fend for ourselves. Right.

BETTER TOGETHER

Of course, that’s not really true. There may always be the classic woodsman out there, living off the land but, for the majority of us, a stable economy, cheap energy, well-stocked grocery stores, big boxes filled with Chinese creature comforts, digital information at our fingertips, and endless sources of entertainment-on-demand have simply lured us into thinking we’re the masters of our own domains. As though self-reliance were actually easy.

Sadly, it’s not. As John Michael Greer says in his handy post-industrial how-to, *The Long Descent*, “One core concept that has to be grasped is the rule that the community, not the individual, is the basic unit of human survival. History shows that local communities can flourish while empires fall around them.”

Resilient communities are connected communities and there’s a [growing body of research](#) to back that

up. Furthermore, there’s more than a little evidence indicating that the strength of those connections is fostered, in part, by the [form those places take](#).

That’s right. I’m talking about *traditional urban form*. Walkable, neighborly [Smart Growth](#). Community design designed for the complexities of community.

ROADBLOCKS

Given the less-than-desirable state of our economy and the national financial obligations that go with it, common sense would dictate that we invest in the strength of our community ties as a reasonable tool for reducing demands on the Fed. Yet, curiously, those most concerned with whittling down the size of government are more often than not the same ones opposing the local community visioning and smart growth planning efforts necessary to restore the social fabric that makes such reductions possible.

Add to that the tenor of sustainability discourse. Day in and day out, it’s consistently predicated on *unthinkable* scenarios — natural disasters, climate change, peak oil, global financial meltdown. From a rhetorical perspective, this is done to create a sense of urgency but, in terms of motivating our efforts to rebuild local social networks, it tends to have the opposite effect.

Those things are just too big, too unpredictable or too uncertain to wrap our heads around. Justifying the effort to meet the neighbors now requires we buy into global warming? Aw, jeez. Just forget it then.

A NEW DISCOURSE

Instead, I propose a new premise. A simple premise. *Change happens*. That’s it. It is, without dispute, inevitable that change will come to our communities. It may take the form of a locally unique challenge or it may be the effects of something larger trickling down upon us. Something we brought upon ourselves or something unfairly levied.

It may be change for the bad, bringing with it great tragedy, or it could equally be change for the good, revealing tremendous new opportunities.

Whatever form it takes, the reigning constant is this: The deeper our sense of community and strength of its connections, the more robust our web of interdependent relationships, the better positioned we'll be to take it on and manage it effectively.

Connected communities are competitive communities. And those willing to compete are those best positioned to win.

IN PRACTICE

Recognizing the practical value of strong, local community is not a difficult proposition. The more we admit that we need each other and, in turn, make ourselves available to others, the better off we'll be. Many of us are already hard-wired to do this. Which means the role for municipalities is to simply make it easier — in the form of policy, expenditure decisions and growth planning.

One example I'm closely familiar with is right here in my hometown. Decatur, Georgia's community-wide strategic planning effort in 2000 revealed something interesting: The surge of newcomers descending upon this revitalizing city, as well as the long-timers greeting their arrival, wanted the city to take an active role in connecting people by providing a central clearing-house of civic-minded opportunities.

In response, the city created Volunteer! Decatur, which coordinates volunteers for city-sponsored events as well as maintaining a referral database of local, non-profit opportunities. Give 'em a call, tell them how you might be useful, and they'll point you in the right direction.

The city was simply responding to expressed need but, as it turns out, they were creating value as well. Not just in the terms discussed here, where a more robust community can better weather change in the future, but in the here and now.

Over the course of roughly eight city-sponsored events each year, volunteers contribute 13,000+ man-hours. Hours which, if gauged according to the skills

employed, translate to over a quarter million dollars in value. Each year. And that's not counting all of those steered towards the non-profits tirelessly taking on social imperatives that, in their absence, would fall on the shoulders of... you guessed it: government. Put a price tag on that.

But even better, in the course of all that volunteering, all those civic-minded participants met other civic-minded participants and forged the connections that have since resulted in things like community gardens which, in turn, inspired our local farmers' market and farm-to-school initiative.

That's how community grows. Of course, it's not just about food. It's a lot bigger than that.

It's about cooking up the tasty stock of resiliency. Tocqueville style.

