Urban Planning Law, Growth, and Sustainable Development

An American Perspective

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Our Built Environment Of Low Density Automobile Dependant Sprawl Is Not Sustainable!
Green Urbanism

• European Sustainable Cities Campaign Charter 1994 Alborg, Denmark (500 European cities and towns)

• U. S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement 2006 (700 U.S. cities and towns)
Some Real Inconvenient Truths

* Urban Planning & GHG emissions

* America will have to embrace an ethic of stewardship/social cohesion

* The reduction of GHG will be enormously costly - for less affluent
Cities as “Growth Regulators”

Urban Planning & Sustainable Development
Energy Consumption USA

- Buildings 48%
- Transportation 27%
- Industry 25%

The built environment
> 75%
Wind and solar energy of USA energy production

- $\frac{1}{2} \%$
High Density is Green

David Owen
“Green Manhattan”
New Yorker
Oct, 2004

environmentally & economically

Higher density mixed use development can be 40%-80% greener than low density detached homes.
Benefits of Higher Density Mixed Use Less Auto dependent Development

• Enhance lifestyle choices
• Reduce automobile use
• Increase household incomes
• Enhance global competitiveness & job creation
• Enhance economic productivity
• Enhance public health & safety
• Reduce infrastructure costs
• Reduce environmental impacts
• Enhance energy security-peak oil
• Reduce fossil fuels & GHG
• Enhance social cohesion
The cleanest and cheapest power plants and cars are those we don’t have to build or use due to smart urban planning.
Urban Planning
21 century?

Colorado USA

Shanghai China
Welcome!
New Urbanism
Town Center

Smart Growth
Meeting Tonight

Are Americans ready for a low-carbon diet??

Transportation is 33% of USA’s GHG emissions
Fixed Rail Public Transit for widely dispersed population?

A Comparative Perspective

Barcelona, Spain 1.6 million pop.

By year 2030
* 10 million households TOD
* 40 million households aren’t TOD
* 70 million more cars

City of Denver, USA ½ million pop.

* Barcelona has 9x Denver’s Residential Density
Denver could add another 1 million people and still have only 1/3 the density of Barcelona.
Ildefons Cerda’s Plan for expansion of Barcelona 1854
Santa Catarina
Means of Transport – Barcelona 2006

+75% trips - pedestrian, bicycle or public transit
Energy – Transportation - Density

USA Transportation
+80% of oil supply

Energy for mobility MJ/p/a

Density people per ha
Spain has less than $\frac{1}{2}$ per capita energy consumption and GHG emissions of the USA.
TOD - Vienna, Austria
New Urbanism - A typology
High density is green

Still auto dependent in USA?

• True urbanism – highest density - No, 80+
• Old urbanism – very high density- No, 20-80
• New urbanism – much higher density- No, 15-20
• New urbanism – higher density -Yes, 5-15
• Hypersprawl - low density*-Yes

*1-5 units per acre
SMART GROWTH?
Built Environment NIMBYS

“Sentimental NIMBYS”

Land use activists promoting the “public interest” by “fighting sprawl” through various “smart growth” and “environmental protection” restrictions (which enhance the aesthetic character and property values of existing neighborhoods but that actually promote more harmful and unsustainable low-density regional sprawl).

“Think globally - Exclude locally”
The USA built environment
Social Cohesion and the Public interest?
Beyond the Federal Fair Housing Act

* Snob zoning and spatial segmentation

* Environmental justice issues in planning

* Gated communities & inward looking behavior

* Car culture & isolation, anxiety, disconnection
The USA Built Environment & Sprawl

Is there a decline in altruism, civic engagement & social cohesion?

- Mark Baldassare, Trouble in Paradise 1986
- Robert Fishman, Bourgeois Utopias 1987
- Eric H. Monkkonen, America Becomes Urban 1988
- Joel Garreau, Edge City 1991
- James Kunstler, The Geography of Nowhere 1994
- Moshe Safdie, The City After the Automobile 1997
- F. Kaid Benfield, Once There Where Greenfield's 1999
- Joseph Rykwert, The Seduction of Place 2000
- Hal Kane, Triumph of the Mundane 2000
- Robert Putman, Bowling Alone 2000
- Andres Duany, Suburban Nation 2000
- John DeGraaf, Affluenza: The All Consuming Epidemic 2001
- Setha Low, Behind the Gates 2003
- Greg Easterbrook, The Progress Paradox 2003
- Morris Berman, Dark Ages America 2006
Social cohesion and the ethic of stewardship

The cornerstone of sustainable development policy
Need for new federal and state policies tempering local control of urban planning

Regional policies promoting higher density mixed use less auto dependant development
ULI Growing Cooler
Policy Recommendations

• Reform of local zoning and growth management programs

• Strengthen link between urban development and transportation planning

• Federal EPA standards for regional transportation and GHGs

• Federal “Green-TEA” Transportation Legislation promoting reduced auto travel in metro areas

• Federal transportation funding to Metropolitan Planning Organizations for alternatives to auto transit

* Outlaw solo drive commuting -25% oil consumption
The end
Our twenty-first century  
2008-2050 problematic times USA

• Much oil from unstable regions of the world
• US households/a negative savings rate
• US $ +150 billion yr global terrorism
• US $ 8 trillion national debt
• US $ 2 trillion state infrastructure deficit
• US $50 trillion federal entitlement deficit by 2050
• Problem of sustaining “long term” goals in “short term” inward-thinking democracy.
• Problem of social cohesion
BOULDER, COLORADO
A Sustainable Self-Sufficient City?
Think globally- Exclude locally!

- City has population of about 95,000.
- City has about 53,000 working residents.
- About 30% (16,300) of city’s working residents work outside city.
- About 30,000 students attend C.U. (most receive money from outside city and the city does not provide these people with jobs, housing or services).
- About 40,000 people work in the city but live outside city—many priced out of housing in the city.
- Local zoning and growth management programs are a significant cause of city’s inflated housing prices.
- Local zoning and growth management programs are a significant cause of regional sprawl.