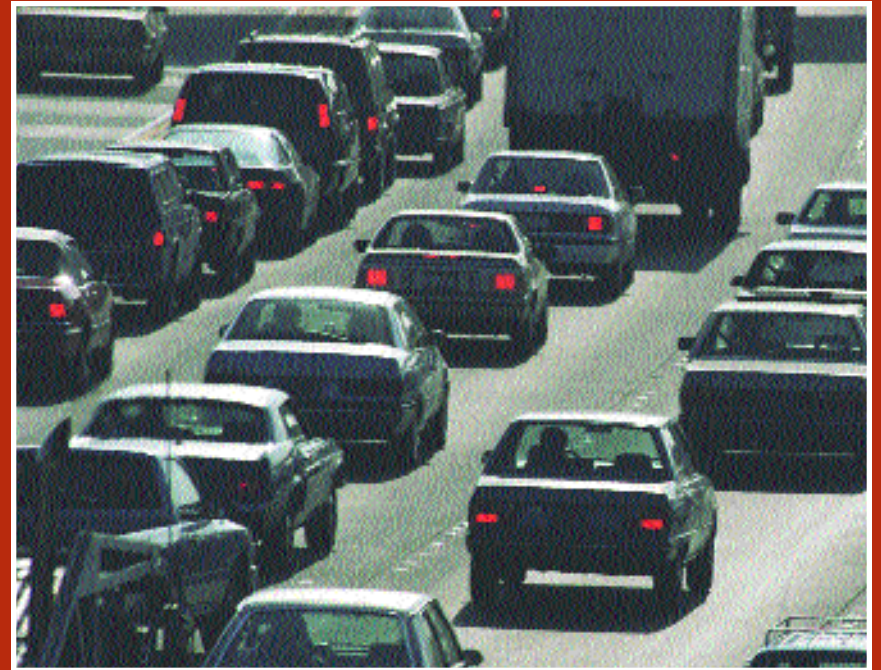




Explore. Enjoy. Protect.

A 50-State Survey of Development

# Smart Choices or Sprawling Growth



# Acknowledgments

## Sierra Club September 2000 Report on Sprawl

This report is the Sierra Club's third annual report on sprawl. Last year's report was entitled "Solving Sprawl: The Sierra Club Rates the States." To read previous reports or for more information on our Challenge to Sprawl Campaign, please visit our Web site at: [www.sierraclub.org/sprawl/](http://www.sierraclub.org/sprawl/).

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# Smart Choices or Sprawling Growth

**G**rowth. Expansion. Progress. For two centuries, they have been synonymous. And they have been the American way. Until now. The consequences of unbridled, haphazard growth — traffic congestion, air pollution, overcrowded schools, lost farm land, forests and open space — are forcing us to reconsider how and where we build.

According to a recent survey conducted by the Pew Center for Civic Journalism, sprawl

tied with crime as one of the most pressing concerns for Americans at the local level. A quick glance at the hundreds of recent state and local ballot measures on the issue confirms the fact: Americans want to find a better way to grow.

The good news is that some developers and communities are coming up with answers. Across the country, smarter, better-planned developments are being built that are walk-

able, accessible to public transportation and that strike a balance between jobs, houses, shops and open space. Even the most sprawl-choked cities — Atlanta, Denver, Houston and Los Angeles — are experimenting with innovative ideas to rein-in poorly planned development. And good planning isn't confined to big cities — suburbs like Somerville, Mass., and smaller cities like Boise, Idaho, are also making an effort to grow more intelligently.

Clearly, the demand for smarter growth and planning is strong. Market research backs this up: Smart-growth developments across the country are selling well and light rail has taken off in such unlikely places as Salt Lake City and Los Angeles.

The bad news is that old habits die hard. There are still developers who don't care a whit and communities that haven't caught on yet. And in too many places, poor planning, out-of-date laws and petty politics make building better developments an uphill fight. Since 1997, only 22 states have updated their planning codes and laws to encourage smarter growth.

**SMART-GROWTH SUCCESS STORY:** The Vermillion Project, located in Huntersville, N.C., epitomizes smart growth. It preserves open space, provides alternatives to driving and is located close to jobs and shops.



This report, “Smart Choices or Sprawling Growth: A 50-State Survey of Development,” is the Sierra Club’s third annual survey of sprawl. It looks at development in each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Our goal is to help define what’s good and what’s bad and to present evidence — and hope — that we can change the way we grow, protect our environment and strengthen our communities in the process.

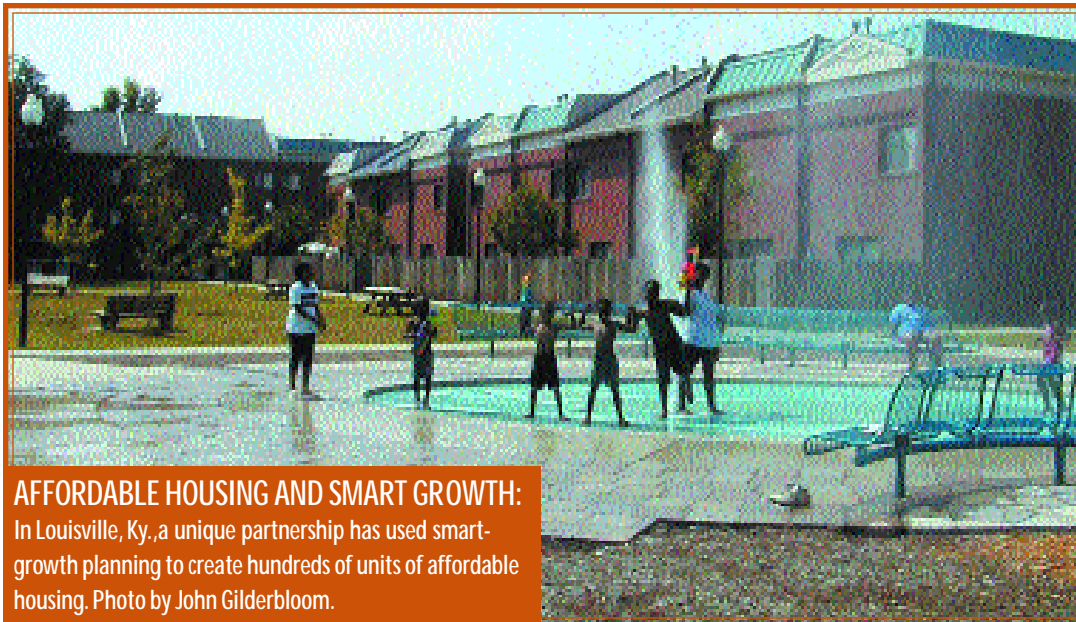
### *Smart Growth’s Success Stories*

Looking at the projects we’ve assembled, one trend is clear: Smart growth is behind many of the most successful examples. Some refer to this work as “New Urbanism,” or traditional neighborhood development. And though the range of developments that fall under

these headings is wide, they all share certain essential traits.

Smart-growth projects seek to make neighborhoods friendly to people on foot, offer residents public-transportation options, and create a healthy balance of shops, jobs and housing around a downtown or main street. Proper smart-growth planning also invites residents into the process, empowering them to participate and, instead of starting with a blank slate, looks to an area’s history and architecture for inspiration.

The success of many smart-growth projects has created a profitable niche that developers are beginning to fill. And community developers, long expert in using public/private partnerships to help create affordable hous-



**AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND SMART GROWTH:** In Louisville, Ky., a unique partnership has used smart-growth planning to create hundreds of units of affordable housing. Photo by John Gilderbloom.

### *What Is Smart Growth?*

Smart growth is intelligent, well-planned development that channels growth into existing areas, provides public-transportation options, and preserves farm land and open space.

### *What Is Suburban Sprawl?*

Suburban sprawl is irresponsible, poorly planned development that destroys green space, increases traffic and air pollution, crowds schools and drives up taxes.

ing, are now turning their sights to smart-growth projects that provide low-cost houses and apartments.

A unique partnership between the University of Louisville, non-profits, city officials and developers shows how smart-growth ideas can be used to build affordable and livable housing. Residents of East Russell — once a down-and-out neighborhood in Louisville, Ky., — participated directly in the planning process and, after years of neglect, hundreds of houses have been built. Now the neighborhood is enjoying a resurgence that is bringing new businesses to the area.

Ohlone-Chynoweth Commons in San Jose, Calif., is another good example. This project will turn an underused parking lot into almost 200 units of affordable housing, a play area for kids, on-site day care, a community



#### PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION VS. SPRAWLING HIGHWAYS:

Salt Lake City's new light-rail system, pictured at left, is attracting far more riders than expected — 40 percent of whom are new to public transportation. Unfortunately, Utah is also pushing to build the Legacy Highway, an expensive new road that will create more sprawl and air pollution similar to what's pictured above.

Photo at left by Marc Heileson.

center and a computer-learning facility. Residents will have a landscaped pedestrian walkway that gives them easy access to San Jose's 21-mile-long light-rail line.

#### *Public Transit Gains Speed*

Another key trend that emerges from this report is the importance of public transportation to a healthy community and the growing acceptance of light rail, commuter trains and high-speed buses — even in unlikely places.

The Village Green in Los Angeles is one of a new breed of transit-oriented developments

that have been taking root on the West Coast. Though not known in recent years for its public transportation, Los Angeles has slowly begun moving in the right direction, adding subways, high-speed “smart buses” and commuter trains to the mix. Developers are responding in kind, building housing, jobs and stores around these newly energized corridors.

In Salt Lake City, the recently built light rail, dubbed TRAX, has been very successful as well. It has exceeded its ridership goals, and plans are in the works to further extend the system.

#### *Protecting Open Space*

Cutting-edge developments are also using smart-growth ideas to protect open space, and using urban green spaces to link neighborhoods to each other and to their natural surroundings.

The community of Vermillion, located on 360 acres of land in North Carolina just outside of Huntersville, preserves open space and provides residents with a 1.5-mile greenway along a creek.

The Metuchen Square project in Hoboken, N.J., is restoring a waterfront park that will

## [QUESTIONNAIRE]

### How Smart Is Your Growth?

Are you living smart or sprawling? Answer the questions below, add up the points and find out how you score.

#### 1) Where do you live?

- (a) In a city, town or village, or on a family farm. [3 POINTS]
- (b) Near a community with access to basic necessities. [2 POINTS]
- (c) In an isolated housing development close to an accessible city or town. [1 POINT]
- (d) Far from the basics with no public transportation. [0 POINTS]

#### 2) How do you get around?

- (a) By walking, biking or using public transportation most of the time. [3 POINTS]
- (b) By walking, biking, carpooling or using public transportation frequently. [2 POINTS]
- (c) By carpooling or using public transportation occasionally. [1 POINT]
- (d) I have to drive alone most every day. [0 POINTS]

#### 3) How friendly is your neighborhood to those on foot and bike?

- (a) There are sidewalks on both sides of the street, some bike or foot paths and enough crosswalks to make those on foot feel secure. [3 POINTS]
- (b) There are sidewalks on just one side of the street, or non-continuous sidewalks with few crosswalks. [2 POINTS]
- (c) It's possible but not enjoyable to walk. [1 POINT]
- (d) You'd have to be crazy to walk in my neighborhood. [0 POINTS]

#### 4) Does the area where you live restore, enhance or protect green space?

- (a) Our existing community has plenty of parks or open space nearby and has protected or restored key natural areas. [3 POINTS]
- (b) Our new community has preserved a large percentage of open space including important habitats and watersheds. [2 POINTS]
- (c) Our new community has preserved some open space. [1 POINT]
- (d) Our new community has preserved little or no open space or was built in an ecologically sensitive area. [0 POINTS]

#### 5) Do you live in an intelligently planned neighborhood?

- (a) My neighborhood offers a well-balanced mix of jobs, shops, housing, and green space in a design that allows residents to walk or take public transportation to most areas. [3 POINTS]
- (b) My neighborhood offers at least some mix of housing types and some access to stores, schools, day care and jobs. [2 POINTS]
- (c) My neighborhood offers at least a few shops and stores. [1 POINT]
- (d) I have to drive to get a quart of milk. [0 POINTS]

#### Final score:

**10-15 points:** Good job! You're living in a smart community and helping fight sprawl.

**5-9 points:** Not bad — but urge community leaders to provide carpooling, improve public transportation and create an environment more conducive to walking.

**0-4 points:** You're living in sprawl-land. See Resources (page 36) for information on what you can do to make your community smarter.

then be linked up to a coastal trail. Farther up the coast, the community of Peterborough, N.H., plans a “river walk,” giving pedestrians safe and aesthetically pleasing access to downtown businesses.

### *Sprawl Threatens Coast and Country*

Now the bad news. The Cahaba River outside Birmingham, Ala., is one of many coastal or riverside places threatened by careless planning. Developers have recently fought to reduce a protective buffer along the river to a mere 50 feet. Much development along the Cahaba abuts this buffer and threatens riverside habitat and open space.

Impossible as it seems, a developer in Biloxi, Miss., has actually one-upped Alabama's river sprawl problem — by proposing to fill in 65 acres of the Mississippi Sound and 3.6 acres of nearby wetlands. This newly filled wetland would be the site of six floating casinos, eight hotels, parking garages and other resort amenities, requiring thousands of new septic tanks. Habitat for fish, crabs and other marine organisms will be jeopardized or destroyed by stormwater runoff and sand mining for construction.

In neighboring Florida, the massive development of Nocatee shows that developers still haven't learned that building on flood-prone areas is dangerous business. Its placement, smack-dab in the middle of a floodplain, will increase the risk of flood damage.



And in Southern California, Newhall Ranch, which dwarfs most other projects in this report, is threatening to chew up 12,000 acres — including 300 acres located in the floodplain of the Santa Clara River.

### *The Impacts of Sprawl*

All this sprawl is a huge threat to the environment and, in some cases, to human health.

One of the biggest impacts of sprawl relates to how we get around. Research by transportation experts shows that sprawl forces us to take more trips and drive more miles. Multiply the tens of millions of cars on the road by the air pollution each creates and you have some inkling why many of our major cities are choking under a haze of smog.

Another sprawl-related impact stems from roads. As of 1997, we had built more than 4 million miles of roads — almost 80 percent of which are located in rural areas. Experts estimate that one-fifth of the land area in the United States has been affected by road building. And sprawl itself wreaks massive destruction on our wildlands and wildlife. According to the American Farmland Trust, we continue to lose nearly 1 million acres of farm land and open space each year.

Careless development also entails harsh economic costs. From 1988 to 1998, destruction caused by flooding cost American taxpayers more than \$473 billion in local, state and fed-



**MALLING OF MISSOURI:** Despite heavy flooding in 1993, Chesterfield Commons is being built on a floodplain. In the past eight years, floods have killed 850 people across the United States. Photo by Claralyn Price-Bollinger.

eral funds. In this same period, the Federal Emergency Management Agency moved more than 17,000 damaged homes and businesses out of floodplains.

### *Solutions*

Making sure our states have the proper tools needed to discourage haphazard development and encourage smart growth is an essential first step. Getting local planners and elected officials to see the problems of sprawl and respond effectively is also crucial.

Thousands of local ordinances and codes

actually encourage or even require sprawling development by preventing developers from building different types of housing — like apartments and townhouses — or different types of development — like shops and housing — in the same neighborhood. While over 100 communities have adopted smarter codes in recent years, there's a long way to go in reforming local development guidelines.

Eliminating the subsidies that make sprawling development easier and cheaper to build than smart growth is also key. (Our 1998, 1999 and spring 2000 sprawl reports looked

at these issues respectively. See Resources on page 36 for more information.)

Our efforts to stem suburban sprawl will go nowhere until the private sector puts its substantial creativity and muscle behind smart growth. The good news is that some developers are leading the way by coming forward with smart-growth models. Overall, however, these projects are still few and far between.

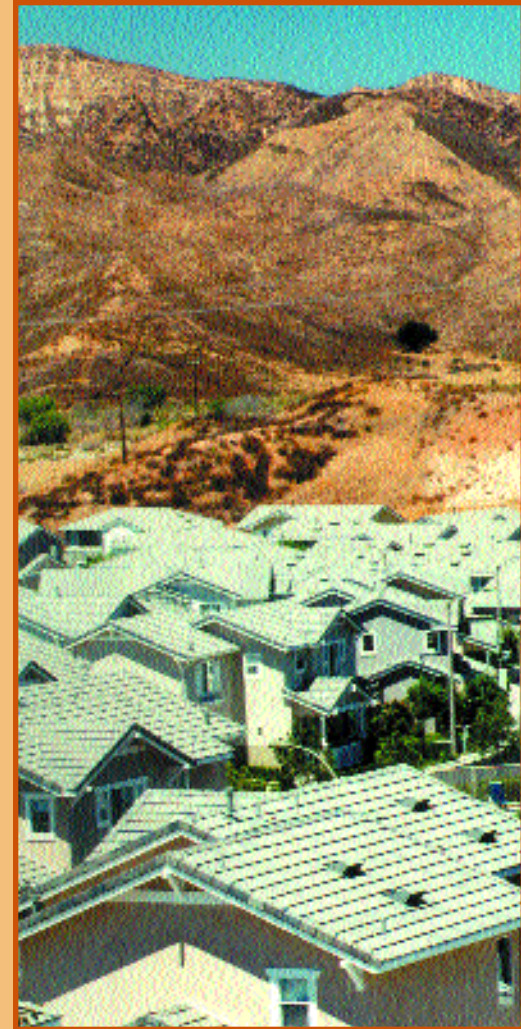
The demand is there for a change in business as usual. Public-opinion research shows that people are yearning for the sense of community that comes with traditional neighborhood development. Visual Preference Surveys, which ask participants to choose either images of traditional neighborhood development or suburban sprawl, turn up the same results time and again: Most people would prefer to live in a place with a convenient mix of places to work, shop and relax.