Scott Doyon is principal, director of client marketing services with Placemakers, a planning, coding, marketing, and implementation firm. This article was also published on PlaceShakers and NewsMakers.



AN UPSIDE-DOWN VIEW OF WHERE ECOLOGICAL DAMAGE COMES FROM

By Robert Steuteville, New Urban Network

New Geography, the pre-eminent digital defender of US automobile-oriented policy, argues in recent articles [here](#) and [here](#) that suburbs are superior to walkable urban neighborhoods in environmental performance.

The claim defies sound reasoning and most scientific evidence. Not only do people have to drive more in the auto-oriented suburbs, but there's more infrastructure to maintain. Goods and services have greater distances to travel. And the houses and lots are bigger. All of the above promote more consumption.

With regard to greenhouse gases, the handiest data from *New Geography's* standpoint comes from Australia — specifically the study *Consuming Australia*, that forms the basis for the *Australian Conservation Association's Consumption Atlas*, where you can type in a postal code and get a number for average carbon emissions in that locale. The emissions closely track wealth, according to the *Atlas*, and wealth is concentrated in dense cities in Australia (more so than the US). So the number tends to be higher in urban postal codes, and *New Geography* has made much of this finding, citing this data [more than a dozen times](#) in recent years. This calls out for further examination, because there's a lot less here than meets the eye.

Consuming Australia attempts to allocate total greenhouse gas emissions to individual Australians. That's tricky, because most greenhouse gases are generated by industry, agriculture, road-building, and other sources that are difficult to attribute to households. Much of the data used by the study is national, some is gathered at the state level, and some is regional. Using economic models and consumption surveys, the authors apply this data locally. The study is intended to make individual Australians aware of how much carbon they produce when they go shopping or pop open a Foster's.

Unfortunately, *Consuming Australia* does not appear to be an accurate tool for assigning greenhouse gases at the neighborhood level. To accomplish that, it is crucial to get vehicle miles traveled (VMT) figures, among other data, for those neighborhoods. VMT is not part of the Australian study.

The implications of this omission go beyond individual driving. How do you allocate, to individuals, greenhouse gases from road construction and maintenance, a "free good" that is disconnected from household expenditures, without measuring VMT? Emissions from the asphalt industry are huge, and they are, in this study, distributed across the board — when they should be connected to settlement patterns that actually require higher or lower use of asphalt.

I don't want to pick on this study, because the main conclusion has some validity: Higher incomes tend to be associated with higher carbon emissions — but there are important exceptions, and they seem to occur mostly in very liveable compact cities (see New York data in the graph "Country and cities CO2"). Moreover, the correlation between spending and greenhouse gases does not hold true when comparing countries that have different settlement patterns (see US emissions versus European countries and Japan).

Europe, for example, with denser cities and a similar standard of living to the US and Australia, has far lower carbon emissions. US emissions are [82 percent higher](#) per capita than Germany's, and 207 percent higher than France's. If suburban development patterns reduced carbon emissions, then US, the most suburban nation on Earth, would be expected to generate less carbon than Europe, not significantly more as is the case.

Detailed studies in the US point to the reason. The [Housing & Transportation Affordability Index](#), (H&T Index) by the Center for Neighborhood Technology in

Chicago, has data on vehicle miles traveled and transportation carbon emissions for every census block and metro area in the US. Without exception, the metro areas look like the attached Portland map, which shows carbon emissions from transportation rising dramatically outside of inner cities.

Another map (Bay Area emissions) from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission shows greenhouse gas emissions from all transportation in the San Francisco Bay area. The emissions from the sprawling suburbs are triple those of the central cities. This study does not include added emissions from the building and maintenance of roads, parking lots, and far-flung infrastructure, or energy use in disconnected buildings.

Still another source is conservative economist Edward Glaeser of Harvard, who mapped carbon emissions for households in the Boston area, which, like the H&T Index maps, show a dramatic drop in carbon emissions as one moves from the suburbs toward the city.

A closer look at the first graph, by McKinsey & Co. and the World Resources Institute, dramatically illustrates two points. Not only are US emissions a lot higher than more urban developed nations, but also emissions for the US are triple that of America's densest city. Is the current brand of automobile-oriented suburbs greener? Impossible.

