

# CREATING SUCCESSFUL MIXED-USE COMMUNITIES

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## Part I:

### SPRAWL IS....

- Low-density, single-use development
  - Housing types and prices segregated
  - Commercial uses separate from residential
  - Housing subdivisions, shopping centers, office parks
  - Very land-intensive

### Sprawl is a Complete System

- Housing in single-type, single-price neighborhoods
- Shopping centers and parking lots
- Office parks and parking lots
- School sprawl

Which requires:

- Highways to tie it all together

And often results in:

- Traffic congestion
- Loss of farmland and countryside

### “The sticker shock of metropolitan sprawl”

Brookings Institution, 2003

- For every household dollar (1998) (source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics)
  - 19 cents is spent on housing
  - 17.9 cents is spent on transportation

- In “Sprawl-belt” cities - Houston, Dallas, Atlanta - households spend more on transportation than on housing

### **Can states keep up?**

- Since 1991, only three states have raised gas tax = rate of inflation.
- In 2003, 45 states in budget trouble.

### **Traffic congestion: can this battle be won?**

- Induced travel (new highways generate new trips, so new highways do not reduce congestion very much)
- Not many new highways are being built (environmental, political and financial reasons)
- Local elected officials rank new highways low:

### **2003 Survey of County Officials**

#### **Transportation Priorities:**

1. Road maintenance
2. Road safety
3. Congestion relief
4. Increase road capacity
5. New freeways

Source: National Assn. of Counties

### **2003 Survey of Mayors**

#### **Transportation Priorities:**

1. Increased funding for transit and rail
2. Metropolitan-wide congestion relief
3. Integrate land use with transportation
4. Road maintenance
5. New freeways

Source: U.S. Conference of Mayors

### **“AAA Arizona Public Affairs Survey Reports Surprising Results”**

***March 5, 2003, Phoenix, AZ: AAA members who rely almost exclusively on automobiles for daily transportation needs, would opt to spend more money on public transit than new roads, according to survey.***

## **Part II: SMART GROWTH and MIXED USE COMMUNITIES ARE HAPPENING**

### **Redeveloping Malls into Communities “Greyfield malls”**

- “Older, economically obsolescent regional malls.”
- 7% of malls nationally are greyfield malls
- Another 12% could potentially become greyfield malls  
PriceWaterhouseCoopers, 2001

### **Recommendation**

- “Redeveloping into high density and mixed use” offers benefits to greyfield mall owners, owners of nearby healthy malls, and the community. PriceWaterhouseCoopers, 2001

**Example: The Crossings  
Mountain View, CA**

### **Highway Strips to Towns**

**Examples: Photo-simulations of adding buildings close to street**

### **Transit-Oriented Development**

**Example: Pleasant Hill BART Station (CA)**

### **Neighborhoods with a Mix of Housing Types and Prices**

**(example: Aggie Commons, Davis, CA)**

**More interest in city housing**

**More interest in transit**

**More Interest in New Products:**

**lofts, live-work units, accessory units**

**“Smart Growth” Development:**

**New Traditional Neighborhoods**

**New Suburban Downtowns**

**Infill and Higher Density**

## **“Greenfield” development as complete neighborhoods and towns**

**Apartments can be built as neighborhoods, not “complexes.”**

Example: Addison Circle by Post Properties, Dallas

**Expanding the fabric of villages and small towns**

Example: Port Royal, SC

## **Smaller, “walkable” schools**

(require sensible school development standards by states and school boards)

## **Smart Growth...**

- Is not just about high density
- It is about mixed uses and connectivity

## **Part III:**

### **MARKET REALITY: Where do People Want to Live?**

Builders say: “People love the suburbs as they are.” “Families have rejected dense urban environments.”

Smart Growth advocates say: “Consumers don’t have enough choice.”  
“How can buyers choose something that isn’t there?”

### **Survey of recent homebuyers (NAR & NAHB, 2002)**

Were a sufficient number of homes available in your price range to give choices in location, design, features, etc.?

Yes 70%

No 30%

Which of the following statements do you agree with?

64% I wish my home were larger

23% I wish my home were closer to where I work

**27%** I wish I could walk to more places from my home

7% I wish I were closer to the city

Please rate the importance of the following community amenities...

("important + "very important"):

- 46% Highway access
- 36% Walking/jogging/bike trails
- 28% Sidewalks
- 26% Parks
- 19%** Shops within walking distance
- 9% Soccer field
- 5% Security guard at gate

Would you buy a home in a neighborhood with a wide range of housing types incl. single-family, townhouses and apartments?

- Definitely yes **17%**
- Maybe **47%**
- Definitely no 36%

### **Metropolitan voters polled on transportation issues (NAR, 2001)**

**Would you be willing to commute using:**

**Public bus** if it were convenient, safe and available?

- Willing **52%**
- Not Willing 47%

**Rail or train** if it were convenient, safe and available?

- Willing **62%**
- Not Willing 36%

**Please choose the statement you most agree with:**

I'd rather have a commute to work 30 minutes or less, even if it means living in a smaller home or on a smaller piece of property. **50%**

I'd rather live in a larger home on a larger piece of property, even if it means a commute to work of more than 45 minutes. 44%

**How important was each issue in forming your attitudes and opinions about where you choose to live: ("important" + "very important")**

- Low crime rate 98%
- Good quality public schools 92%
- Sidewalks 70%
- Convenient public transportation 65%
- There are shops and restaurants within walking distance **52%**

NAR, July 2002, 1000 voters

## **California Voters were asked, “Would you choose to live...**

In a mixed-use neighborhood where you can walk to stores, schools, and services? 47%

OR

In a residential-only neighborhood, even if it means you have to drive a car to stores, schools, and services? 50%

## **“Would you choose to live...**

In a high-density neighborhood where it was convenient to use public transit when you travel locally? 31%

OR

In a low-density neighborhood where you would have to drive your car when you travel locally? 66%

Public Policy Inst. Of Calif., Nov. 2002

## **My Interpretation**

Yes, MOST people want a single-family home in a low-density suburb where they have to drive to everything.

BUT perhaps ONE-THIRD of the population wants the option of higher-density, mixed-use, walkable neighborhoods with transit.

### **More indications of a new market demand:**

- In 2002, 13% of all homes sold in US were condos.
- 2000 Census: Traditional family of husband + wife + children = only 23.5% of American households.
- Demand for new housing types: lofts, unfinished space.

### **An apparent desire for unstructured, unfinished space: What do people do with Three-Car Garages?**

Cars parked in garage:

No cars	17%
One car	30%
Two cars	40%
Three cars	13%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1999

## **Part IV: Economic Development**

Economic development is no longer about chasing factories. In the new economy, what is needed is:

- Educated work force
- High quality community
  - Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class*. Successful communities will have:
    - Diversity
    - Urban locations with high amenities
    - Places that conserve time (24-hour cities)

(This sounds a lot like Smart Growth and Mixed-Use Communities.)

**An example of Smart Growth ideas affecting economic development strategies:**

### **Central Indiana Economic Development Strategy recommends:**

- A mosaic of quality neighborhoods and a vibrant urban center
- Quality urban design and public space
- Diversity of civic life
- Racial and ethnic harmony

More and more, Economic Development = Smart Growth and Mixed-Use Communities