Where there's demand for smart growth, there's a profit to be made. And, as this report shows, the environment benefits when we build alternatives to sprawl.

We hope this report will demonstrate why we don't have to settle for more poorly planned growth. There are dozens — if not hundreds — of examples of well-planned, innovative smart growth that point the way out of our destructive patterns of suburban sprawl. Now it comes down to whether we have the courage and vision to follow through.

## SPRAWL ACROSS THE

**WEST:** In the already sprawling Santa Clarita Valley, pictured at right, California's massive Newhall Ranch will add to suburban sprawl. If built, the project would turn 12,000 acres of pristine open space into more poorly planned development. Colorado's Aurora development, below, has likewise gobbled up open space and turned acres of drought-resistant prairie grass into water-hungry lawns fed by the Colorado River. Newhall Ranch photo by Lynne Plambeck, Aurora development photo by Albert Melcher.





## ALABAMA

## Five Points South

[BIRMINGHAM]

**Vacant Lots Become a Destination**

Fifteen years ago, the Birmingham neighborhood of Five Points South was a run-down area of office buildings and vacant lots. Now, after much work by the city, local businesses and private developers, this area has been transformed into the premier dining and entertainment district in Birmingham.

After one of the top restaurants in the state took a chance on the then still-rough neighborhood, other restaurants and bars started to move in. Only a dozen blocks from downtown and with good public transit, the area has come back to life and is now considered a highlight of the city.

One of the most important goals of the revitalization project was to make the area more friendly to pedestrians. Sidewalks were widened, streetlights lowered, utility lines were buried and trees were planted. The area was declared a revitalization district so no new billboards could be put up. A nearby park — which now hosts concerts on Friday afternoons — was also cleaned up and public space in the neighborhood improved. Along with the commercial development, nearby housing was renovated and affordable housing was built.

With smart-growth planning and cooperation between the city and local businesses, Five Points South has become a Birmingham destination — contributing to the cultural and economic success of the city while reducing sprawl, traffic and air pollution.

## Cahaba River [BIRMINGHAM]

**One Sprawling Site Paves the Way for Others**

The Cahaba River is one of the last free-flowing rivers in the state of Alabama. Almost 200 miles long, it provides habitat for over 130 species of fish and is the primary drinking-water resource for 1 million residents of the metropolitan Birmingham area. The crucial lands bordering the river — long open and undeveloped — are increasingly being destroyed by sprawling development.

The expansion of Liberty Park, a subdivision along the Cahaba, will create a 1.4 million square-foot “town center” of retail and office space. Though this would bal-

ance existing residential development, the style and layout of the current and future development makes walking quite difficult. Thus most residents — even if they work in the new office park — will probably still have to drive.

The developers concede that this expansion will overwhelm local roads with traffic, so they are also pushing to build a new road across a fragile watershed, widen an existing road and construct an interchange to connect them. Local, state and regional environmental groups believe that this new road will fuel more sprawling growth south of the current development and destroy riverside habitat. If the interchange is approved, construction will most likely cause sediment to flow into the Cahaba, diminishing its value as a habitat for fish. The finished project will also add more air and water pollution to the area from increased traffic.

This development highlights two national trends that threaten habitat, open space and clean water: It is located on fragile land just a stone's throw from an important river, and its residents have few options other than driving.

## ALASKA

## Tony Knowles Coastal

[ANCHORAGE]

**Urban Trail Offers a Whale of a View**

Many cities in the United States are cut off from their natural surroundings by urban highways. But the success of the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail in Anchorage shows that there is another option: build walking and biking trails to link natural areas with the urban core.

Beginning in downtown Anchorage, the Knowles trail follows the coastline for several miles while offering spectacular views of the Cook Inlet set against distant, snow-capped peaks. During certain times of year, beluga whales can be spotted. This surely is one of the most beautiful urban trails in America, and it is very popular with local residents and out-of-town visitors. Though the setting is hard to copy, the concept of using walking and bicycling paths to link cities with their natural surroundings could be applied almost anywhere.

The coastal trail is just one of several urban paths in Anchorage — another scenic trail branches off the coastal trail and follows a creek and urban greenbelt for

almost five miles. An example of foresight and sound planning, the popularity of the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail has ruled out an ill-conceived coastal freeway that was once under serious consideration by local officials and state highway engineers.

## Fred Meyer and Wal-Mart

[WASILLA]

**Bear and Moose Can't Compete with Stores**

Sprawl in Alaska? Unfortunately, yes. With precious few ground rules or planning, it's spreading across the countryside in that all-too-familiar pattern.

Wasilla, a fast-growing town outside of Anchorage, demonstrates what happens when communities are unprepared for rapid growth.

Retailer Fred Meyer opened a huge 172,000 square-foot store in Wasilla in 1999. Following close on Meyer's heels was Wal-Mart, which increased the amount of retail space in town by another 156,000 square feet. Traffic congestion and four stoplights are brand new realities with which the citizens of Wasilla must cope.

There is a growth plan for the town, but it was written 30 years ago. Back then, Wasilla held a mere 7,000 people; now it holds almost 10 times that many.

Poorly planned development has had a huge impact on people and wildlife. Sprawl is increasingly encroaching on black bear, brown bear and moose habitat. In Anchorage, calls regarding bear problems have increased fivefold over the past decade. And along the main highway leading through Wasilla, about 300 moose are annually struck and killed by automobiles.

## ARIZONA

## West Fifth Street [TEMPE]

**Trees, Wide Sidewalks Encourage Pedestrians**

Sometimes simple things make all the difference. By making sidewalks wider and planting trees, planners in Tempe are making walking in the city safer and more enjoyable. The West Fifth Street Pedestrian Improvements will combine the redevelopment of a park and community center with smart-growth improvements to a key connector road.

Jaycee Park and the West Side Community Center had become run-down and needed repair. But instead of just rebuilding, planners decided to also make West Fifth Street — which links the two projects with the surrounding community — more walkable. To do this, sidewalks are being widened and bike lanes are being added to the street. A row of trees will be planted to create shade and provide a buffer between cars and people. Meanwhile, measures meant to make drivers more aware of pedestrians — like extending curbs at crosswalks and replacing a traffic light with stop signs — are being used to make the area safer for those on foot.

## Anthem [PHOENIX]



### Del Webb Develops the Desert

Arizona has one of the nation's worst cases of suburban sprawl. Poorly planned development has eaten up fragile desert open space at a dizzying rate. Does Arizona need better tools to deal with sprawl and promote smart growth? You bet. The Anthem housing development demonstrates why.

Anthem is a classic example of leapfrog development: A developer jumps over open space to build far from existing communities. Del Webb, the developer, has thrown up 1,300 houses in the middle of the desert and has plans to expand the development to house up to 50,000 people. Unfortunately, Anthem's closest neighbor, New River, is a small, rural town that has few jobs or shops and is located over 30 miles from downtown Phoenix. In fact, before a new grocery store opened, residents had to drive almost 20 miles to reach a supermarket.



**Development in the Desert:** With projects like Anthem, pictured above, Del Webb is making a name as the king of sprawl. Photo by Scott Mittelsteadt.

Not only is Anthem quite far from everything its residents need, the development is totally auto-dependent: There is no public transportation whatsoever between Anthem and Phoenix. Current traffic has created serious air-quality problems for the area — more traffic will make it worse.

Del Webb plans to develop the overwhelming majority of the 5,800 acres they have purchased at this site. Less than 20 percent will be protected from development, and most of this open space will be used for a planned golf course and an artificial lake.

## ARKANSAS

### Block 2 Lofts [LITTLE ROCK]



#### Bringing Downtown Back to Life

Private developers often need just a little encouragement to turn their talents to rebuilding downtown areas and main streets. Public assistance in the form of tax credits or financing can sometimes make all the difference. The Block 2 Lofts in Little Rock's Rivermarket District are a testament to the flexibility and potency of using public/private partnerships to create innovative smart-growth developments.

The Block 2 Lofts project is being redeveloped by the Vanadis group and involves the conversion of three historic buildings, located in the heart of the Rivermarket Entertainment District, into loft-style apartments. All three buildings — the Wallace Building, Beal-Burrow Dry Goods Building, and Democrat Printing and Lithograph Building — date back to the mid-1920s, and one is on the National Register of Historic Places. Though their original tenants have moved on, Little Rock has grown into a community of more than 170,000 people and housing is in demand.

But turning these buildings into apartments will do more than provide housing — these loft conversions are part of the renewal of Little Rock's downtown. Thanks to the efforts of creative developers and government incentives, the city's center has come back to life. Now that the area is thriving, adding housing will complete the mix.

Though the city has done much to help rejuvenate downtown, the state of Arkansas could do more to offer community-centered developers state-of-the-art financial tools. Developers who are willing to redevelop historic

buildings and create smart growth should have the full range of public/private financing options at their disposal. An examination of downtown Little Rock makes the benefits abundantly clear.



**Making History, Again:** The Block 2 Lofts contribute to the comeback of downtown Little Rock by creating housing in the city's center. Photo by Chris Weiss.

### Deltic Timber [LITTLE ROCK]



#### Developer Pushes Little Rock's Limits

Despite the innovative revitalization at its core, sprawl has eaten up open space around the city of Little Rock. From 1990 to 1996, the population remained steady, but the amount of developed land has almost doubled.

Deltic Timber, one of several developers adding to Little Rock's sprawl, has successfully petitioned for the annexation of nearly 5,000 acres of land and has developed thousands of home sites and hundreds of acres of commercial properties. This sprawling growth has contributed to a regrettable trend: the flight of Little Rock's wealthier residents. And, despite recent progress, sprawl has long been aided by the city's leaders. Little Rock has a history of letting the developers plan the growth of the city.

Fortunately, these activities have been challenged by a coalition of conservation, neighborhood and social-justice groups led by the Little Rock New Party and assisted by Sierra Club members.



## CALIFORNIA (north)

### Ohlone-Chynoweth Commons [SAN JOSE]



#### Parking Lot Becomes Affordable Housing

One of the oldest settlements in California, San Jose is now a bustling center of high technology. It has grown from a small hamlet to become the third largest city in California. But all this silicon-fed growth has had some serious consequences. The area's traffic problems are severe, its air quality is poor and a housing crunch is threatening the quality of life. But an innovative smart-growth project shows how well-planned communities can provide solutions to all these problems.

Built on an underused parking lot, Ohlone-Chynoweth Commons will provide almost 200 units of affordable housing — a desperately needed resource in San Jose's red-hot housing market. The project offers space for play and work, including a mist-cooled bamboo forest for kids, on-site day care, a community center and a computer-learning facility. The development will also provide several thousand square feet of retail space accessible to residents and commuters.

One of the smartest features of the development is the landscaped pedestrian walkway that gives residents easy access to the nearby Guadalupe Light Rail Line. The 21-mile light-rail line makes getting to downtown, the San Jose airport or outlying districts fast and easy — all while reducing the number of cars on the road and helping clean up the air.

### Bickford Ranch

[PLACER COUNTY]



#### The Golf Course is Close; Everything Else, Far

California's Placer County is one of the two fastest-growing counties in the state. Extending east of Sacramento to Lake Tahoe, it includes the oak woodlands of the Sierra Nevada foothills, dense conifer forests — and some of the most polluted air in the state.

In the largely rural western part of the county, near Sacramento, the county's board of supervisors is currently considering approving a massive new subdivision that will add to the area's suburban sprawl woes. Bickford Ranch — 1,950 half-acre lots and a golf course on just

under 2,000 acres — will be built far from existing urban centers. This sprawling development is the result of the county's 1994 general plan, which justified such isolated leapfrog developments by calling them "new towns."

This project, however, does not have the diverse housing types required under the general plan or the shops and stores necessary to provide for the residents' needs. Since there is no public transportation to the subdivision, residents will have to drive. And the 16,000 additional car trips per day Bickford Ranch is estimated to add to local roads will worsen air quality in an area already in violation of state and federal clean-air standards.

Local residents who have organized to oppose the project are concerned about traffic and the project's impacts on open space. The area has some of the finest oak woodlands left in the state, but part of this forest will be paved over since it lies directly in the path of the development.

Sprawling development doesn't only threaten towns and cities — as Bickford Ranch shows, rural residents and their open spaces are also falling victim to poorly planned growth.

## CALIFORNIA (south)

### Village Green [LOS ANGELES]



#### Light Rail and Smart Design Draw Raves

Can Los Angeles, the birthplace of sprawl, change its ways? Yes — just look at Village Green, an award-winning development of affordable, environmentally friendly housing in a transit-accessible location.

The project uses cutting-edge techniques to save energy. It is the largest solar-powered housing community in Southern California and uses high-tech gas-fired air-cooling, space-heating and water-heating systems. All of these energy-saving features translate into 30 to 50 percent less energy use.

Though the project includes plenty of green building features, the smartest thing — and most unusual for Southern California — is its rail link. Village Green is located just one block from a Metrolink commuter rail stop. L.A.'s commuter rail system is just 10 years old, but it has grown quickly. Village Green is well located on the Antelope Valley line just a few stops from Burbank, Glendale and downtown L.A.

This being L.A., few people who live in Village Green

will likely give up their cars altogether. But even if residents take the train only a few days a week it could make a big difference in cutting the development's impact on traffic and air quality. The growth of public transportation in Los Angeles — which now includes not only commuter rail but also the Los Angeles city subway and the new Metro Rapid express bus — allows developments like Village Green to break out of the cycle of sprawl.

### Newhall Ranch [LOS ANGELES]



#### Development Threatens 12,000 Acres

Just when we thought Los Angeles was turning things around, along comes Newhall Ranch. The project will chew up 12,000 acres of some of the last pristine open space in L.A. County. Located at the Ventura County border, Newhall Ranch, if built, would eventually house almost 70,000 people.



**Landscape in Jeopardy:** The Santa Clara River, near the Ventura County line, is ground zero for the Newhall Ranch development. Photo by Lynne Plambeck.

Kern County Superior Court Judge Roger D. Randall recently put the project on hold due to unresolved questions about the development's impacts on local water supplies, but Newhall Ranch's impacts on roads and air should also be examined more closely.

The area currently has some of the worst traffic and highest ozone levels in Southern California. But the environmental impact report doesn't even address the project's consequences on air quality in adjacent Ventura County.

Equally troubling is the development's location in a floodplain along the Santa Clara River. Newhall Ranch would destroy over 300 acres of the floodplain, increasing the risk of flash floods in L.A. and Ventura counties.

Local watershed groups note that the project sur-

rounds more than 1,200 acres of the best stream-side habitat anywhere on the river, and runoff from the project is sure to degrade local waterways. Among the "natural" features planned for the project are an 18-hole golf course and a 15-acre man-made lake.

## COLORADO

### Stapleton Airport [DENVER]



#### Shuttered Airport Yields Affordable Housing

Denver is one of the fastest-growing cities in the United States. Like similar communities in the West, it suffers from all the problems of poorly planned growth — air pollution, gridlocked traffic and creeping sprawl. But a plan to convert Denver's former airport into a model smart-growth community points out several practices that cities can use to recycle and rejuvenate older development. The downside is that this well-planned project is marred by a lack of public transportation.

Stapleton Airport was built in the late 1920s just a half-dozen miles from what was then Denver's city line. In the 1970s and 1980s, as sprawl encroached and jets got bigger, the airport began to become less useful. The upshot: What was once an isolated airfield had become prime urban land to redevelop. By 1989, as the airport's commercial use was about to end, planning for the future of the site began.

The conversion of Stapleton to a smart-growth development has many positive aspects. It's only 10 minutes from downtown Denver, and instead of chewing up more green space on the fringes, this development makes use of vacant land near the city's center. The new Stapleton will also contain a mix of housing types, including some affordable housing. The project has a town center and puts schools, retail shops and office development all within easy walking distance.

The Stapleton conversion also sets aside at least one-third of the area to preserve Sand Creek, an important wetland. And it uses parks and parkways to create a mini-greenbelt, which will provide a transition from the city to the open space on its border.

Despite the great location, intelligent design and innovative plans to protect open space, the transportation plans need improvement. Tens of thousands of commuters will add hundreds of thousands of trips to area roads and make polluted skies worse. Public transporta-

tion is part of the plan, but it won't be built until 2012. Denver and the developers of Stapleton need to move more quickly.

### Rock Creek/Interlocken

[DENVER/BOULDER]



#### A 10-Mile Commute That Takes an Hour

Located on the traffic-choked freeway that connects Boulder and Denver, Rock Creek is classic suburban sprawl. The development consists of traditional suburban houses and office parks. There are few shops, restaurants or civic buildings — and since Rock Creek is not served by public transportation, residents must drive for every chore. The only open space the project preserved has been turned into a golf course.

The worst part of this development is its location. With limited transportation options, residents must add to traffic along the notoriously crowded freeway that links Denver with Boulder. During rush hour, commuting to downtown Denver — only 10 miles away — can take an hour or longer. Boulder is roughly the same distance and drivers often face incredible traffic, but again there are no public transit links. The one park-and-ride in the area was recently downsized to make room for another shopping center.