Getting back to Australia, it must be noted that the nation is in the midst of a hot political debate over a carbon tax, which has brought out factions that are making half-baked arguments. Although the authors of *Consuming Australia* defend their conclusion that the effects of wealth are greater than geography when calculating greenhouse gas emissions, they nevertheless strongly disagree with any conclusions that suburbs are inherently greener.

"We are aware that some commentators have used these findings to encourage unsustainable peri-urban

developments, and we categorically reject their conclusions," Chuck Berger of the Australian Conservation Association told Planetizen. "Eco-footprints in suburban areas in Australia are lower than in the urban core in spite of, not because of, lower residential densities."

The real issue is not whether automobile-oriented development patterns lower carbon emissions — this claim cannot be taken seriously in view of the evidence — but how the suburbs can be made greener. Most research points toward land-use reform to make suburbs more walkable, mixed-use, and transit-friendly. Fortunately, these measures also improve quality of life and revitalize local economies. I certainly hope that *New Geography* can support those goals.

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ENVISIONING FORESTS IN THE SKY

By Philip Langdon, *New Urban News*



The 27-story Bosco Verticale in Milan, designed by Stefano Boeri, is described as the world's first "vertical forest." Image courtesy of the *Financial Times*

"The most exciting new tower in the world is under construction in Milan," says Christopher Woodward, director of the Garden Museum in London, England.

"What sets the Milan tower apart is that it will be the world's first vertical forest, with each apartment having a balcony planted with trees," Woodward writes in the *Financial Times*.

The 27-story Bosco Verticale was designed by Stefano Boeri, who says that making it capable of supporting an urban forest adds only 5 percent to the construction cost. "In summer," Woodward writes, "oaks and amelanchiers will shade the windows and filter the city's dust." In winter, sunlight will shine through the bare branches.

Woodward's article tells about developments and imaginings around the world that would make tall buildings literally green. Unlike what's usually called green design (projects that use advanced technology but don't necessarily do much planting), Woodward says "the 'living architecture' movement goes beyond

the current [environmental and energy-conserving] legislation: it is about how cities should feel." He attempts to link this movement to the Garden City idea of Ebenezer Howard over a century ago. Today's architects, he laments, are generally "not taught to understand the rhythms and seasons of the external environment."



Torre Huerta, a social housing project of 96 apartments in Valencia, Spain, was designed by Rotterdam-based MVRDV and MGAARQTOS as a place where residents can grow oranges and lemons on their balconies. Image: MVRDV, courtesy of the *Financial Times*

D. SMART GROWTH

EPA PRAISES SMART GROWTH ACHIEVEMENTS IN 5 COMMUNITIES

New Urban Network

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) today recognized five communities with the 2011 National Award for Smart Growth Achievement. Through this award, EPA acknowledges and supports communities that use innovative policies and strategies to strengthen their economies, provide sustainable housing and transportation choices and protect the environment. The award winners show how communities of any size can use smart growth to become dynamic places to live, work, and play.

Smart growth policies include improving transportation choices to include walking, bicycling and public transit, promoting the safe redevelopment of potentially contaminated areas in local neighborhoods and reducing polluted stormwater runoff into area rivers and streams. These practices help protect Americans' health and the environment while strengthening local economies.

"Smart growth is a crucial strategy for tackling the environmental and economic challenges we face in the 21st century, and the communities we're recognizing this year are leading the way with their successes," said EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson. "By bringing together traditional ideas, innovative technology and common-sense planning, these communities are giving residents and businesses places that are healthier, safer and more economically and environmentally sustainable."

The 2011 National Award for Smart Growth Achievement recognized communities in five categories:

OVERALL EXCELLENCE

Old North St. Louis Revitalization Initiative, St. Louis, MO
Community leaders redefined and rebuilt the historic neighborhood of Old North to attract new residents

and economic growth while maintaining its distinctive character.

SMART GROWTH AND GREEN BUILDING

Silver Gardens Apartments, Albuquerque, NM

This LEED Platinum-certified apartment building puts affordable homes with innovative green design near reliable transportation options, helping low-income residents save money on energy, transportation, and housing.

PROGRAMS, POLICIES, AND REGULATIONS

Plan El Paso 2010, El Paso, TX

El Paso's development plan will create new transportation options that link neighborhoods to greater economic opportunity and to one another, encouraging growth that can bring new homes and jobs.

RURAL SMART GROWTH

Maroney Commons, Howard, SD

This small town revitalized its downtown with a green building that houses training for green energy and rural health care jobs and models innovative environmental approaches that can spur economic development.