With few sidewalks, bike lanes or pedestrian-friendly crosswalks, and plenty of traffic, getting around in the area almost always involves a car. The development has no buffer zones to protect open space, and instead of using native vegetation, Rock Creek has lawns of water-hungry bluegrass.

This project shows that without greenbelts and open-space protection, development will creep along freeway corridors, creating textbook suburban sprawl with all its problems: traffic, air pollution and loss of open space.

## CONNECTICUT

### Main Street Market

[MIDDLETOWN]



#### Main Street Market is a Hit

Middletown has long been thinking about how to plan growth — in 1931, it established one of the first

planning commissions in the nation. This tradition of good planning has been largely kept up, and local planners continue to carefully balance commercial and residential growth while protecting open space.

But even a well-planned town can sometimes need help. In the case of Middletown, a faded but historic downtown was languishing in the heart of the community. Making the area pedestrian-friendly helped turn this once-barren shopping center into a thriving main street. Over 30 new businesses have opened in what is now called the Main Street Market, and a new 12-screen movie theater is planned for the heart of the town.

### Buckland Hills Mall

[HARTFORD]



#### Mall Expansion Gobbles Up Farms and Forest

Call it the "mall-ing" of Eastern Connecticut. The rapid spread of retail outlets in recent years has had a huge impact on the Hartford area. Disappearing open space and growing traffic congestion are becoming commonplace in once-bucolic towns.

The developers of the Buckland Hills Mall are adding to these problems by creating the biggest retail area in Connecticut. Their plans will turn a 232-acre site of farms and forest into one sprawling mass, doubling the size of the current mall.

Not surprisingly, a local economist argues that this type of development has already shut down a number of nearby mom-and-pop stores. And the auto-based mall expansion will add more pollution to Connecticut's air. Continued mall development means continued costs to Hartford and its inner suburbs.

## DELAWARE

### McCaulley Court

[WILMINGTON]



#### Affordable Housing That's Smart

Efforts to provide low-cost housing in the United States have traditionally taken two forms — building housing projects and giving assistance to renters. And though both are sorely needed, developers and local



planners, at the behest of residents, are also beginning to provide affordable houses that people of moderate means can purchase. The developers of McCaulley Court have taken this strategy to heart.

Just a few blocks from the city center, in a neighborhood in desperate need of housing, empty lots had long languished. After endless delays by the developer who owned them, the lots became property of the city. The city's planning department collaborated with local residents on the scope and style of what should be built. Designed to hark back to traditional development, McCaulley Court created two-, three- and four-bedroom brick houses that fit in with the surrounding neighborhood. In 1998, the project was finished and the units were quickly sold.

Like many downtown neighborhoods, McCaulley Court is well located just blocks from the city center, has access to public transportation and is walking distance from schools and stores. Projects like McCaulley Court that give residents a stake in the future do more than provide housing, they help stabilize and restore neglected neighborhoods and reduce the pressure to sprawl.

## Americana Bayside

[SELBYVILLE]



### Lax Regulations Lead to Massive Sprawl

Delaware's Sussex County has experienced explosive growth over the last several years. With little public transportation or land-use planning, development has sprawled across the county and overwhelmed the area's roads, water supply and sewer systems. Ten-mile traffic jams, low water pressure and overloaded sewers have been the result.

A new 2,800-home development, Americana Bayside, now threatens to add more pressure to the overloaded infrastructure of southern Delaware. Located outside the town of Selbyville, this development has all the hallmarks of suburban sprawl: It's far from existing communities, it has no access to public transportation and the development, consisting mostly of houses and a golf course, does little to provide for the needs of its residents. To make matters worse, over 200 acres of wetlands will be sacrificed to build this monster.

Since there is no public transportation nearby and only limited public transportation in the region as a whole, the only means of travel for most residents is by automobile. But the roads and highways in the area are

already choked with traffic, and residents of Selbyville are worried that the road to the new development is inadequate.

Unfortunately, there is little local residents can do. Delaware lacks crucial land-use planning regulations that would have allowed the town to have more say in Sussex County's land-use decisions.

## WASHINGTON, D.C.

### Washington Naval Yard



#### Historic Redevelopment Restores City Core

There are abandoned and polluted spaces across the country that, if properly cleaned, could be turned into thriving developments. The refurbishment of the historic Washington Naval Yard is a case in point. This innovative project will convert and remediate a polluted and run-down site into state-of-the-art office space for thousands of employees of the Navy's Sea Systems Command — all while preserving some of the property's historic structures and rejuvenating the surrounding neighborhood.

Opened in 1799, the yard is the oldest continuously operated Navy facility in existence. And it bears the scars to prove it: Two hundred years of producing weapons and warships has left the Naval Yard contaminated with heavy metals, petroleum products and other chemicals. After industrial use ended in the early 1960s, the Navy yard stood largely vacant and the surrounding industrial areas declined.

In 1995, the Base Realignment and Closure Commission recommended that NAVSEA — as the Sea System Command is also known — move from leased space in Crystal City, Va., to the Navy yard. Scheduled for completion late in 2000, this redevelopment project will adapt and preserve two historic industrial buildings as offices while moving thousands of jobs from the fringe to the city core. Green building materials and sustainable design will be used to create energy-efficient structures, and tucked between the refurbished buildings will be "pocket parks" and scenic sidewalks. A new waterfront park is also planned for the site.

Not only will the redevelopment refurbish a derelict space, but because the Navy requires that contractors be in close proximity to their Navy customers, commercial and retail development is springing up along a previously run-down strip nearby. A major brownfield site next door

to the Naval yard is now slated for development, and there is interest in developing an abandoned property across the street.

## New Convention Center



### Convention Center Cramps Neighborhood

At first blush it sounds great. Washington, D.C., is going to build a new \$820 million convention center that's accessible by Metrorail. But instead of building the project in a nearby industrial space, it is being planned for the middle of a historic neighborhood.

The new convention center will host three-quarters of a million feet of exhibition space and encroach on Mt. Vernon Square. Not only will this project stand out visually from the stately row houses that surround it, it will surely increase truck traffic in the largely residential neighborhood. The better location, just a few blocks away in an abandoned rail yard, would have recycled unused space instead of building over existing development.

The alternate location probably would have given the center more room to expand, too. The first convention center was built in 1983 and by 1986 it was already considered too small and out of date. But rather than learn from its mistakes, the city decided to build another convention center on a similarly constrained site. Unlike the Washington Naval Yard, where public investment is spurring development in what was a blighted area, this is a case where public investment is harming a neighborhood with an inappropriate project.

## FLORIDA

### Mizner Park [BOCA RATON]



#### Jazz and Smart Growth Revive Dying Mall

Decaying malls are oftentimes painful evidence of an area's decline. By the 1980s, the Boca Raton Mall had reached that point — it was in bad shape.

That's when the city's Community Reinvestment Agency and developer Tom Crocker stepped in. They mapped out a redevelopment project, received approval from both the city council and voters, and moved forward with their plans.

These plans have brought Mizner Park, a remarkable new town center, to Boca Raton. Forty businesses face a

tree-lined pedestrian plaza. The plaza's village green holds fountains, benches and gazebos. Many of the area's 480 residents live in apartments set above storefronts. Not only do the residents have convenient access to neighborhood stores, they're also just a few minutes walk from cultural and entertainment centers, a transit stop and the nearest park.

Community events, including jazz concerts and art festivals, are held regularly in the center's amphitheater. And residents and visitors alike are enjoying a unique addition to Boca Raton's landscape: the International Museum of Cartoon Art.

## Nocatee [ST. JOHNS COUNTY]



### Developer Builds Suburb in Sensitive Wetlands

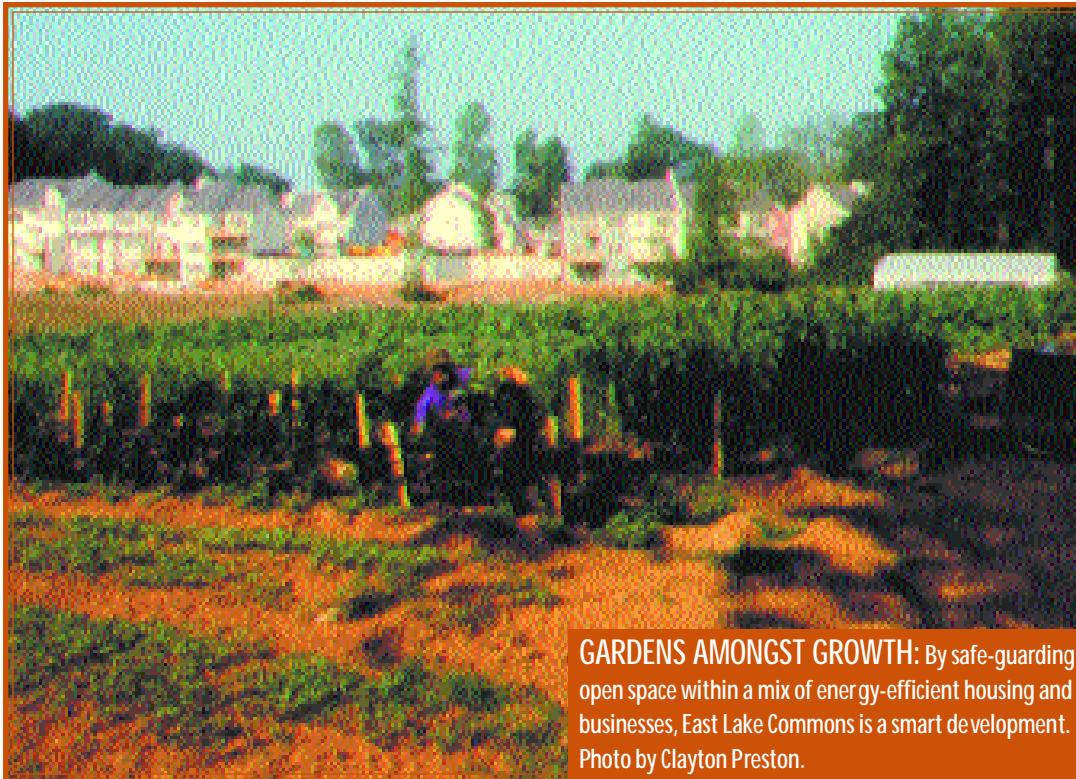
Nocatee, a massive new development of 15,000 acres of woodland and wetlands will be built on the rural pinelands of southern Jacksonville and northern St. Johns County. The development, slated for 35,000 residents,

threatens to push sprawl far into the region's open space and sensitive wetlands. The area is designated as Regionally Significant Habitat for many critical wildlife species including the imperiled Florida black bear.

While the project will preserve 2400 acres, the worst feature of this development is that it will be built in the middle of a floodplain near Snowden Bay and on the headwaters of the Tolomato River. Over 470 acres of sensitive wetlands will be destroyed by the project.

The development will have greenways and paths, but it will be split down the middle by a major highway, creating a hostile environment for pedestrians, cyclists and wildlife. To make matters worse, there is no public transportation in the area, and the development is far from the services and jobs its residents will need.

Nocatee will create a massive new city three times the size of the city of St. Augustine in the middle of a completely rural area. Nocatee will be at least half an hour drive time from most jobs and without any public transportation. Florida has given a lot of lip service to smart growth, but this project shows that sprawl is still on the loose.



**GARDENS AMONGST GROWTH:** By safe-guarding open space within a mix of energy-efficient housing and businesses, East Lake Commons is a smart development. Photo by Clayton Preston.

## GEORGIA

### East Lake Commons

[ATLANTA]



### Open Space and Privacy Close to Town

Atlanta's ferocious traffic and serious sprawl have caused endless problems. But a small, innovative development close to the central city shows that, with a little creativity, a community can preserve open space while giving residents privacy, convenience and freedom.

East Lake Commons is most notable for its lack of cars. Parking and access to the development are provided along one side of the 10-acre project, and walking and biking are encouraged. Lease-on-demand vehicles and good access to local public transportation help connect the residents of this suburban-style development to the central city.

Less than five miles from Atlanta, over half of East Lake Commons is protected as open space. At the request of the residents-to-be, key habitat was set aside as a wildlife corridor and an on-site spring was protected with a buffer zone. The remaining green space is dedicated to a small orchard, a working organic garden and a village green.

Environmentally friendly design extends to the housing itself — it is designed and constructed to be energy efficient and environmentally responsible. Storm-water runoff generated from paved surfaces is treated before being released.

The project offers two-, three- and four-bedroom homes and reserves 5 percent of its units as affordable housing. By offering play areas for kids, shared work facilities and other communal resources in a pedestrian-friendly design, East Lake Commons reduces the number of trips residents must make while providing housing that fits the area.

### Super Wal-Mart [AUSTELL]



### New Wal-Mart Adds to Sprawl Woes

Wal-Mart has become an icon of sprawl. And rightly so. In the chain's rush to conquer, it will put up as many stores as an area can handle, and then some. A Super Wal-Mart in Austell shows how big-box retailers — as these stores are known — can suck the life out of an area and accelerate sprawl.



But the Wal-Mart in question is actually not new to the community — it merely moved to a bigger space one-eighth of a mile from its previous site, which is now closed. Just like Wal-Marts around the world, it is a big shoe-box-shaped building in the middle of a massive parking lot. It is built on open space and isolated from public transit.

Austell is being devoured by sprawl. A lot of mature forest land has become increasingly valuable, and the area has undergone a surge of recent development activities.

Area roads are buckling under heavy traffic, and Austell's air is suffering, too. Meanwhile a half-dozen stores have recently closed as poorly planned growth hopscotches across the countryside.

## HAWAII

### Makawao [MAUI]



#### Planning Preserves Cowboy Character

On the slopes of Haleakala, Maui's majestic 10,000-foot dormant volcano, is a quaint historic town called Makawao.

With origins in the upcountry "paniolo," or Hawaiian cowboy lifestyle, Makawao still hosts the statewide rodeo each Fourth of July weekend.

While a resurgence of tourism has spawned a new generation of galleries, boutiques and shops, the town is governed by a special "business-country-town" zoning category that requires strict design guidelines for new development.

Though upcountry Maui has grown significantly in population, Makawao has resisted planning proposals that would have altered the character of the town. Developers tried to get a 12-acre parcel in the center of town rezoned to allow construction of a huge retail complex.

But public outcry over the plans persuaded local leaders to scrap the proposal. The land, originally the estate of a New England sea captain, comprises pasture, open space, a 100-year-old house and huge, statuesque trees.

Surrounded by pineapple fields and pasture, the town has grown primarily in one direction. By making some savvy land-use decisions, Makawao has fought off sprawl while preserving its open space and rural charm.

### Spreckelsville Mauka [MAUI]



#### Sprawl Drains Water, Crowds Schools

On Hawaii's Maui, haphazard development is threatening the island's rural character and legendary beaches while adding heavy stress to area roads and taxing the island's fresh water supplies. Considering the impacts of current growth, adding more sprawl to Maui is a dangerous idea.

But Spreckelsville Mauka, a 420-home subdivision, will do just that. Slated to be built on prime agricultural land just outside the rural village of Paia, this development is sprawl in the extreme.

Not only will this project double the population of the area, it will push water supplies, roads and schools beyond capacity. Paia receives water from an already overwhelmed aquifer system, sends its children to schools that are bursting at the seams and has a single access road that is already gridlocked every evening during rush hour. The county council voted to rezone the property to allow the development to proceed. But the deal is not done, and if Maui follows its planning guidelines, this development will not be built.

## IDAHO

### Treasure Valley Futures

[BOISE]



#### Partnership Plans For Smart Future

Though suburban sprawl may conjure up visions of L.A. or Phoenix, the rugged, southwest corner of Idaho — home to Boise and one of the fastest-growing counties in the nation — faces serious traffic and air-quality problems stemming from poorly planned growth. But there is hope. Treasure Valley Futures, a smart-growth plan being put together by local leaders, points a way out of the mess.

Midway through 1997, Boise Mayor Brent Coles and other public officials from the area agreed to better coordinate their land-use and transportation planning. The Treasure Valley Partnership, as this project is called, brings together officials from seven towns and two counties in Southwest Idaho. As part of this effort the partnership helped create Treasure Valley Futures, a public education and planning project for the area. With grant money,

research is being done on smart-growth solutions to local sprawl-related problems.

The group is still working on creating a valley-wide plan to protect open space, but a few towns have made progress. Nampa, home to the Idaho Center and Boise State University, is about to refurbish its downtown and is planning to make future growth accessible to commuter rail or other public transportation. The town of Star is also planning to revitalize its main street. And the Partnership recently pledged to restore rail access to Boise and surrounding communities.

If other communities in the region follow through, Idaho's rejuvenated small towns — linked by greenbelts, hiking trails and commuter rail — could one day be a model for smart growth in the West.

### Hidden Springs [BOISE]



#### Good Intentions in the Middle of Nowhere

Can a development that preserves hundreds of acres of open space and includes energy-efficient homes and neo-traditional construction be called sprawl? Unfortunately, yes. Though Hidden Springs has all the trappings of smart growth, the development — located outside of Boise and consisting of over 1,000 houses — is sprawl.

The first issue is the project's location — at least 10 miles from any significant development. Suburban sprawl has crept far along route 84, the main highway that links Boise to towns north and south, and the area suffers from increasing traffic and air pollution. Located in the foothills and without any real public transportation or job opportunities, Hidden Springs will add to these woes.

The problems with its location are compounded by the scale of the project. It will add thousands of people to an isolated area far from existing resources. Though the developers tout the 800-900 acres of open space that the development will preserve, Hidden Springs is located in an undeveloped riverbed at the base of steep foothills. Much of what is being preserved is not easily built on, and the area where construction will take place is ecologically sensitive. True, Hidden Springs could be worse, but it also could be a whole lot better.

## ILLINOIS

## Market Street

[WILLOW SPRINGS]

**Greenery and Public Space Revitalize Suburb**

Can smart growth help a community get in touch with its inner self? In the mid-1990s, Willow Springs, a suburb near Chicago, fell into a sprawl-induced identity crisis. Looking increasingly like its neighbors and choking in traffic, the town embarked on an innovative smart-growth development to build a downtown that makes transit more accessible, creates spaces for residents to gather, and provides a blend of shops, housing and jobs.

Begun as a purely residential community, Willow Springs lacked a central space. Developers and town planners engaged the community to seek out ideas, and then pledged to take the history of the area and the context of the site into account. The developer, Heritage Renaissance Partners, and the architects, Yas/Fischel Partnership, built in a historically appropriate style, and took advantage of the town's location on the Illinois-Lake Michigan Canal. They used traditional touches, like placing parking behind residences, to make the area walkable.

The other critical decision was moving the town's rail stop to the new downtown and integrating it with a new village hall. The developers were able to move the rail station and add key extras to the civic spaces in part because they had access to up-to-date public/private financing tools.

The new downtown is a functional place to shop, work and live. But it is also a beautiful place where greenery and public space lead residents and visitors to the center of town. What Willow Springs discovered is the essence of smart growth: A town with a center is a place with context, community and economic vibrancy.

## New Lenox Sub-Area Development Plan

[NEW LENOX]

**New Development on the Fringe of the Fringe**

A decade ago, New Lenox was barely a speck on the map. Now this burgeoning bedroom community, 40

miles southwest of Chicago, is well on the road to sprawl. New Lenox has an aggressive plan to create 1,000 acres of residential development, 1,000 acres of industrial space and 360 acres of office space.

The problem is that this development will be built on the edge of a community that is itself on the sprawling fringe. Will County, where New Lenox is located, could be called a sprawl disaster area: It's chock-full of poorly planned development and has little public transportation.

The New Lenox plan will repeat the same cookie-cutter patterns of classic suburban sprawl: Throwing up strip malls, office parks and subdivisions that are not pedestrian-friendly while offering little or no public transportation. Not surprisingly, this project is expected to add tens of thousands of car trips per day to the area — adding more traffic to stressed roads and more pollution to dirty skies.

Of the roughly 3,000 acres of mostly agricultural land that will be developed, only 400 acres will be kept as open space. The bulk of this undeveloped space, adjacent to a creek that serves as a water source for Joliet, will be used for sports facilities, doubtlessly adding to the project's harmful impacts on the local watershed.

## INDIANA

## Broad Ripple [INDIANAPOLIS]

**Town Welcomes Those on Foot**

Founded in the 1800s along the White River, Broad Ripple has grown intelligently through much of its history. Though now part of the city of Indianapolis, the community has retained its identity by preserving classic buildings and protecting open space.

Broad Ripple has a great blend of people and places — residential areas as well as jobs, commerce and arts, scenic parks and beautiful trails. The area is served by public transportation, and a light-rail plan for Indianapolis may extend to Broad Ripple.

One distinctive aspect of Broad Ripple is how pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly the town is. Streets have wide sidewalks, and several areas in town have bicycle racks. The Monon Trail, a rail corridor turned bike path, and the Central Canal Towpath, a holdover from the 19th century, provide safe and scenic bike paths that link the village with nearby neighborhoods.

Aside from the trails there are two popular parks,

Marott and Broad Ripple. Marott Park, located just off the Monon Trail, includes trails running through native woodland and around Williams Creek. Broad Ripple Park, located on the White River, offers a variety of recreational opportunities that are within walking distance of local neighborhoods.



**Choices for Getting Around:** A network of scenic trails and ample bike racks provide prime cycling opportunities in Broad Ripple. Photo by Jennifer Cannon.

## Sycamore Springs

[INDIANAPOLIS]

**Hoped-For Park Slips Away**

Protecting green space is key to curbing sprawl and Marion County, home to Indianapolis, has a plan to create new parks and protect open space. But over the past eight years, due to under-funding and a lack of commitment, 29 of 72 areas tagged as high-priority acquisitions have been lost.

The development of Sycamore Springs was built on 172 acres of fragile wetlands and lakeside habitat. Residents thought the open space might become a park. Instead, it was rezoned, surrounded by a high brick wall and developed. Many of the trees on the property were cut and little open space was preserved.

Sycamore Springs not only destroyed valuable open space, it's almost totally automobile-dependent. The roads surrounding the development are busy and have no sidewalks. There is a bus line nearby but it is difficult to access. Traffic in the area is a problem and the traffic generated by this gated community will just make it worse.

How did it happen? When faced with the request to rezone the open space, the metropolitan development commission said yes. Not only were public officials unsupportive of efforts to protect the land, the parks department had only a pittance to carry out the acquisition.

The saga of Sycamore Springs shows that there's more to smart growth than a good plan — it needs support from public officials, planners and residents. In this case, opposition by locals wasn't enough to stop the project.

But some area environmentalists are pushing for a simple, free-market way to create more parks and help slow sprawl: Use impact fees on new development to fund open-space protection.

## IOWA

### All Iowa Community Grocery [DES MOINES]



#### Fresh Produce and Smart Growth

In conjunction with neighborhood residents, local consumers and farmers, 1000 Friends of Iowa is pushing to create a unique grocery store on the edge of downtown Des Moines. The full-service grocery store would feature Iowa-grown food and be designed to fit the historical and architectural flavor of the neighborhood. Community support for the project, which would help rejuvenate an older section of Des Moines, is near unanimous. But instead of helping this smart-growth project along, city government is dragging its feet.

The existing downtown farmers' market has been steadily growing in popularity, proving that locally grown meats and produce are popular. Every Saturday between May and October, thousands of customers congregate on Court Avenue to buy everything from fruits and vegetables to farm-raised chicken. The benefits to the local economy seem reason enough to build a store that offers locally grown foods all year round.

But the proposed community grocery store, which would be located at 6th and University Avenues, would have other benefits too. It would rejuvenate a neglected part of Des Moines, provide new life for commercial and residential revitalization in the adjoining neighborhood and bring needed jobs to the community.



**GATED SPRAWL:** Sycamore Springs turned open space that residents had hoped might become a park into more suburban sprawl.

### Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway Extension

[DES MOINES]



#### Highway Plan Targets Urban Green Space

Tearing down urban highways has brought new life to neighborhoods long hemmed-in by the roads. Unfortunately, Des Moines seems to be heading in the opposite direction with the proposed extension of Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway. This project will put a highway in what is now an urban green space and flood-control zone.

The Des Moines River Valley is a unique urban green space that provides a variety of habitats for wildlife, plants and people. It is an important wintering ground for the bald eagle and ideal habitat for many species of migratory birds. This area also serves as a buffer between existing neighborhoods and the current interstate. Two bicycle trails run along the river and improve the transportation choices for Des Moines residents.

Building a highway through this area will clearly harm its value to wildlife, reduce the value of the land as a

floodplain and make areas downstream more prone to flooding. The proposed extension will also encourage sprawl outside the city and add to the traffic and air pollution problems of the region. Middle- and low-income neighborhoods near the proposed route will suffer from more noise and air pollution.

Given that new highways draw more drivers onto the road, the parkway extension would do little to ease traffic. Rather than building a major new highway and destroying this open space, a smarter plan would enhance this urban green space and use public transportation to ease the area's traffic congestion.

## KANSAS

### Downtown 2000 [LAWRENCE]



#### Community Effort Revamps Downtown

Is a parking garage smart growth? Yes — if it's part of an innovative downtown redevelopment plan.



Lawrence is building a multi-level garage as the first piece of Downtown 2000, a project that will include an art center, housing and shops.

For better or worse, cars are a part of the American lifestyle, and communities can hardly ignore the needs of drivers. But what planners can do is balance these needs with those of pedestrians and cyclists to create areas that encourage residents to park and walk — or even leave their cars at home. In the case of Lawrence, they are integrating the new parking garage with adjacent development that will include loft-style apartments, room for dozens of retailers and new office space.

This city has involved hundreds of residents, developers and local leaders in planning the redevelopment. By its expected completion date of summer 2001, the project will turn an underused area in the heart of downtown Lawrence into a place to shop, work, live and walk.

That is what makes this project — including the parking garage — smart growth. Poorly used but central space in a community's downtown is being redeveloped to create jobs, shopping and housing in a pedestrian-friendly design. When communities have a thriving downtown, the urge to sprawl is checked. And this project will help do just that.

## Oz Theme Park [DESOTO]



### Theme Park Sprawl is No Fantasy

The most serious sprawl threat in Kansas comes from the takeover of the Sunflower Army Ammunition Plant near DeSoto by the Oz Development Company — a group of investors who want to develop a theme park based on the Wizard of Oz story.

In 1941, the Army acquired over 9,000 acres near DeSoto by buying half a dozen farms and building the Sunflower Plant. Though the plant helped contribute supplies to World War II and the Korean War, it has been idle since 1992 and the Army has been trying to sell it.

But the Oz theme park is not right for this property. It will jump over existing development in the county and lead to more suburban sprawl. The increased traffic from the project is also a major concern. An extra estimated 36,000 cars per day on the K-10 highway will harm air quality in the greater Kansas City area, which is already close to violating Clean Air Act standards.

Pressure is building to reroute — at taxpayer expense — the K-10 highway between Lawrence and



**BEFORE:** The neighborhood of East Russell in Louisville, Ky., suffered the fate of all-too many downtown areas when it began its decline several decades ago. Boarded-up housing and litter lined its streets.

**AFTER:** Thanks to a unique partnership between the University of Louisville, non-profits, the city, developers, churches and residents, East Russell now offers hundreds of quality homes near jobs, shops and entertainment. Michael Brazley, pictured at right, is a Ph.D. student at the University of Louisville who assisted with the architectural design of the homes. Photos by John Gilderbloom.



Johnson County in order to handle the traffic the project will likely generate. The highway improvements, if carried out, will damage wetlands and pave over more open space. Another major concern is the possible toxicity of the site itself. The environmental impact statement raised serious questions about how much pollution is still on the premises, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is critical of the cleanup work conducted by the Army.

## KENTUCKY

### East Russell [LOUISVILLE]



#### Smart Growth Restores Urban Decay

East Russell was once a solid working-class neighborhood with a good sense of community, but in the 1960s and 1970s it began to decline. As shops closed and

buildings fell into disrepair, crime increased and the neighborhood became trapped in the spiral of urban decay. Many thought inner-city communities like East Russell could never thrive again. But recent efforts to revitalize the area using smart-growth planning have worked wonders.

This collaboration between the University of Louisville's Sustainable Urban Neighborhoods program, the city, private developers and local residents used a holistic approach that combined redevelopment with intensive outreach. The project did more than build buildings, it also gave residents the tools and training they needed to turn things around. Instead of a top-down approach, the project empowered those who lived in the neighborhood to take possession of their community.

One result of that process: Residents expressed a strong preference for creating new housing for sale instead of rental units or public housing. So, chief among the plans was the construction or rehabilitation of affordable houses that low-income residents could buy. Since then, 500 quality homes have been built close to downtown, jobs have been created and millions of dollars of investment are flowing into the neighborhood.

Now that crime is down and the area is showing signs of life, a bookstore and movie theater have recently opened and more business is on the way. A growing neighborhood business area, new housing and a great location close to jobs and transit have turned this once-abandoned community into a smart-growth success story.

## Hamburg Place [LEXINGTON]



### Town Loses 100-Year-Old Farm to Sprawl

Lexington is an area of rolling hills and bucolic farms. But the growing loss of these farms to suburban sprawl has many long-time residents worried. The conversion of Hamburg Place, a historic farm outside of Lexington, is emblematic of the changes that poorly planned growth is bringing to Kentucky.

Hamburg Place was a century-old farm beloved by residents of the area that was turned into a classic suburban strip mall. Where once there were 400 acres of trees and pasture there is now an Old Navy clothing franchise and lots of parking.

In fact, no significant efforts were taken to break out of the suburban-sprawl mold. The mall has little access to public transportation and is not pedestrian-friendly. Its location on the outskirts of Lexington is sure to increase traffic on nearby roads.

## LOUISIANA

### Plan Baton Rouge



#### Riverfront Park, Native Trees Enhance Capital

In the mid-1990s, Baton Rouge was going through some hard times. The collapse of oil prices had hurt the region's economy, and downtown Baton Rouge was rife with vacant lots and unused buildings. But in 1998, the city embarked on an ambitious plan to redevelop its downtown.

After hiring noted new-urbanist planners Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, the town held an open forum to solicit ideas from the community. The response was excellent. Now "Plan Baton Rouge," which will remake 550 acres within the downtown area, is taking shape.

The plan recommends making downtown more friendly to pedestrians and more human in scale. Wider crosswalks, new street furnishings and more trees and landscaping will all be used to make the area more walkable. Along with pedestrian improvements, planners hope to improve the balance and flow of cars and people in the area.

As the capital of Louisiana, Baton Rouge has thousands of state workers. One of the keys to the redevelopment plan is making the downtown area more diverse by adding shopping, recreation and housing. Baton Rouge also has some beautiful civic buildings, including the state capitol, in its downtown. The creation of a 22-acre riverfront park will enhance the public spaces around the capitol building. Planners also hope to add native trees and small parks to further beautify the surroundings.

Though construction is just beginning, the project has already created a lot of excitement in the city. New businesses are moving in, property values are rising and the residents of Baton Rouge are looking forward to a rejuvenated downtown where they can live, work and play.

### Willow Ridge

[ST. CHARLES PARISH]



#### Crime Pays for Wetland Developers

If persistent and savvy, most developers find a way to get the permits they need to develop a piece of land. But a few bad apples just break the law.

In 1999, the Rathborne Land Company — developers

of the Willow Ridge subdivision — were fined \$620,000 and required to donate land to settle a lawsuit brought against them by the Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. According to the suit, the developers illegally filled in fragile bayous and built an entire subdivision in a swamp.

To prepare for construction, Rathborne cleared and dug in the area without receiving proper permits, and then filled in a wetland and two small bayous. The developer then built houses on top of parts of the swamp. Though they were successfully sued over the development, the settlement allows Rathborne to continue building homes in an area previously identified as one of the most sensitive and diverse habitats in Louisiana.

In addition to its egregious destruction of fragile wetlands, the development places people far from where they work, shop and recreate. No public parks exist where this development is located and the school system is currently trying to determine how it will obtain the millions of dollars needed for expansion.

## MAINE

### Bayside [PORTLAND]



#### Residents Help Create Smart Community

Bayside is a 100-acre neighborhood dominated by two giant scrap-metal yards. After city officials floated some controversial proposals for developing the area — including building a 10,000-seat arena — local residents decided to craft a different plan. Several freewheeling planning sessions that brought together property owners, developers, planners and residents were held to brainstorm on the scope and design of the project. From the outset, stakeholders have been pushing to make any redevelopment of the area environmentally friendly.

The smart-growth features of Bayside start with its location: right downtown, behind city hall.

The planning sessions for Bayside have also focused on incorporating smart-growth planning into the new development itself. Stakeholders want to make the neighborhood walkable and ensure it is well connected to Portland's public-transportation system. The planning sessions have also focused on creating a mix of developments in the area — including new housing, a community center and recreational space — while retaining the social services now clustered there.

Portland has enjoyed some respite from the suburban sprawl that is threatening so many of our communities. But the city's success stems from more than laws and rules — it is also the product of open-minded, inclusive planning that empowers residents to participate in creating their future.

## West Bath



### New Roads, New Business Park, New Sprawl

The United States has lost hundreds of thousands of acres of prime farm land over the last several years. The conversion of a farm that straddles the boundary between the city of Bath and the town of West Bath shows how this process happens.

The 100-acre site, once a historic farm, is being turned into a giant business park. Companies need space to conduct their affairs, but by creating a single-use area that is cut off from its surroundings, the business park threatens to worsen sprawl in the area. Already the city has used state and local funding to extend infrastructure and build new roads. This spending gives sprawling growth like the business park a subtle but significant advantage that encourages more of the same.

Commercial development is important to balancing growth in an area. But in this case, the project will create more sprawl. Perhaps if West Bath and surrounding communities move toward a more open planning process they could better balance growth and protect open space.

## MARYLAND

### Downtown Silver Spring



### Redevelopment Adds Jobs, Keeps History

After two recent attempts at revitalization, it looks like things are actually coming together for Silver Spring. Named after a nearby mica-encrusted spring, this down-but-not-out community has painstakingly put together a smart-growth strategy.

Key to the redevelopment was landing Discovery Channel's world headquarters, which will bring thousands of employees to the area and transform a vacant, unused lot into a 650,000 square-foot office building. To the northeast, the American Film Institute will build its new

East Coast headquarters. Part of this effort will rehabilitate the historic Silver Theater as a fully functioning 400-seat movie house.