CIVIC PLACES

Uptown Normal Roundabout, Normal, IL

Originally designed to manage traffic, the Uptown Normal Roundabout has evolved into a civic gathering place that increases business for local stores.

This year's winners were selected from a pool of 68 applicants from 27 states. The winning entries were selected based on their effectiveness in creating sustainable communities; creating a robust public involvement process; generating partnerships among public, private, and nonprofit stakeholders; and serving as national models.

EPA created the National Award for Smart Growth Achievement in 2002 to recognize exceptional approaches to development that protect the environment, foster economic vitality, and enhance quality of life. In the past 10 years, 47 winners from 24 states have shown the variety of approaches that states, regions, cities, suburbs, and small towns can use to

create economically vibrant and environmentally responsible development. EPA's Office of Sustainable Communities (OSC) manages the award program. OSC helps America's communities turn their visions of the future into reality through research, tools, partnerships, case studies, grants, and technical assistance.

NEW YORK PLANS AN OUT-OF-PLACE BOULEVARD

By Philip Langdon, *New Urban News*

By 2013, New York City is going to have its first new boulevard in years. But it may be the kind of thoroughfare that will make people wonder whatever happened to the art of boulevard design.

Above rail yards on Manhattan's Far West Side, a gigantic real estate development is in the works — a 26-acre commercial and residential project called Hudson Yards.

Redevelopment of the underutilized industrial area has been "a signature initiative" of Michael Bloomberg's administration from the day he took office in 2002, says *The New York Times*. Rezoning in 2005 and 2009 authorized up to 24 million square feet of offices, up to 13,500 apartments, 2 million square feet of hotel space, and a million square feet of retail in the area.

The Related Companies was chosen by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to develop 12 commercial and residential towers, a park, and a cultural center over rail yards between 10th and 12th Avenues, from 30th to 33rd Streets.

But blocks in Manhattan are extremely long from east to west, and the supply of parks on the Far West Side is limited, so a plan was devised that remedies both those problems in a single stroke: Between 11th and 12th Avenues, a combination boulevard/park will be created, running from 33rd Street to 42nd Street.

The design of what are being called Hudson Park and Hudson Boulevard was assigned to a team led by

Michael Van Valkenburgh Landscape Architects, in collaboration with the Hudson Yards Development Corporation (HYDC), the city's Departments of Parks and Recreation, Transportation, and City Planning, and the Economic Development Corporation.

BREAKING THE BLOCK

There's a lot to be said for breaking up the long blocks, as the HYDC plan does. Ever since Jane Jacobs's *Death and Life of Great American Cities* 50 years ago, people have been aware that short blocks enliven city life, that they serve pedestrians much better than long blocks. New York architect John Massengale, who has done extensive historical research, says all Manhattan blocks in the Commissioner's Plan of 1811 measure 200 feet in one dimension. That dimension explains why walking is so satisfying when you're heading north or south in Manhattan. It takes no time at all to cover a 200-foot block on foot.

The east-west dimension, by contrast, makes for long trudges. The blocks from Sixth to Twelfth Avenue stretch on for 800 feet, Massengale says. (Those between Third and Sixth Avenues are even longer, 920 feet.)

For the developer, the future boulevard corridor, which is to run at a slightly northeastward angle through the middle of the blocks, offers a marketing advantage: more attractive sites for companies that want their buildings to stand out. The buildings will have a certain pride of place, fronting on the boulevard. Fewer buildings will be relegated to inconspicuous

mid-block stretches, when compared to what happens on an 800-foot-long block.

From 39th to 42nd Street, the corridor will have a slightly meandering park and an accompanying pedestrian passage — no boulevard. It's south of 39th Street that the boulevard begins.

Unfortunately, the plans posted on the HYDC website show that this boulevard will be strangely incomplete. From 39th to 35th Street, Hudson Boulevard will have two 30-foot-wide stretches of pavement separated by wide medians — a configuration that's fairly common in boulevards.

But then, from 35th to 33rd Street, half of the boulevard vanishes. The median, which has been very wide for four blocks, expands and simply eliminates the pavement. The landscaped area — at this point it's really not a "median" any longer — marches up almost to the facades of the buildings. The buildings look as if they "own" the park. Perhaps that's deliberate—another marketing advantage—but if so, it's a transgression of the boundaries between public and private.