Across the street, the state of Maryland and Montgomery County are collaborating with the city to build a multimillion-dollar transit center. The center will join a train line, a bike trail, and local and regional bus service with the existing subway station. In addition, the center will host retail outlets and office space so that transportation, shopping and work space will be in one convenient location. Fresh Fields has just finished construction of a new grocery store and Borders Book Store just signed a lease. There are also community amenities such as a planned veterans' memorial and an open arena that will host concerts in the summer and be converted to an ice rink in the winter.

But despite the smart-growth features of this project, a member of the development team, the Peterson Companies, is backing a giant sprawling development in the neighboring town of Oxon Hill. National Harbor, as it is called, will destroy over 200 acres of open space and riverside habitat while bringing an estimated 60,000 more car trips per day to the area. Peterson is involved with smart growth in Silver Spring — they should do the right thing in Oxon Hill as well.

### Hunters Brooke/Falcon Ridge [CHARLES COUNTY]



### Sprawl Threatens Rare Wetland

The Hunters Brooke/Falcon Ridge project is quintessential sprawl. Far from existing infrastructure, it threatens a fragile wetland and important historical sites near the Chesapeake Bay.

The project will destroy a forest adjacent to state-preserved wildlands and severely degrade one of Maryland's largest magnolia bogs. A new sewerline the project will require would cut through properties adjacent to major historical sites, including a house in which George Mason lived. The house and land are included on the National Register of Historic Places.

Not only is this development poorly placed and destructive, it is isolated. Washington, D.C., the primary commute destination, is up to one and a half hours away during rush hour. Limited public transportation and a lack of amenities for those on foot ensure that most residents will drive.

The county government more or less recognizes that this development is not appropriate, but justifies it because the developers have already spent money on planning the project.

At a broader level, the county comprehensive plan is supposed to prevent sprawling development like Hunters Brooke. Unfortunately, there is little implementation, and poorly planned development is the rule. This proves, once again, that having smart-growth planning rules on the books is not enough — they must be enforced to be effective.

## MASSACHUSETTS

### Davis Square [SOMERVILLE]



### Public Space and Public Transit

Can transit turn a town around? The redevelopment of Davis Square, a neighborhood in Somerville, makes a case that it can help. Once a thriving area of stores and businesses, this older suburb of Boston had begun to go downhill. The lack of any direct rapid-transit access from the booming Boston/Cambridge core and its position off major highway routes seemed to isolate the community. But in the early 1980s, a long-awaited extension of the region's rapid-transit system gave Davis Square new life and contributed to a dramatic turnaround.

Somerville already had a somewhat traditional and pedestrian-friendly plan — a legacy of its original street-car-driven development. Named for the public space at its center, Davis Square had not succumbed to any number of auto-centric solutions for revitalization and had remained a virtually intact neighborhood. Around a core of shops, stores and offices was a blend of apartments and townhouses.

In this case, what the area lacked was good public transportation. The extension of the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority's Red Line, which runs northwest from Harvard Square in Cambridge, was the perfect solution. While it took a few years for the impact of the extension to be felt, it's now quite clear that adding rail service helped put the community back on track. Today, Davis Square has not only recovered economic and social vitality, but it has become a popular destination in its own right.



## Mt. Holyoke [HADLEY]



### Mountain Top Houses Spur Sprawl

Trophy houses on a high ridge are often a feature of poorly planned development in the mountain West. But a similar development that threatens to destroy key open space and push sprawl deep into fragile habitat has cropped up outside the Massachusetts town of Hadley.

The Mt. Holyoke range is one of the largest unfragmented forests in the state and is home to 30 rare species. But residents are realizing that despite the mountains' importance to people and wildlife, most of the range is privately owned. On one of these private parcels, Bercume Builders hopes to place 40 to 60 large homes. The 106-acre parcel of land extends from the Connecticut River valley almost 500 feet up to the summit of the Mount Holyoke range.

Though the project is small, this type of development is part of a larger trend that is pushing sprawl deep into untouched lands in the Pioneer Valley. In the long run, to protect this and other parts of the mountain, Hadley will need better planning and open-space protection.

## MICHIGAN

## Old Town [LANSING]



### Success Breeds Competition Downtown

The Sierra Club works hard to educate the public about suburban sprawl. But the Mackinac Chapter is doing a little more. In June of 2000, the chapter became the first tenant to occupy a restored two-story townhouse in a newly redeveloped area of Lansing called Old Town.

As its name would suggest, Old Town is the oldest part of the community. And like many central neighborhoods, the area had become run-down. But redevelopment is slowly bringing life back to this historic neighborhood. In addition to the Sierra Club, the convention bureau has moved in, condominiums are being built next door and a run-down club was recently demolished to make room for a new park.

A linchpin of Old Town is the Otherwise Gallery, which gives local artists a place to show their work. Though the gallery has long had Old Town to itself, success has bred competition and over a half-dozen other galleries have opened in the area. Restaurants, cafes and shops are starting to crop up, too. Old Town also hosts two large festivals each year, the Lansing JazzFest and Octoberfest.

Though the redevelopment of Old Town is a work in

progress, local residents and town officials are excited about the changes. When completed, Old Town will offer art, food and shops along with housing and office space in a walkable and centrally located neighborhood.

## Meridian Township



### Petty Policies Lead to Sprawl

Many elected officials talk movingly about the need for cooperation. But the reality is that in many areas, competition for development is the name of the game. Unfortunately this competition often results in poor land-use decisions and lots of suburban sprawl.

The saga of the Governor's Club, a proposed development in southwest Meridian Township, perfectly illustrates how a lack of regional coordination and planning leads to poorly planned growth. The project, a massive development involving hundreds of homes and a golf course, was approved by the township over stiff local opposition. Residents of the area then embarked on a successful petition drive to place the rezoning on the ballot in November.

To counter the citizen petition drive, the developer asked the neighboring community of East Lansing to annex the area of the proposed Governor's Club development, setting off a high-profile turf battle between the two communities. Because of the state law, the only people who can vote on an annexation petition are those living within the area proposed for annexation and those in the community to which they seek to be annexed. In a move to block the annexation, Meridian Township, with the backing of developers, enticed a third community, the city of Lansing, to enter the squabble with a tax-sharing agreement.

This effort paid off, blocking the annexation and silencing the citizen petition drive by changing the borders of the development to exclude residents.

By playing one community off against another, common-sense approaches to planning and zoning and respect for citizen involvement are tossed aside. The only winners in this are the developers, who will use the lack of coordination between neighboring towns to push a poorly planned development through.

## MINNESOTA

## Main Street [HOPKINS]



### Suburb's Downtown Keeps it Smart

Hopkins is an example of a suburb that grew up

smart. Founded in 1893 and famous for its raspberries and its farmers' market, this city has a walkable, vibrant downtown and is linked to Minneapolis and other communities by public transportation.



**Farmers Flock to Downtown Market:** The Hopkins, Minn., farmers' market is just one of the attractions that have kept downtown vibrant.

What sets Hopkins apart from other suburbs of the Twin Cities is its downtown. With ample sidewalks and other details that make drivers more aware — like cutouts for parking and well-marked crosswalks — pedestrians feel at ease. Good planning has helped keep this downtown thriving, and civic buildings, office space, stores, restaurants and homes are all within walking distance.

The downtown cultural and civic destinations add to its appeal. The new Hopkins Center for the Arts, which houses a theater company and dance troupe on the site of a former car dealership parking lot, is popular with residents and visitors alike. The dealer's showroom across the street has become a movie theater and restaurant. Half a block from the arts complex is the public library on one side of the street and a food market on the other. There is a small downtown park where concerts take place, and a larger park with ballfields built on a landfill site. Innovative local transportation planners have allowed a right-of-way being held for a future light-rail line to be used as a bike path in the interim.

## Spring Hill Golf Course

[ORONO]



### Golf Courses and Wildlife Don't Mix

In Minnesota golf courses are spreading quickly, and since they are hardly indigenous, they're exacting a toll on wildlife habitat, open space and the environment. Aside from the traffic any development on the fringe brings, the main problem with golf courses is their highly manicured greens. Though pleasing to the eye, they are harsh on the environment. Most golf courses use tons of fertilizers and pesticides to keep those lawns in shape.

The Spring Hill Golf Course was constructed in the summer of 1999 on part of the maple-basswood Big Woods. These forests once extended over a large expanse of central and south central Minnesota, but in Hennepin County — the county in which Minneapolis and the western suburbs are located — less than 1 percent of this forest remains.

The golf course development was made possible by the lack of land-use standards that would have helped protect the site.



**Bulldozing Forests Isn't Par:** The Spring Hill Golf Course was built on part of Minnesota's Big Woods forest.

## MISSISSIPPI

### Tradition Community Development Corp.

[HARRISON COUNTY]



### A New Model for Coastal Development

Growth in the Gulf Coast states is predicted to continue at a breakneck pace. In Harrison County alone, the population increased almost 30 percent in the last decade. But Tradition Community Development Corporation is proposing a smart-growth alternative to sprawling development in this coastal region.

The project, a \$1.7 billion planned community, is to be located 12 miles north of the shoreline. While the development will bring more population growth to the coast, it is a vastly preferred alternative to the sprawling, poorly planned development that currently dominates the area. In fact, if Harrison County provides for additional population growth in the traditional way — with one-acre lots — it would take 25,000 acres (and thousands of septic tanks) instead of the 4,600 acres and centralized sewage treatment and stormwater management envisioned at Tradition.

The 15-year plan for the project calls for a series of developments that will offer a range of housing choices. A variety of architectural styles are planned, and badly needed affordable housing will be included. In addition to housing, the development will eventually host a town center with up to 5,000 new job opportunities, as well as churches and schools. No longer captive to the car, residents will be able to walk or bike to work, to the store or to church.

The developers also plan to preserve up to 25 percent of the site as lakes, parks and nature trails. One sticking point that needs to be resolved is a concern about the gopher frog, a rare amphibian that may live in a pond next to Tradition property.

### Destination Broadwater

[BILOXI]



### Sprawl in the Mississippi

Biloxi should learn from cities in the South about the problems caused by poorly planned development.

One needs to look no further than Atlanta or Tampa for examples of suburban sprawl at its worst. Unfortunately, the proposed Destination Broadwater development demonstrates that Biloxi has yet to learn from these mistakes.

At the center of the project is a proposal to fill 65 acres of the Mississippi Sound and almost four acres of wetlands for the construction of six floating casinos, eight hotels, parking garages and other resort amenities. Where fish, crabs and other marine creatures now live, sand mined from the bottom of the Sound will destroy existing habitat. The proposed fill is so damaging that it would violate the Essential Fish Habitat provisions of the Magnuson Fisheries Act in an area where natural fish habitat is already being destroyed at an alarming rate.

There may also be devastating long-term environmental impacts: An estimated 7,436 new septic tanks will be needed to accommodate new residents and hotels. This influx of sewage will cause severe storm-water pollution, especially in light of the inability of most coastal soil to properly filter the waste. In addition, air pollution could become a serious concern, as the project will doubtlessly increase car traffic along the project's access roads.

It's hard to imagine any place where such a huge development would make sense. But in a fragile area that has experienced rapid declines in water quality and wetlands habitat, this project is especially inappropriate.

## MISSOURI

### Murphy Park [ST. LOUIS]



### Developer Makes Smart Growth Affordable

As with other older Midwestern cities, St. Louis has been losing people and jobs for decades. Thankfully, some business leaders are beginning to take advantage of redevelopment opportunities created by vacated areas.

One such developer is Richard Baron. One of his newest developments is Murphy Park, a 402-unit townhouse and apartment complex on the former site of a high-rise housing project. Building began on Murphy Park in 1996 and will be completed by 2003 at a total cost of over \$50 million.

The brick buildings have separate entrances, backyard patios and spacious floor plans. Many units will offer larger four- to six-bedroom homes, which are in great demand in the city. Plenty of green space has been creat-

ed in the development, and amenities include a day care center, the Center of Contemporary Arts and an elementary school. The refurbished neighborhood is located in midtown St. Louis, near bus lines that feed into the popular Metrolink light-rail system.

The project is highly affordable, with 55 percent of the units reserved for low-income residents. Baron, who also raised \$3.5 million to refurbish Murphy Parks Jefferson Elementary School, says he designs his developments to help address urban poverty simply because "it's the right thing to do." Other developers should follow his lead.

## Chesterfield Commons

[ST. LOUIS]



### Mall in Floodplain Tempts Fate

"If it's man-made, nature can wipe it out." That was how James Lee Witt, head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, summed up the construction of a new levee to replace the one destroyed by a 1993 flood that inundated Chesterfield Valley. The lesson should be obvious to the planners and public officials in the St. Louis suburb of Chesterfield, much of which lay under 10 feet of water during the flood: Don't build in a floodplain.

However, it seems that the lesson hasn't been learned. Consider Chesterfield Commons, a huge mall anchored by a Wal-Mart. Nowhere near public transportation, this gaggle of retail outlets is little more than some boxes plopped in the middle of a floodplain.



**Risky Business:** Built in an area that was flooded seven years ago, Chesterfield Commons is tempting fate. Photo by Claralyn Price-Bollinger.

Of course, the project isn't alone. It's part of over \$300 million worth of new development built or planned for an area prone to flooding. To add insult to injury, the projects are being financed by the public through a tax-increment finance district, a tool used in some places to redevelop blighted areas. And how can the city's coffers afford

this? In part by raiding school and fire district funds.

This project shows the shortsightedness that besets local officials and developers alike. Let's just hope nature doesn't wipe out their mistakes as brutally as it did in 1993.

## MONTANA

### The Great Northern Project [HELENA]



#### Town Reclaims Unused Space

Development in Helena is booming. In 1990, there was \$15 million worth of new construction in the town. In 1998, that number tripled. With all this construction going on, the pressure to sprawl can be intense. Fortunately, developments like the Great Northern Project, designed by the architecture firm of Dowling-Tintinger, show that smart growth can help even rapidly growing places curb sprawl.

This urban revitalization project, which won the American Institute of Architects of Montana award in 1998, is being developed on 11 acres of vacant industrial land just north of the downtown area. Great Northern features homes, office space and green space galore — all within a walkable environment. The proximity to jobs, stores and nearby Carroll College means that residents can enjoy easy access to work, school and other necessities.

The projects within the development exemplify smart-growth design principles. To encourage an active streetscape, buildings are required to rent at least 75 percent of their ground floor to retail-type businesses. Second and third floors can be retail space or office space, and living units are encouraged on the top floors.

To help preserve open space, the city of Helena is creating a 20-acre park that will be connected to the downtown through a pedestrian path. Public transportation also serves the area, giving residents and workers alike a range of transportation choices.

Perhaps most importantly, the developers conducted an extensive public-consultation process to ensure that the new development will meet the needs of the community. Some of the unique features, such as the hand-carved, all-weather carousel, are the result of ideas that flowed from public discussions. The Great Northern Project may herald the start of a new gold rush for Helena

— one that will create jobs and build community while slowing the growth of sprawl.

## Shiloh Interchange

[BILLINGS]



### Developer's Pet Project Leads to Sprawl

After the Montana Department of Transportation completes the I-90 Shiloh interchange, the small town of Laurel, just west of Billings, will never be the same. What is now a site for some of the best farm land in the state will soon become strip malls, subdivisions and sprawling development. This project will propel Billings' sprawl westward into the more rural areas of the state. In fact, the interchange is situated in such a way as to practically guarantee that the town of Laurel and the city of Billings will sprawl into one another.

The interchange, created at the behest of a local developer, is only five miles from another exit. Although the ostensible reason for this road project is to relieve traffic congestion, it is really meant to encourage more development.

With careful planning, road projects can serve to actively support the vitality of city centers, ensuring that sprawl is kept to a minimum. Unfortunately the Shiloh interchange will do the opposite by destroying open space, creating unneeded development and bringing more traffic to this area of Montana.

## NEBRASKA

### The Lofts [OMAHA]



#### New Lofts in Historic Buildings

The NuStyle company has done more to bring people back to downtown Omaha than any other developer in the past 20 years. The cutting-edge developments they've created transform vacant downtown buildings into architecturally appealing housing and shops while maintaining the unique historical characteristics of each site.

The Lofts, one of NuStyle's more recent projects, combines the best of old and new. The developers have purchased three historic warehouses, which were built from 1899 to 1919. They are taking advantage of the era's solid



construction practices by leaving the original brick walls and steel joists in place to create a unique, visually appealing living environment. Central to the interior of the building will be a five-story atrium. In a unique approach to adding green space to living space, waterfalls, skylights, plants and a footbridge are planned for the interior courtyard, which some apartments will overlook.

Although parking is planned for the development, residents may find they don't need it. With 30,000 square feet of retail space on the first floor and a location five blocks from a business center, jobs, shops and entertainment are all within an easy walk. For those who work at home, NuStyle is bringing these historic buildings up to date by providing high-speed Internet access to every room. But this great project won't be for urban professionals alone as apartment prices will be quite affordable.

Residents are optimistic that growth and development downtown will continue — due in part to innovative smart-growth developments like The Lofts.



**Lofty Living:** Historic redevelopment like this loft conversion in Omaha, Neb., can help reinvigorate a city's downtown. Photo by Rob Parolek.

## I-80 Expansion [LINCOLN]



### Highway Boondoggle Crowds Out Transit

According to Nebraska's transportation planners, expanding state and local highways at a cost of \$375 million is a good investment — even though the same amount of money would fund Lincoln's Metropolitan Transit Authority, at 2001 spending levels, for roughly 24 years.

As part of this highway spending, a two-mile segment of the I-80 near Lincoln will be expanded at a cost of \$15.69 million. Another nine-mile segment of I-80 will be

expanded at a cost of \$45 million over five years. Supporters claim these expansions are needed to address congestion problems caused by sprawling development. The area in question, between Omaha and Lincoln, has seen explosive growth in the last several years, altering suburbs and downtown areas.

But are massive highway projects the best means to deal with this growth? According to the most recent transportation research, the answer is no. Experts have found that adding lanes to highways and interstates actually draws more drivers to the road, erasing many of the gains created by new construction. Extending roads and building new highways also increases the spread of suburban sprawl, which in turn makes traffic worse.

This is already happening in the Omaha-Lincoln region, where developers are contemplating construction in newly accessible areas. With the ongoing threat of development, Lincoln has been forced to agree to a study of potential development of the Stevens Creek watershed east of town.

Clearly, this region of Nebraska has enough suburban sprawl, and the expansion of I-80, instead of easing traffic, will just make things worse. The tens of millions of dollars Nebraska is set to spend on new and expanded roads could be put to much better use building and expanding the area's public-transportation system.

## NEVADA

### Campaigne Place [LAS VEGAS]



#### Smart, Stylish, Affordable Housing

In the fastest-growing big city in the country, where developers never met a neon sign they didn't like, the Campaigne Place housing development is a breath of fresh air. The 320-room development was built in a decrepit part of downtown Las Vegas known more for its crime rate than for its safe, affordable housing opportunities.

But Campaigne Place is turning this around. The apartments are located in a stylish, secure and well-designed building and monthly rents are very affordable. The project is conveniently located near jobs and shops and will allow those who work downtown to dispense with driving. In a city like Las Vegas, which consists mainly of hotels and casinos, providing affordable housing near the core is crucial.

City officials and developers hope that projects like Campaigne Place will spark more development in the area, thus adding to efforts to revitalize a part of Las Vegas desperately in need of help.

## Anthem Development Project [HENDERSON]



### Del Webb Strikes Again

Being the fastest-growing city in America is quite a distinction — especially when the city is essentially a suburb of another city. Henderson, a suburb of Las Vegas, is quickly becoming a highly popular destination for retirees, and has just bypassed Reno as the second largest city in Nevada. Its population has exploded in the last decade, jumping from 69,000 in 1990 to 200,000 by the end of 2000.

In an area that used to be mainly open space and Bureau of Land Management property, development has occurred at a feverish pace and with little planning. Developers are snatching up land and building subdivisions with names like McDonald Ranch, the Vineyards and Palermo. Smack dab in the middle of all this sprawl is Anthem by Del Webb — a development firm that seems to specialize in sprawling projects.

Del Webb's latest is a 5,000-acre development with 12,000 homes and 30,000 residents. The project is being built on what is now Henderson's southwest border, but given the pace of development and lack of planning, it is unclear where Henderson's borders will be in two or three years.

What is clear is that developments like Anthem are eating up precious natural resources. Major irrigation is needed to sustain the faux desert oasis the project will create. In fact, Del Webb will have to build five new reservoirs to meet the needs of the community and its lush surroundings. It will also add more cars to crowded roads and more smog to dirty skies.

## NEW HAMPSHIRE

### Downtown 2000

[PETERBOROUGH]



#### River Walk Connects Downtown

The residents and local officials of Peterborough

recognize what makes a community thrive: A rich pedestrian environment, a strong central core and beautiful green surroundings. As part of Downtown 2000, they are trying to achieve those goals using smart-growth techniques.

For communities seeking to reinvent themselves, one of the most potent tools in the smart-growth tool kit is an old-fashioned one — zoning. Many towns and cities are actually zoned to prevent smart-growth development that, for instance, places apartments near stores.

Peterborough is seeking changes that will concentrate economic development in the downtown area and make it more pedestrian friendly. By building a walkway under an existing highway bridge and creating a river walk to better connect downtown businesses, the city will provide those on foot with a safe and appealing means of getting around. Downtown 2000 will help create a more livable community by adding landscaping, pocket parks, planters, trees and a garden to the town's core.

Peterborough is also paying attention to the buildings that form the core of downtown by creating a Heritage Commission to protect historic structures. In addition, town officials are discussing how to keep civic buildings, like the post office, downtown.

Peterborough's Downtown 2000 plan demonstrates that communities with vision aren't waiting until sprawl has gotten unbearable to take action — they're thinking about the future today.

## Manchester Airport

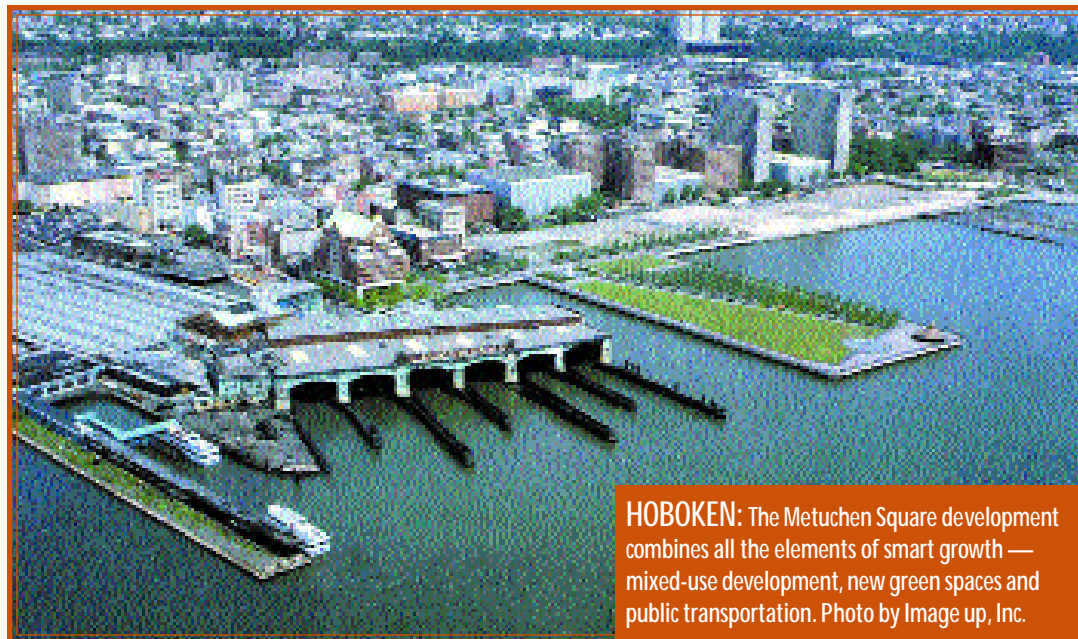


### Road Project Threatens Eagle Habitat

A proposed four-lane road and bridge across the Merrimack River will destroy wetlands and key habitat while increasing traffic and sprawl. The project, meant to ease access to Manchester Airport, will severely impact 100 acres of underground aquifers, 36 acres of farm land, 18 acres of floodplain and 23 acres of a designated state park. It will also allow urban sprawl to invade 1,000 acres of undeveloped land and fragile wildlife habitat. All for a cost of \$75 million.

The lower Merrimack River, which would also be harmed by this project, ranks second only to the Great Bay Estuary in importance as wintering habitat for bald eagles in New Hampshire.

Travelers landing at Manchester's airport currently have few choices except to drive. While the bridge plan



**HOBOKEN:** The Metuchen Square development combines all the elements of smart growth — mixed-use development, new green spaces and public transportation. Photo by Image up, Inc.

does call for a bicycle lane, a bus, light-rail or other type of public transportation would probably be more useful to people carrying suitcases. To add insult to injury, an existing rail bed at the airport was recently destroyed to expand the runway.

Fortunately, there are smart-growth alternatives to the new bridge that environmentalists can support. Widening and improving Brown Avenue and the I-293 bridge would minimize environmental damage, while bringing public transportation to the airport would ease congestion.

## NEW JERSEY

### Metuchen Square [HOBOKEN]



#### Smart Project Restores Waterfront

East Coast cities often have beautiful coastal areas that are marred by abandoned industrial land. But Hoboken is doing something about it: A 56-unit housing and retail development proposed for the city's waterfront will refurbish a vacant brownfield and open up public

access to this historic coastal area.

In a location immortalized in the movie "On the Waterfront," the Metuchen Square plan combines all the elements of smart growth — mixed-use development, new green spaces, public transportation and community involvement. Residents will be able to live and work within the project, or use the nearby light rail or PATH train to commute to jobs in Hoboken's center, other parts of New Jersey or New York City. In addition, the project offers easy access to bus and ferry service.

The project is also well located. Adjacent to a college and with access to libraries, government buildings and a community center, residents can stay involved without driving all around town. The streets inside Metuchen Square are also designed to be pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly. Crosswalks, lights and wide sidewalks make travel on foot enjoyable, while amenities for bikes — including bike lanes and bike racks — will make cycling easier and safer.

Of course, with beautiful places to recreate and relax, residents may not want to leave home. Where there is currently concrete and asphalt, the plan envisions new open space that will link up with the proposed greenway along the Hudson River. Furthermore, the designers are

working to catch stormwater and construction-site runoff to protect the area's watershed.

## Ramapo Reserve [OAKLAND]



### Trophy Houses Move Mountain

The Ramapo Mountains used to be known for hiking trails, trout-filled streams and pre-Columbian archaeological sites. Now the mountains are marred by 400 townhouses on 300 acres of blasted ledges.

Ramapo Reserve, as the project is known, should never have happened. The area in question had been on New Jersey's Green Acres acquisition list since before the development took place. After a bruising court battle, local public officials allowed the development to go forward, arguing that the court decision made this necessary. But the real motivation was likely extra tax revenue.

This project exemplifies all the problems of sprawling growth. First, by placing homes on pads blasted into the mountain, the builder practically guaranteed that possibly polluted runoff would pour off the steep slopes into a river that serves as a water supply. Second, the development's "pioneering" status as the first building site west of the Ramapo River violated existing natural boundaries and will place incredible pressure on the natural resources in the area. Third, only the wealthy will have access to these homes. At prices from the mid-\$200,000 range to over \$2.5 million, "Ramapo Reserve" can in no way be considered affordable. And finally, because of the isolated location and lack of public transportation, the development will force residents into their cars for even the most limited errands.

In exchange for a few luxury homes in an isolated and car-dependent community, the developers destroyed greenways, turned trout streams into steel pipes, carved away parts of the Ramapo Mountains and caused other severe environmental damage.

## NEW MEXICO

## Sawmill Community Land Trust [ALBUQUERQUE]



### Citizens Turn Abandoned Land Into Housing

What can residents do when industrial land

becomes abandoned? Residents of the Sawmill community in Albuquerque took things into their own hands by forming a community land trust to redevelop the site. This project, built on the site of a former sawmill, balances the rapidly growing community's need for new housing with protection of pristine natural resources.

With assistance from the city of Albuquerque, the New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority and federal agencies, the creators of the community land trust have developed plans for an impressive project that will consist of a mix of single-family and multi-family housing, live/work units, child-care facilities, senior apartments and commercial space. The housing units are not only smart-growth, they're affordable — ranging in price from \$54,000 up to \$104,000.

The location of the project near existing public transportation gives residents more choices in how they get around. There is a bus route two blocks from the neighborhood, and the streets are designed to be pedestrian-friendly.

The designers are also seeking to recapture some of the natural resources and green space lost when the site was converted to industrial use. A central plaza, orchard, and community garden will ensure that those who work, live and play in the development will have a beautiful environment to enjoy.

## Black Ranch [ALBUQUERQUE]



### Sprawl Jumps Over Natural Limits

The Petroglyph National Monument outside of Albuquerque has long served as a natural limit to development on the west side of the city. However, in a classic case of leapfrog development, the Quail Ranch project will sprawl past the monument into a region of the state that is still undeveloped.

The project, known to locals as Black Ranch, is planned for up to 50,000 residents — each of whom will need to drive to work, shop or run errands. The developers hope to build an extension of the four- to six-lane Paseo del Norte highway through the Petroglyph National Monument to access the development, and two major loop roads are also proposed. All told, the roads and the proposed development will destroy 6,700 acres of prime agricultural land.

Not only is this development bad for the environment, it will sap resources from the city of Albuquerque. Many residents wonder how the city will provide needed

services, like police and fire protection, and basic infrastructure, like water and sewer lines, to a far-flung community while struggling to meet a \$1 billion infrastructure maintenance backlog. The Albuquerque Public Schools estimates that building schools in Black Ranch will cost \$142 million in taxpayer money.

Albuquerque has a long tradition of planning by geography — using natural features to guide growth. But poorly planned suburban sprawl is jumping over these boundaries. To the east, a major canyon is being developed. To the south, farms are being transformed into suburban-style subdivisions. To the northwest, auto-oriented subdivisions are quickly expanding. And now, with the Black Ranch project, the west side of Albuquerque is threatened. Unless Albuquerque changes its ways, the city will soon find itself surrounded by sprawl.

## NEW YORK

## Renaissance 2010

[ROCHESTER]



### Smart Growth Renaissance

Rochester has embarked on an impressive effort to redevelop downtown, create smart growth and rejuvenate the city. Advocates claim that Renaissance 2010, as the plan is known, will turn Rochester into a world-class cultural, economic and social center.

Every aspect of the plan takes advantage of existing development to protect and enhance the community's natural resources. The city has adopted a regional "no net loss" policy to ensure that open spaces, waterways, parks and urban forests are not threatened by suburban sprawl. Development will be focused on the city center through reclamation of brownfields and other previously developed areas. The great waterways — Lake Ontario, the Genesee River and the Erie Canal — will be given their rightful due as the crown jewels of the region. Downtown development plans will focus on making these incredible resources easier to access.

Finally, the city has recognized the social elements that comprise livable communities. One impressive feature of the plan is a focus on citizen involvement through the Neighbors Building Neighborhoods program: Residents are encouraged to become active players in the decisions that will improve their communities and



way of life. The city of Rochester recognizes that smart growth is about more than buildings and parks — it's about people.

## Stewart Airport

[ORANGE COUNTY]



### Conversion Eats Up Open Space

In an area of metropolitan New York already choking on suburban sprawl, the privatization of the Stewart Airport is threatening one of the last remaining open spaces in the region. The state-owned airport was turned over to private operation in April 2000. Now, Gov. Pataki is proposing to sell the adjacent buffer lands for private development, threatening the extensive wetlands, forests and fields in the area. What was once an oasis in a rapidly developing area will soon become yet another sprawling development under the governor's proposal.

Supporters of the plan envision a metropolitan complex similar to the Metroplex in Dallas. They point out that

it is ideally situated five hours from Boston and Washington, D.C., and "only" 90 minutes away from New York City. Unfortunately, most visitors will spend that time in a car, because driving is still the main way to access the project. Any development in this area is likely to contribute to the already significant congestion and deteriorating air quality in the region.

In order to accommodate the new traffic, the state of New York has proposed the construction of a new interchange on I-84 that will pave over more open space and spur even more sprawl.

And other development in the area will just make this traffic worse. In a cornfield not far from the project in rural New Jersey, near the small town of Hopewell, Merrill Lynch is building a 3.5 million square-foot office development that will employ as many as 3,500 people. In nearby Middletown, AT&T recently built 1 million square feet of laboratories.

The conversion of Denver's Stapleton Airport is a model for how to turn unused land into a well-planned development that preserves open space. New York would do well to look west for ideas on how to develop Stewart Airport while protecting open space.



**Losing Our Natural Heritage:** For the sake of more sprawl, New York is putting beautiful areas like this on the chopping-block. Photo by Nick Zungoli.

## NORTH CAROLINA

## Vermillion Project

[HUNTERSVILLE]



### Walkable, Beautiful and Smart

A neighborhood is, first and foremost, designed for people. With this kind of philosophy driving it, how can the Vermillion Project go wrong?

This development, located on 360 acres adjacent to downtown Huntersville, N.C., exemplifies the best of the smart-growth movement. It is designed around 13 principles of town planning, and will include public transportation, people-oriented architecture and mixed-use design.

Rather than force residents to drive everywhere, the Vermillion Project focuses on walking and biking. Perhaps most importantly, the developers recognize the importance of having a place to walk or bike to by integrating shops, jobs and other necessities within the community.

For those residents who need to commute, the

project will offer shuttle-bus service to downtown Huntersville, or access to the nearby Anchor Mill project where an abandoned textile mill is being transformed into a vibrant neighborhood of its own, complete with shops, restaurants and a train station.

The project also makes the most of existing natural resources by integrating a one-and-a-half-mile greenway into the neighborhood plan. The backbone of this greenway is a small creek which the developers will leave untouched for residents to enjoy. The housing plans call for traditional touches like wide sidewalks and front porches.

Vermillion's goal is to be a community for people from all walks of life. Pending the completion of an agreement with Habitat for Humanity, the developers will also create more affordable housing.

## Outer Loop [RALEIGH]



### Second Beltway Threatens Wetlands

Anyone who believes Raleigh is learning from the mistakes of Atlanta's sprawl hasn't seen the construction of Raleigh's Outer Loop and northern Wake County's sprawling developments.

The 71-mile-long Outer Loop, the county's biggest road project ever, is currently projected to cost at least \$1.2 billion. It will destroy acres of precious wetlands and the county's rural character, while encouraging more sprawling growth.