From 33rd to 35th, there is one 30-foot-wide northbound thoroughfare — it really can't be called a boulevard at that point, since its southbound counterpart is missing in action. The truncating of the boulevard seems an odd thing to do in a city that knows very well the virtues of a continuous grid.

RETURN OF THE AMOEBEA

What's worse, Van Valkenburgh's landscape plan is full of kidney-shaped and amoeba-shaped green areas. They recall the amoeboid designs popular among modernists in the 1950s — period pieces that I had assumed would never be revived. (Foolish me. I should have known that *everything* from modernism's heyday, no matter how goofy, gets a revival.)

The dictionary defines an amoeba as "a single-celled organism found in water and in damp soil on land, and as a parasite of other organisms." Indeed, the amoeba

here is a parasite sucking the life out of the traditional concept of the boulevard — it saps the boulevard's vitality and makes it look silly.

The curving, blobby forms shown in the site plan are apparently to be mounded up, Douglas Duany at the University of Notre Dame's architecture school tells me after a quick look at the HYDC website. But if the amoeboid shapes are mounded, does this make them any better than if they were flat? Hardly.

My sense is that what we're witnessing here is not only the resuscitation of a funny '50s form but also a transplanting of the berms that landscape architects have been deployed on suburban office parks and shopping malls for the last 30 years. In those low-density office parks, where everyone needs a car, the berms have a purpose, if not a particularly august one: They help hide the parked cars from people driving past on the roads. In the suburbs, a collection of mounds may be okay. But not in New York, least of all in Manhattan. I checked with a New York landscape architect who perhaps has more accepting tastes than I do, and she offered that "the overall design is probably to allow the pedestrian circulation to meander stream-like around a variety of verdant islands of lawns and trees." This, she said, would make a "dramatic contrast to the strict regularity of the surrounding cityscape."

"The design would represent a dynamic system, each park a fractal, a repeating element slightly differing from each other," she continued. "Some of this vocabulary came out of the chaos theory involving math, physics, biology, etc."

All of that may very well be true. But to my eye, a truncated, amoeba-encrusted boulevard looks wholly out of place in a dense urban setting. A city location of the sort being developed on the Far West Side deserves regularity and order. The straight lines of the streets and the buildings call for rows of trees and other elements that make a rhythmic, steady progression. A traditional boulevard has a certain amount of restraint and discipline, which is generally good for the cityscape.

One of the principles that underlies thoughtful urban design is appropriateness. That's what's missing in Hudson Park and Boulevard. With so much that's

positive about Hudson Yards, it's unfortunate that the boulevard seems to have been arbitrarily dropped there, from another time and place.

CAN GRASSROOTS PLANNING SAVE WHAT'S BEST OF A RAPIDLY SUBURBANIZING COMMUNITY?

By Kaid Benfield, New Urban Network

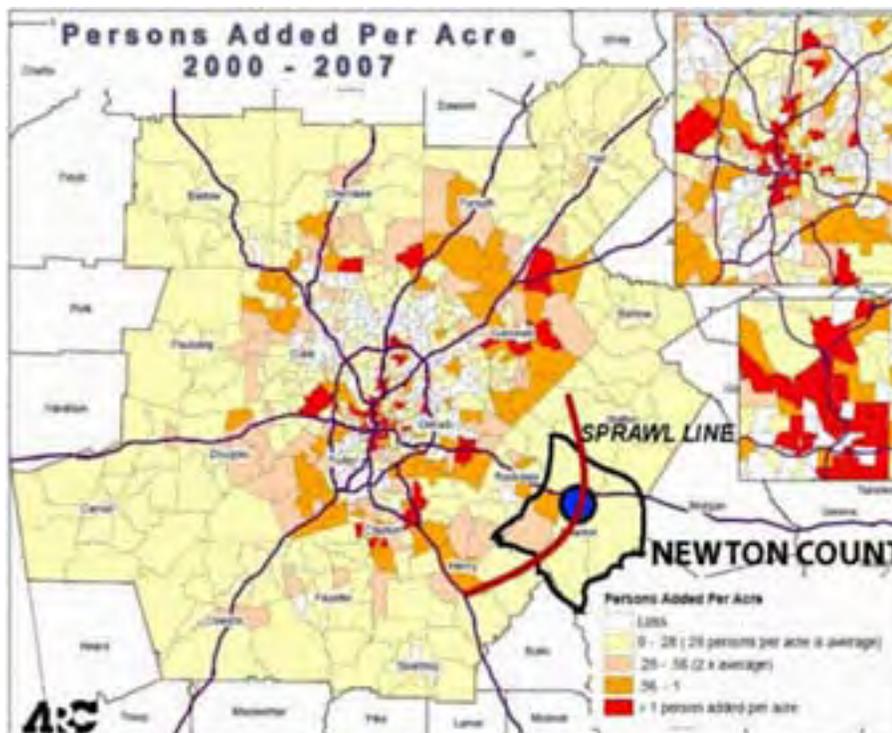
Residents of Newton County, Georgia, started from scratch and learned as they went along — eventually finding the right kinds of help and resources.