In the northern reaches of the loop, which is currently under construction, new developments are breaking ground in a big way. Wakefield Plantation exemplifies the new type of sprawl Raleigh is encouraging. The city fought to annex this huge development.

Now Raleigh is spending hundreds of millions in taxpayer money to extend water and sewer lines, build schools, widen and build roads, and provide government services. What's worse is that Raleigh's politicians in the mid-1990s approved the development and annexation without a master plan and with very little public discussion.

Most everyone in the area agrees that new developments are needed. But instead of more roads and more sprawl, the county needs to protect its open space, build better public transportation and create walkable communities with town centers. If Raleigh continues to encourage developments like Wakefield, Atlanta may soon lose its place as sprawl capital of the South.



**SMART AND BEAUTIFUL:** The Vermillion development near Huntersville, N.C., offers a smart-growth alternative to more suburban sprawl.

## NORTH DAKOTA

### Williamsburg [BISMARCK]



#### Smart Housing for Seniors

The mostly senior residents of the planned Williamsburg development in downtown Bismarck will enjoy a very pedestrian-friendly environment: Jobs, shops and other services are only a short walk away. This is because the developers wisely recognized the value of developing the project on vacant property with easy access to all the amenities of downtown.

The 40-unit town-home community is a welcome change from much of the scattered development on the outskirts of the city. By redeveloping vacant property near downtown, the developers have managed to avoid destroying open space or farm land. And by locating the development near the city park, residents will be able to enjoy green space close to home.

### Southport [BISMARCK]



#### Homes on Wetlands Aren't Smart

Advocates of smart growth usually argue that building within city limits is key to slowing suburban sprawl. But the Southport development in Bismarck demonstrates that this type of development is not always a good idea — not when homes are built on fill and rock that used to be wetlands.

Though the homes in the Southport project are adjacent to downtown, these homes also sit in a section of the Missouri River known as the Garrison Reach — the longest free-flowing stretch of the Missouri from the Garrison Dam to St. Louis. Now, due to the pressures caused by Southport and other developments, this incredible natural resource is threatened. And by filling in the wetlands associated with the river's floodplain, the developers are virtually guaranteeing increased flooding in Bismarck and communities downstream.

The environmental concerns extend beyond flooding

and the impact on the river. By limiting the development to just housing, with no workplace opportunities and only one small convenience store, residents will be forced to drive to work or to run errands. There is a bicycle lane on the community's two-lane access road, but without additional access to buses, light rail or safe pedestrian routes, many residents will have no choice but to drive.

Successful waterfront development projects seek to revitalize communities through improved economic opportunities, while protecting and enhancing natural resources. This project does not even come close to passing that test.

## OHIO

### EcoVillage [CLEVELAND]



#### Urban Oasis Will Brighten Downtown

The EcoVillage project is still in the conceptual phase, but it's already a great idea. Intended to be an environmentally friendly village within the city of Cleveland, this project, if successful, could be a powerful model for communities across the country.

One of EcoVillage's most innovative aspects is its commitment to creating an urban oasis. Plans call for creating parks with trails and bike routes, restoring environmentally degraded urban habitats and enhancing open space. Residents, as well as wildlife in the area, are sure to enjoy the tree-lined streets and plentiful green space.

By locating housing next to an existing light-rail station, the developers will be able to provide location-efficient mortgages, giving homebuyers credit for reduced transportation costs. Residents will have access via walking, biking or public transportation to shops, markets and other resources within the neighborhood. Many of the developments will also use passive solar energy for heating and cooling.

### Deerfield Mall/Cincinnati Center [CINCINNATI]



#### Mall Creates More Sprawl

In southwest Ohio, near Cincinnati, six mall projects have been proposed, are under development or will be opening in the near future. Given this, it's hard to single out just one as an example of poor planning. But the



Deerfield Mall, also known as Cincinnati Center, is a good place to start. Slated to be built at one of the most congested intersections in the region, this 80-acre development threatens air, water and quality of life in the area.

To accommodate the extra traffic that this auto-dependent development will inevitably create, developers are proposing to widen portions of I-71 and nearby Mason-Montgomery Road. When other nearby development, like the proposed Deerfield Town Center, is taken into account, the traffic and air pollution will only get worse.

In addition to concerns about air quality, residents of nearby Mason may have to worry about their water as well. Sprawling development in the area is already depleting their drinking water aquifer. Developments such as the Deerfield Mall will only make this worse.

## OKLAHOMA

### Maple Ridge, Swan Lake, Yorktown [TULSA]



#### Watchdogs Defend Historic Neighborhoods

The neighborhoods of Maple Ridge, Swan Lake, Yorktown and Central Park in Tulsa have used smart-growth concepts to preserve and protect historic, pre-World War II houses and create livable, walkable communities.

These neighborhoods offer a mixture of rental apartments, historic mansions and middle-income bungalows. Residents can walk, bike or take the bus a short distance to work. Bike lanes are well integrated with the rest of the city's bike trails, and streets are designed with appropriate lighting, crosswalks and trees for those on foot.

These neighborhoods boast an amazing array of open spaces as well. Residents can watch migrating waterfowl, have a picnic at Swan Lake — one of the two well-maintained urban parks in the neighborhood — or walk through shady avenues of 100-year-old trees to the Saturday farmers' market. If they're looking for culture, museums, opera, ballet and the symphony are all just a few minutes away.

What makes this all possible is the phenomenal level of citizen involvement. Active "watchdog" groups in each neighborhood keep an eye out for the quality of life in

the area. When residents get involved in their communities, smarter growth and better planning is almost always the result.

### South 71st Street [TULSA]



#### Mega-Malls Harm Downtown, Open Space

Tulsa seems to be suffering from a split personality disorder. On one hand, the city has well-planned, historic neighborhoods that epitomize smart growth. On the other hand, the South 71st Street corridor reflects all the classic problems of suburban sprawl. The question: Which Tulsa will win out?

The South 71st Street corridor is superstore heaven. Acres upon acres of land were paved over to make way

for adjacent mega-plexes of chain stores. Over time, an excess of development has forced some businesses to close, leaving vacant parking lots and abandoned stores.

Unfortunately, this pattern of sprawl shows no sign of letting up. More and more developments are being built to the east, with sprawling development now also threatening housing and farm communities to the north and south.

Those who want to shop at one of these mega-malls have a tough time getting there. Although the area is served by a city bus, most people drive, causing tremendous traffic jams. Even residents of the housing complex immediately adjacent to the western end of the corridor find it hard to get around due to a tall retaining wall that separates their homes from the shops.

**DOWNTOWN FLOWERS:** Tulsa's farmers' market helps keep its central shopping area healthy. Photo by Judy Reid.





## OREGON

## Buckman Heights

[PORTLAND]



## Location, Location, Location

The residents of Portland have long been pioneers in the smart-growth movement. Nowhere is that more evident than in the Buckman Heights Apartment project. This project, which mixes affordable apartment units with townhouses, is close to public transportation, and has easy access to shops and jobs.

This project follows the cardinal rule of real estate and smart growth: Location, location, location. Prendergast & Associates, the developers, have transformed a vacant inner-city auto dealership into a walkable, bikeable neighborhood with easy access to a range of existing services.

The apartments and townhomes they created incorporate a huge array of "green building" elements, from energy-efficient windows to low-chemical carpets to recycled content in the building materials. One building has a 2,000 square-foot roof planted with native grasses. The developers have also designed a groundbreaking stormwater filtration system.

Whenever residents need to leave their homes, they have easy access to jobs, shopping and recreation through a range of transportation options. Most live only about 5 to 15 minutes away from their jobs, which they can get to via four high-frequency bus lines, light rail, bike lanes and pedestrian routes. Residents can even take advantage of two on-site CarSharing Portland cars — part of a program to provide as-needed access to automobiles. The Buckman Heights project proves that, given time and effort, good things can grow in an asphalt jungle.

## Genstar [PORTLAND]



## Developers Push Growth Limit

Despite urban growth boundaries and strong land-use laws, sprawling development is creeping along the Tualatin Valley Highway in Oregon. At issue is an ongoing battle between developers and smart-growth advocates about the best way to manage the region's high-technology-fueled growth. Developers want to add over 450 acres of prime farm land to the region's growth plan — smart-growth advocates want to stick to the current boundaries.

Genstar, a Canadian company with its U.S. headquarters in San Diego, has an option to buy a plot of land that has been designated for potential future addition into the buildable area for about one-sixth the market value. Genstar is trying to convince the Portland area's regional government to allow them to start building a 4,000-unit housing complex — the largest ever built in Oregon — on the site right away.

If the proposal is approved, the amount of prime farm land in the urban reserves will be reduced to 2,017 acres, down from the 3,086 acres that was originally slated to be preserved. It would be the first time that prime farm land has been added to the region's buildable area since 1979.

The urban growth boundary concept has made Oregon one of the most livable states in the country. But piecemeal, poorly planned additions threaten the region's quality of life. Hopefully, residents of Oregon won't let their communities slide down the slippery slope to suburban sprawl.

## PENNSYLVANIA

## TJ Maxx Warehouse

[PHILADELPHIA]



## Warehouse Brings Jobs, Smart Growth

When is building a major warehouse and distribution facility considered smart growth? When it provides jobs, transportation options and environmental benefits like those created by a new TJ Maxx warehouse to be built next to the Northeast Philadelphia Airport.

In a truly innovative approach to environmental remediation and job creation, TJ Maxx and the city of Philadelphia have agreed to locate the facility on a 122-acre municipal landfill that has been unused for over 20 years. As a part of the proposed development, the landfill will be carefully cleaned up and protected to meet current environmental standards.

In its place, TJ Maxx will build a 1 million square-foot warehouse and 1,500 square feet of office space. The company chose the spot in part because of its proximity to public transportation. The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority runs frequent bus service very close to the property. In addition, because the facility is near existing homes and businesses, some workers may be able to walk or bike to work. This project clearly shows

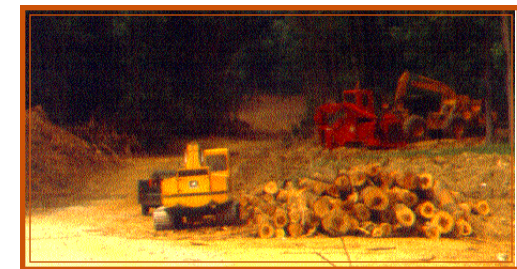
that smart growth and economic development can go hand in hand.

## Oaklands Corporate Center [DOWNINGTON]



## Oaks Bulldozed for Offices

The Oaklands Corporate Center outside of Philadelphia used to be heavily forested. Settlers named the area in recognition of the beauty of its oak trees. But that natural beauty is being demolished by sprawling housing, businesses and retail shopping developments. The last haven of forested land in the area, the 200-acre Downingtown woods, fell prey to development in the early 1990s, and development is continuing on this land today.



**Bulldozing Over Beauty:** Outside of Philadelphia, some of the region's last open space is being paved over for new developments. Photo by Richard Whiteford.

About one mile north of the town of Downingtown, this forest is being rapidly bulldozed to make way for 517 housing units. The Strubble bike trail, which used to run through trees and natural habitat, will now run through housing tracts. The wildlife in the area, which used to have hundreds of acres to roam, will now only have access to the paltry 70 acres that the Brandywine Conservancy managed to wrest from the developer.

Though there's less room for wildlife, there's more room for cars. The development will add at least 3,000 new cars to local roads. Removing much of the forested area to build this auto-dependent development will reduce the natural air-filtration that the trees provide and leave the area vulnerable to water pollution from stormwater runoff.

What is most troubling about this development is that there were alternatives. Conservancy groups offered the developers \$5 million to purchase the land. These

groups hoped to preserve the woodlands for wildlife and for future generations of hikers and outdoor enthusiasts. Although the developer was seeking to sell the land, and the amount offered was twice the original purchase price, the developer said no.

## RHODE ISLAND

### Middletown Town Center



#### Walkable Design Makes Chores a Pleasure

Imagine waking up in the morning to the view of a forested valley, then strolling through the town park on your way to the post office. From there you pick up some coffee at a nearby shop, hit the Sakonnet Greenway and then loop past a reservoir and bird sanctuary on your way to the library. Sound good? After the Middletown Town Center is built, residents of Middletown will soon enjoy this lifestyle.

The project will include residential, retail and public-use properties all within a quick walk or bike ride. For residents who need to commute longer distances, the development is fully equipped with existing bus service, and there's talk of adding a trolley. The developers are taking full advantage of existing resources by building near developed properties.

The new shops and dwellings will look directly down into Bailey's Brook Valley, an area that has become choked with invasive plants, but will be restored to its natural beauty by the developers. Nearby farm land is being purchased for protection or potential use as community gardens for residents.

The project will ensure that buildings and streets are built at a human scale: The maximum building height will be 40 feet and the sidewalks will be wide enough to accommodate outdoor cafes. Residents will also be able to enjoy concerts at the planned amphitheater or meet at the senior center that's already being built.

### Centre of New England Business Park [COVENTRY]



#### Business "Park" Brings Sprawl, Traffic

The new 480-acre Centre of New England Business Park is actually in the center of suburban sprawl. This development is at least five miles from any urban

center, and the site's location near two smaller towns will spur even more sprawling growth.

There are no plans to restore, enhance or protect open space. In order to begin building on the site, forest lands were cleared, habitat was disturbed and an already-threatened watershed has been further imperiled. As a result of the development, a nearby lake is in danger of experiencing serious problems with sediment from runoff.

With bus service only twice a day and no housing anywhere nearby, almost everyone who works at the complex will be forced to drive. In fact, the developers have plans for 8,000 to 9,000 parking spots to accommodate workers and visitors. This means more air pollution for a region that already has air pollution problems.

The Centre of New England Business Park is poorly planned growth that will encourage more suburban sprawl. This type of haphazard development harms the environment and local residents' quality of life.



**Springing Back to Life:** Thanks to the work of Spring Industries, Fort Mill, S.C., is building neighborhoods where residents can walk to stores and shops. Photo by Saussy Burbank Model Homes at Baxter.

## SOUTH CAROLINA

### Clear Springs [FORT MILL]



#### Smart Design, Lots of Open Space

At the Clear Springs development in Fort Mill smart growth is a family affair. That's because this 20-year

smart-growth project is being developed by Spring Industries. This family-owned business hopes to transform the town of Fort Mill and other nearby communities into model smart-growth developments.

Between now and 2020, the plan, incorporating all the important elements of a livable community, will create six neighborhoods surrounding the historic city. Homes will be built close to the street to create a walkable neighborhood. A range of commercial spaces will be within walking or biking distance. And although no public transportation to Charlotte exists as of yet, the developers are hoping to improve the situation.

The crown jewel of the project is the 2,300-acre Anne Springs Close Greenway. Natural and historic features of this area will be left untouched, including 26 miles of hiking trails, a creek, three lakes, a 190-year-old cabin, a 1946 dairy barn, more than 150 varieties of wildflowers and a vast array of wildlife. Buffer zones protect the ecology of lakes and streams in the developed areas, and existing waterways have been left undisturbed.

### Myrtle Beach



#### Developers Dig and Drain Wetlands

In a case of killing the goose that laid the golden egg, developers in Myrtle Beach are destroying the open space that makes the town such a popular tourist getaway and residential community. A pattern of poorly planned development along several miles of the Highway 17 Bypass in Horry County has destroyed wetlands and open space, increased traffic congestion and eliminated important wildlife habitat.

Much of the land upon which these developments are built was previously forest. Since laws regulating the draining of wetlands do not apply while cutting timber, "temporary" drainage ditches are dug in order to cut the trees, then the property is easily converted to a buildable site. Gas stations, restaurants and condominiums now stand where trees and wetlands once flourished.

In one case, 90 acres of wetlands disappeared within two years after drainage ditches were dug to cut timber. Now the developer plans to build an entertainment complex, stores and houses. A four-lane road and bridge over the Inter-Coastal Waterway is also planned for the site.

Adding traffic insult to environmental injury, the Highway 17 Bypass, which was built to ease the area's severe traffic congestion, has already become

overstressed. With little public transportation and few walkable streets, residents have to drive on already crowded roads to get around town.

Without some major changes in Myrtle Beach's land-use planning, this type of development will continue until all the open space is gone. Already, new drainage canals are cropping up throughout the region, which means that development can't be far behind. For developers in Horry County, the motto seems to be "When in doubt, dig and drain."

## SOUTH DAKOTA

### Sioux Falls



#### Project Connects Jobs With Open Space

Vacant industrial land has cut off downtown Sioux Falls from the natural beauty of its namesake, Falls Park. But the city is trying to link these two areas together through smart growth.

These abandoned parcels, also known as brownfields, used to house a variety of industries including a brickyard and a scrap-salvage operation. But if the city of Sioux Falls has its way, the land will be turned into a mixture of private redevelopment and public park land that will include an extension of the 14-mile River Greenway recreational path.

The first crucial step in the rehabilitation is to carefully clean up the area which, after years of industrial use, is heavily contaminated. Once the contamination problems have been solved, about three blocks worth of commercial development space will be available, adding tremendously to the employment opportunities of downtown Sioux Falls.

In addition to cleaning up existing environmental damage, the city is hoping to build a public park and extend existing trails to better connect Falls Park with the newly redeveloped area. The plans also call for using a portion of the new space to extend the park further into the downtown area.