Not long ago, Newton, County, Georgia, was classic rural America: a few small towns, some historic buildings, and a lot of farming. But the county has had the good (or bad, depending on your point of view) fortune to be 30 miles from the center of one of the world's most rapidly expanding cities, Atlanta. And it is smack in the path of the tsunami of suburban sprawl that is emanating outward from the Georgia capital.

Consider some facts: in 1990, the county's population was 41,808. By 2010, it had more than doubled to 99,958. Looking to the future, even under a "low" growth scenario it will grow further to 159,700 by

2030, according to a county planning document; the more likely scenario puts the 2030 population at just over 200,000. And change conceivably could be even more dramatic than these predictions suggest: a series of excellent articles posted by Ruth Miller on CoLab Radio reports that the county's current zoning would actually allow 350,000 people. (CoLab is the Community Innovators Lab sponsored by MIT.)

Newton County's racial/ethnic composition as of 2010 was 52 percent white, 41 percent black, 5 percent Latino. Transportation habits? Commuting by walking, bicycle, and public transportation combined was 0.12 percent in 2000.



These facts are daunting, to say the least, given the alarming prospect of disappearing countryside, mind-boggling traffic, and near-total loss of small-town life in Newton County's near future under current trends and conditions. And they are compounded by the fact that this community has never before had to think about growth management or sustainability.

But the people of Newton County have risen to the occasion. The municipality now has an comprehensive economic development and growth management plan that, according to Miller, will direct growth "into five new planned compact communities [and] will put 88% of the

future population on 30% of the county's land. These communities will be walkable, with neighborhood schools and a mixture of uses. The open space and working farms in the rest of the county would be preserved for future generations."

This ambitious new plan came about because of some remarkable leadership. One key catalyst has been The Center for Community Preservation and Planning, which is both a meeting space in the county seat of Covington and an organization facilitating discussion about the county's future. The nonprofit Center, which is funded by private sources including The Arnold Fund, has become the physical and social catalyst for the planning process. Here's Miller:



The Center for Community Preservation and Planning

"The Center for Community Preservation and Planning feels like a combination rustic farmhouse and landscape architecture studio. The tables are made of reclaimed doors and sawhorses, topped with butcher paper and markers. The walls are covered in maps – maps of watersheds, zoning, schools, populations past and predicted, etc. The place feels busy and full, but it works because it lacks an agenda.

"The Center, as it's called, prides itself on being a neutral planning place. Founded in 2002, it extended an open invitation to anyone that wanted to learn about or discuss the ongoing development boom. When a curious resident, community leader, or elected official posed a question the Center's staff couldn't answer, the Center called on students and friendly professional contacts to find the answers."

Next was the formation of the county's Leadership Collaborative, comprising appointed and elected officials from the county government, the governments of the five cities within Newton County, the county's school board, the water and sewer authority, and the Chamber of Commerce. The collaborative quickly realized it had to "allocate the density" of future growth, as Miller writes (Miller was part of the process as an MIT grad student), to have any chance of preserving the character of the county's towns and landscape. The collaborative has now spawned issue groups that meet regularly to discuss and plan finance, communications, and development.

A third helpful ingredient has been a Metropolitan Design Studio created by the University of Georgia and located near the Center. The studio hosts students in landscape architecture and planning in a "live-and-learn" environment to assist with technical aspects of the process.

A draft of the Economic Development Strategy for Newton County, Georgia is posted on the Center's web site. Its 134 pages detail the comprehensive plan, which is based on some essential building blocks of smart growth and sustainability:

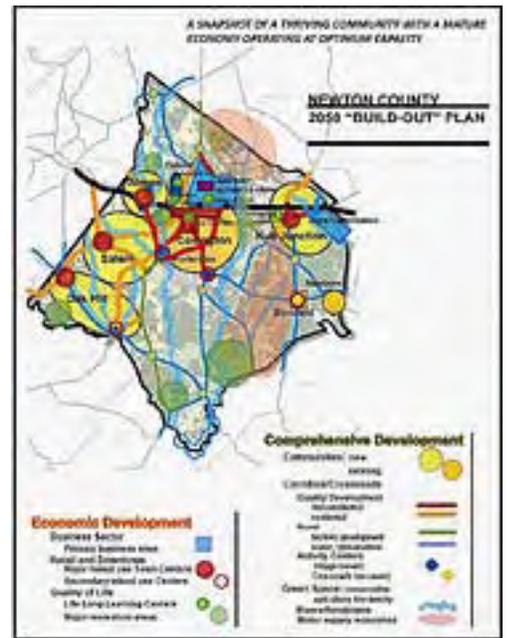
- Grow jobs at home to reduce the portion of residents commuting long distances;
- Preserve a majority of the county as "green land;"
- Concentrate higher density development using existing infrastructure and services to create mixed use, walkable communities;
- Concentrate growth along corridors to preserve scenic and historic resources;
- Protect watersheds, river corridors, and agriculture
- Coordinate planning and funding of infrastructure, schools and other public investments.

The plan also includes among its goals reducing rates of driving, building potential for transit, preserving tree cover, fostering walkability and local food production, hosting green industry, and creating well-planned industrial and office growth.

As with all ambitious plans, the proof will be the doing. But Miller's articles, the plan itself, and the Center's website present a very rich story of how this community started from scratch and learned as they went along, eventually finding the right kinds of help and resources. The result is a terrific set of economic development and sustainability goals for a municipality that, ten years ago, basically had none at all.

A short video, produced by Miller, provides a great summary of why and how all this came to be. Watch the video [here](#).

Kaid Benfield is director of sustainable communities at [The Natural Resources Defense Council](#) in Washington, DC. This blog also appears on [NRDC Switchboard](#) where Kaid writes (almost) daily about community, development, and the environment.



HELP FOR COMMUNITIES PURSUING SMART GROWTH

By Philip Langdon, New Urban Network

Communities that want to obtain technical assistance to help them tackle smart growth objectives are invited to submit letters of interest by Oct. 28 to the US Environmental Protection Agency or to any of four nonprofit organizations that are helping deliver assistance.

EPA is providing free consultation through two programs:

The Smart Growth Implementation Assistance (SGIA) program is an annual, competitive solicitation open to state, local, regional, and tribal governments (and non-profits that have partnered with a governmental entity) that want to incorporate smart growth techniques into their future development. At the SGIA website, EPA says the communities that are selected “will receive direct technical assistance from a team of national experts in one of two areas: policy analysis (e.g., reviewing state and local codes, school siting guidelines, transportation policies, etc.) or public participatory processes (e.g., visioning, design workshops, alternative analysis, build-out analysis, etc.)” This

program focuses on “complex or cutting-edge issues, and projects take about 18 months,” according to EPA. “These projects explore innovative ideas to overcome barriers that are preventing communities from getting the kind of development they want.”

Applicants for the SGIA program must contact EPA to be considered for this assistance.

EPA’s Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities program is geared to providing short, quick assistance on common development challenges. It helps communities interested in Complete Streets, a green streets strategy, a parking audit, preferred growth areas, a walking audit, and other topics. This assis-

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tance is delivered through four nonprofit organizations: Cascade Land Conservancy, Global Green USA, Project for Public Spaces, and Smart Growth America.

The four nonprofits have received grants from EPA to offer technical assistance—generally a one-day visit by a team of experts organized by EPA, HUD, and DOT.

To find out what kinds of assistance are available through the four nonprofits, as well as the application processes and schedules for applying for assistance from them, EPA asks that communities contact those organizations directly.

For answers to frequent questions about the Building Blocks program, click [here](#).

USING CORPORATE POWER TO REVITALIZE AN URBAN CORE

By Robert Steuteville, *New Urban News*

In his 2002 book *The City In Mind*, author and urban critic James Howard Kunstler was scathing in his assessment of Las Vegas, a city which he described as having reached a tipping point of unsustainability — especially the Strip, with its enormous gaming complexes and massively built thoroughfares.

Now through Richard Florida's "Creative Class" concept, there could be hope for the urban vitality of at least part of this metropolis. That is the story from writer Venkatesh Rao, a contributor to *Forbes*, who describes how Zappos CEO Tony Hsieh is trying to transform downtown Las Vegas into a hip haven for city-oriented tech professionals. Rao calls the concept "Corporate Neo-Urbanism."

Hsieh, reports Rao, wants "every downtown bar and eatery to serve as an extended conference room for Zappos employees." Zappos, a major online shoe and apparel store with a reputation as a progressive employer, needs to attract the kind of Creative Class employees that will enable it to thrive. There are three approaches, "represented by Google, Meetup and Zappos respectively," Rao notes:

You could attempt to create the right environment within a large campus, located sufficiently far away from the main urban hub so that it is relatively cheap (Google), you could suck it up and compete for the hipster talent that is willing to pay the costs of Big City life and limit your growth (Meetup), or you could attempt to swallow a likely cheaper location whole, and catalyze the emergence of the neo-urban scene you need for your workforce (Zappos).

The transformation of Las Vegas poses significant challenges, among them:

Vegas is (to be honest) a somewhat unpleasant city in the middle of a desert that endures an awful six months of extreme heat. Outside of a few pockets, it lacks an existing creative class.

The transformation of Las Vegas is beyond the capacity of any one corporation. But the idea that Zappos wants to make its downtown better is a hopeful sign for corporate America and urbanism.

USING CORPORATE POWER TO REVITALIZE AN URBAN CORE

By Philip Langdon, *New Urban News*

TO RETHINK SPRAWL, START WITH OFFICES

To counteract sprawl, Americans should start reenvisioning the vast suburban areas that are occupied by business offices poorly connected to transit and other uses, says Louise A. Mozingo, author of *Pastoral Capitalism: A History of Suburban Corporate Landscapes*.

In an op-ed piece in *The New York Times*, Mozingo, a professor of landscape architecture and environmental planning at the University of California, Berkeley, describes the suburban office as one of the archetypes of sprawl.

Enclaves of suburban offices “cover vast areas and are occupied by a few powerful entities, corporations, which at some point will begin spending their ample reserves to upgrade, expand or replace their facilities,” Mozingo says. She traces the development of bucolic business offices to 1942, when the AT&T Bell Telephone Laboratories moved from Lower Manhattan to a custom-designed facility on 213 acres outside of Summit, New Jersey.

“Yet suburban offices are even more unsustainably designed than residential suburbs,” she observes. “Sidewalks extend only between office buildings and parking lots, expanses of open space remain private and the spreading of offices over large zones precludes effective mass transit.”

Knowledgeable readers might quibble with Mozingo’s assertion that “so far there’s been little discussion” of

the suburban office as an instigator of sprawl. There have in fact been quite a few articles over the years in *New Urban News* and *New Urban Network* about the need to reintegrate office employment into walkable, transit-served, mixed-use development.

One forward-looking development is Sonoma Mountain Village in Rohnert Park, California—a walkable, mixed-use center with thousands of jobs that Coddling Enterprises is creating on the site of a 1980s, auto-oriented business complex (see [Sept. 2010 *New Urban News* story](#)). An earlier proposal was the Upper Rock District in Rockville, Maryland, designed by Duany Plater-Zyberk & Co. for developer JBG Companies in 2004 (see [July 2004 *New Urban News*](#)).

Last August, [plans were reported](#) for Great Pond Village, a \$1 billion development planned by Urban Design Associates for a 653-acre site in what has been a sprawling, suburban corporate office corridor in Windsor, Connecticut. And transit-oriented development has become a priority of some governments, such as [Maryland’s](#)—part of an effort to place more jobs, retail, and housing in mixed configurations that are not dependent on automobiles.

Clearly, though, it’s good to see this issue receiving attention on *The Times’s* op-ed page. Even more encouraging, the op-ed piece on the need for better-configured offices was paired with a piece by Christopher Leinberger, “[The Death of the Fringe Suburb](#),” on America’s demographic shift toward walkable places.



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