Falls Park, with its new river walk, picnic areas and rehabilitated historic buildings, has become a beautiful haven for downtown. It's time the areas surrounding the park were brought up to par.

### Frawley Ranch [DEADWOOD]



#### City Ignores Voters to Annex Land

In a shocking affront to the democratic process, the city of Deadwood is seeking to annex a portion of the former Frawley Ranch in Lawrence County to build more sprawling development — even though residents voted down the proposal in early 2000.

At issue is a 6,255-acre resort development that would take more than 10 years to complete. Proposed for the development are hotels, a golf course, industrial and business parks and residential housing.

The site is located next to Highway 85 just north of the city of Deadwood. Residents of the county voted down the proposal for a number of important reasons. Clearly, the glitzy, resort-like nature of the development would detract from the ranch's historic roots. One-room schoolhouses, historic dairy facilities and barns are a bit at odds with a brand new golf course. Also, ranchers, who have seen development eat up plenty of prime farm land, are concerned that the Frawley Ranch project will threaten neighboring ranch property, especially given the likely influx of cars and roads to the area to meet the needs of future residents.

The economic costs to the community are likely to be high as well, since the proposed development is three times the current size of Deadwood. Developers claim the project will help attract people to Deadwood, which is four miles down the road. But it is far more likely that business in the existing town will be decimated by the new development to the north.

Residents of Lawrence County have spoken. They recognize that the project will harm the economic and environmental vitality of the region, as well as their quality of life. Local officials should listen to the voters.

## TENNESSEE

### Eastgate Town Center

[CHATTANOOGA]



#### Smart Growth Revives an Ailing Mall

The Eastgate Town Center is located about five miles from downtown Chattanooga. When it was built in the 1960s it destroyed the city's downtown base — only to suffer the same fate when a larger mall was built sever-

al miles further out. Using smart-growth concepts, residents, local officials and developers are all working together to bring this area of Chattanooga back from the brink of urban decay.

By 1997, store occupancy at Town Center was down to 27 percent and the mall was failing. However, when AT&T stepped in to lease one of the anchor store sites, local officials were inspired to attempt a full-scale revitalization of the mall. In January 1998, they invited local residents and business owners to a week-long planning process. The participants pushed planners to build a multi-purpose town center with both retail and residential opportunities.

Today, developers are creating housing, parks, civic buildings and a town square on what used to be vacant parking lots. Residents and workers will be able to enjoy a hiking trail to a nearby wetland and, hopefully, a proposed greenway. Thousands of jobs are coming to the area — jobs that are within easy walking and biking distance of homes and shops.

In Chattanooga, local leaders and developers have recognized the value of an open planning process, and citizens are now leading the charge for smarter growth.

### The Village [BRUNSWICK]



#### Housing Eats Up Open Space, Fuels Sprawl

The city of Brunswick is creating a "village" that will destroy the countryside. This development, four miles outside of Memphis, is suburban sprawl at its most damaging.

The 16-acre, housing-only project is being built on what used to be prime agricultural land. According to the Land Use Committee of the Shelby County Commission, any environmental damages to open space that occur as a result of the development are insignificant. In fact, the environmental damages are staggering. The housing project has leveled substantial areas of forest, used dirt mined from a tributary of Oliver Creek to raise the floodplain by approximately ten feet, and produced flooding in adjacent areas of homes and farm land. Siltation problems in Oliver Creek are dramatic — so much so, in fact, that the developer has been cited for violating the state's Clean Water Act.

But the construction process is only the beginning: Traffic congestion and air-pollution problems can only increase as a result of the poorly planned placement of this development. Access to the Village is restricted to



two-lane rural roads, with no bike paths and no public transportation. And because the development includes only housing, residents will be forced to drive long distances for every errand, and commuters will have little choice but to drive 30 minutes or more to jobs in Memphis and outlying communities.

## TEXAS

### Post Midtown Square

[HOUSTON]



#### Project Mixes Shops, Housing

Houston is better known for pollution than for smart growth. But the Post Midtown Square development is a small step towards changing that.

This unique 479-unit project provides a mixture of shops, apartments and flexible space for use by the community. Two blocks from downtown and in close proximity to the Houston Metro Trolley line, the project allows residents to ride public transit or walk — instead of adding to the region's air pollution while trapped in traffic.

Given the intriguing use of open space and innovative design features, residents may not want to go far. The carefully designed landscaping features New Orleans-style courtyards with outdoor fountains and gas lanterns. By focusing development within the downtown, Post Midtown Square developers are protecting the equivalent of nearly six city blocks of open space somewhere out in the suburbs.

The citizens of Houston clearly recognize the benefits of downtown living. In fact, the developers of Post Midtown Square can barely build the units fast enough to keep up with demand. But Houston — where planning has long been a dirty word — still has a long way to go.

### Wal-Mart [DALLAS]



#### Wal-Mart Bullies Residents

How many Wal-Marts are enough for a city like Dallas? Five? Ten? According to Wal-Mart, 40 new stores must be built in the North Texas area within the next year. Dallas-area residents are understandably concerned about this reckless rate of growth, and no community

will be more impacted than Rockwall, where a new store is slated for construction very close to a residential neighborhood.

The new Wal-Mart bears all the signs of poor planning. Zoning for the 13-acre tract of land, which currently provides some protection against poor development, will have to be changed for Wal-Mart to move forward with the 42,000-square-foot store. But residents are caught between a rock and a hard place: Wal-Mart can build on a portion of the site whether zoning changes are approved or not. In that case, the store will be built immediately adjacent to residential areas, with absolutely no buffer zones or greenbelts. While rezoning creates some minor protections for the residential areas, this will amount to surrendering to the larger development.

The store's location near Highway 66 means most shoppers will drive, subjecting the residential neighborhood to dramatically increased traffic and congestion problems — problems already aggravated by new residential development to the north of the city. In addition, residents are concerned about drainage problems at the site. These and other attendant problems of suburban sprawl are likely to get worse as several thousand square feet of additional retail space adjoining the Wal-Mart are developed.

Planning tools can be powerful in the hands of those who understand how to use them to promote smart growth. In this case, these tools are being misused, and the residents of Rockwall and other Dallas communities are suffering.



#### HEALING HOUSTON'S DOWNTOWN:

Post Midtown Square offers a range of housing choices near public transportation, shops and community space. The courtyard shown at right gives residents a space to relax outdoors.

Photos by Steve Hinds.



## UTAH

## Main Street [SALT LAKE CITY]



## Light Rail Success Surprises Salt Lake

Salt Lake City is using light rail as a catalyst to revitalize its downtown. Much like Portland's MAX, Salt Lake City's TRAX system, which has achieved an impressive daily ridership of nearly 20,000 since it opened last December, has spawned transit-oriented development projects all around the city. Nowhere is this smart-growth approach more evident than with the Main Street revitalization project.

On Main Street, old buildings are being transformed to house new businesses. A parking lot is now a community center with an ice skating rink, amphitheater for concerts, and space for events and celebrations. Residents and visitors can enjoy pedestrian-friendly streets with attractive sidewalks, plants and street clocks. The area's central location next to the TRAX line gives residents more transportation choices.



**If You Build It, They Will Come:** Salt Lake City's new light-rail system has been a surprise success. Plans are now in the works to expand it. Photo by Marc Heilesen.

Main Street's successful revitalization will probably spark similar efforts in other parts of Salt Lake City and surrounding suburbs, as TRAX moves further out from the downtown. In fact, the success of TRAX has inspired the Salt Lake valley to request additional segments of light rail. The first additional segment to the University of Utah has just begun and will be completed by the 2002 Winter Olympics. Other segments to Draper, West Jordan, West

Valley City and the Salt Lake City airport have recently been added to the Utah Transit Authority's long-range plan.

Salt Lake City residents who once thought light rail would be a boondoggle are clearly warming to the idea. In fact, according to transit surveys, of the nearly 20,000 daily riders, more than 41 percent are new to public transportation.

## Rosecrest Development

[HERRIMAN]



## Highway Rumors Spur Sprawl

Residents of the town of Herriman enjoy a small-town lifestyle surrounded by Utah's beautiful open spaces. Horses graze in the area's pastures and hillsides are filled with winter-ranging deer.

But if a local developer has his way, this idyllic lifestyle will come to a screeching halt. The Rosecrest development, which spans 2,200 acres and encompasses 2,400 houses and upscale condominiums, will likely hold 7,000 people by 2010 — increasing the size of the town eightfold.

This project is just a small part of the sprawling growth that the proposed 125-mile Legacy Highway is already creating. The highway would cut a swath across some of the last remaining open spaces of the Wasatch Front and has irresponsible developers licking their chops.

While the project will preserve some open space and include some commercial development, the scale is such that, if it goes forward, Herriman will become another small-town casualty of sprawl. In fact, if current trends continue, the town will spread out to include more than 14,000 new residents by 2030, making it one of the fastest-growing communities in Salt Lake County. And, as with many cities, Salt Lake City and its inner suburbs are thirsting for the type of development that will be wreaking havoc on Herriman.

As one county official put it: "It does show one of the drawbacks of not having regional planning."

## VERMONT

## Winooski



## Urban Village Mixes Growth, Open Space

Winooski is perhaps the most accessible and centrally located community in Vermont. Within a two-mile

radius there are five colleges, the state's largest medical center, an international airport, dozens of office buildings and beautiful Lake Champlain. Winooski is also just across the bridge from Burlington, considered the economic, cultural and artistic center of Vermont.

The Winooski Community Development Corporation has proposed a downtown development plan that will serve as a model for other similarly situated communities across the country. Located in the heart of downtown on the northern bank of the Winooski River, the 20.4-acre project will combine places to live, work and shop. An additional open space area of 104 acres to the east will also be preserved, creating a 1 to 5 ratio of development to open space.

The development focuses on the historic Champlain Mill, which, as a result of urban renewal efforts in the 1970s was turned into retail stores and offices. However,



**Renewal on the River:** Winooski, Vt., is redeveloping its historic structures instead of sprawling outward. Photo by Truex Cullins & Partners Architects.

the developers have recognized the potential for this area to become much more than just the existing strip mall and drive-through bank. The goal is to completely redesign the area into a walkable, bikeable urban residential village.

Residents of this new urban village will have access to a range of services and job opportunities. The plans call for office space, government buildings, residential space along the waterfront, retail shops, a movie theater and a health club. When not working or working out, residents can enjoy the public boardwalk that will be created along the waterfront, a planned craft and food market, or the 104 acres of open space nearby. With limited parking, pedestrian-friendly streets, bike lanes and access to transit, residents will also have a choice of transportation options.



## “The Circ”

[CHITTENDEN COUNTY]



### Planned Highway Robs Transit, Open Space

What would you do if you had \$10 million to spend on a transportation system? Convert 250 miles of unused rail tracks to bike paths? Buy one year's worth of public-transit services? Provide for more than two years' worth of rail service? If you live in Chittenden County the answer is, build one mile of the new “Circ,” the Chittenden County Circumferential Highway Project.

In a classic miscalculation of the factors that both cause and relieve traffic congestion, highway planners in Vermont are trying to pave their way out of congestion. The Circ, if completed, will be a 15.8-mile-long, four-lane divided highway running from Interstate 89 in Williston to Vermont Route 127 in Colchester. Of course, \$168 million in taxpayer dollars might not be too much to pay if the result were a dramatic reduction in traffic, commute times and air pollution. But studies show that as we build more roads, more traffic is generated. When one factors in growth and delays from construction, the project will be obsolete almost before it is finished.

The price tag also fails to reflect the environmental damages associated with the project. The Circ passes through much of Vermont's most endangered ecosystem — a rare, ancient habitat called sandplain, created eons ago by glaciers. The impact on this delicate area goes well beyond the Circ itself. By building the highway through previously undeveloped land, the state and county are throwing the doors open to suburban sprawl.

Fortunately, there's an alternative to the Circ — an alternative that provides a better long-term solution for commuters, the economy and the environment: public transportation. By focusing funding on rural bus service, bike-lane enhancements, improvements to existing roads, carpooling, transit incentives and land-use planning, Vermonters can achieve better results at a lower cost while protecting open space and reducing air pollution.

## VIRGINIA

### Simplicity [CHARLOTTESVILLE]



#### Green Buildings, Smart Design

At the Simplicity development in Charlottesville

more land is being left open than is actually being developed. This small-scale project leaves three of its four-and-a-half acres as open space. A green, affordable, bike- and pedestrian-friendly neighborhood will soon exist on what used to be an abandoned industrial site.

In fact, Simplicity gives new meaning to the term “pedestrian-friendly.” The developers plan no through streets, only a central parking area with foot access to homes, parks and open spaces. Residents may find they don't even need cars, as the downtown areas of Belmont and Charlottesville are only a 5- to 10- minute walk. Children will be able to safely bike or walk to the neighborhood elementary school in about 10 minutes, and commuters can use bus service to connect with rail and other forms of transit. The University of Virginia, the region's largest employer, is 15 minutes away by bus.

Simplicity also pushes the envelope when it comes to green-building techniques. The houses will be constructed with extensive use of natural or environmentally friendly building materials and will be very energy efficient. Solar water heaters and special floor heating systems will be incorporated into all the homes.

Though developers hope to make this the greenest community of its kind in the area, the goal is to keep these homes affordable. In fact, over half of the housing stock will be reserved for first-time homebuyers earning 80 percent or less of the area's average monthly income.

Perhaps the best thing about Simplicity is that it is designed to last. The developers propose to transfer ownership of the green spaces on the eastern half of the property to a public/private organization that will permanently protect them.

## The Villages at Round Hill

[LOUDOUN COUNTY]



### Huge Housing Project Scares Nearby Towns

Residents of Loudoun County have mobilized to fight sprawl by electing an entire new board of supervisors dedicated to smart growth. Unfortunately, years of bad planning have left a legacy of sprawling projects that continue to harm the area.

The Villages at Round Hill, a massive 1,100-unit housing development, is one of them. Situated in rural Loudoun County, with no shops or stores and little public transportation, the development's location will force residents to drive to the small town of Round Hill for every errand. There are no provisions for pedestrians or bicycles

on these small rural roads, and increased traffic is making a stroll or a ride unpleasant and unsafe.

Efforts are being made to direct growth to existing urban or rural communities. The trade off is supposed to be a dramatic decrease in building on agricultural land. Unfortunately, sprawl continues to creep into agricultural areas.

If the Round Hill development has a silver lining, it's that the project has spurred other towns in Loudoun County to become more proactive in fighting sprawl.

## WASHINGTON

### Thornton Creek [SEATTLE]



#### Housing Project Will Restore Creek

The residents of Seattle are hoping to make an urban redevelopment site even better. With a few tweaks, the Thornton Creek project — which combines shopping, job opportunities and living space — could become an exciting model for other smart-growth developers.

The development plans call for building new housing adjacent to an existing mall, which will be renovated. A library and community center are also planned. When built, the project will provide people with access to jobs and shops without having to drive. In addition, light rail is slated to be built in the near future, giving residents easy pedestrian access to transit.

If carried out as the local community proposes, Thornton Creek could benefit the environment and local residents. Under the community plan, the city of Seattle would have the chance to restore a creek currently buried under a parking lot and reconnect it with local wetlands. In addition to providing a large parcel of open space, the restoration of the creek would aid a struggling population of endangered salmon.

## Blakely Ridge and Redmond Ridge Projects



#### Huge Development Trashes Growth Limit

What do timber companies do with land that they've logged? In Redmond, they're trying to turn it into a 4-square-mile development. But current residents argue that Washington State's urban-growth law protects



the area from the massive project envisioned by the developers.

Residents of this largely rural area started questioning county land-use decisions after the size of the proposed development was revealed. Quadrant, a Weyerhaeuser subsidiary, is pushing to build 3,950 homes on 2,000 acres outside of King County's urban-growth limit. Those who live nearby are worried about the project's impacts on local roads, and fear this development will encourage more suburban sprawl in the area.

After winning a recent battle in which the court ruled that the city of Redmond must better justify its classification of the land, opponents of the project hope to eventually put an end to such poorly planned development.

## WEST VIRGINIA

### Wal-Mart [MORGANTOWN]



#### Wal-Mart Must Choose: Smart or Sprawl?

Morgantown is in the midst of a battle between David and Goliath. A well-known retail chain is building a superstore on the outskirts of town. The anchor store in the nearby Mountaineer Mall, which rejuvenated the facility in the early 1990s and prevented it from being abandoned, may be forced to close down due to the arrival of a new Goliath. Will the existing shopping center win out? Or will a superstore and its associated suburban sprawl take over?

It doesn't matter from the stores' perspective — both are Wal-Marts.

In the early 1990s, Wal-Mart sought an ideal location for a new store in northern West Virginia. The company went the smart-growth route, choosing one of three closed anchor-store locations at the declining Mountaineer Mall in Morgantown. The mall was fading but the arrival of Wal-Mart helped turn it around — without requiring any additional parking, without destroying any green spaces and without pushing development to the outskirts of town.

Currently, Morgantown's residents are able to enjoy all the benefits of having a Wal-Mart in town, without the accompanying problems posed when a store is located on the suburban fringe. Shoppers and workers alike can walk, bike or take transit to the site. Even if people choose to drive, the surrounding mall's amenities allow shoppers

to handle many errands at once, reducing the need for multiple trips.

The Wal-Mart at Mountaineer Mall demonstrates that even Wal-Marts can be good for the economy and environment of a region — so long as the developers focus on smart-growth approaches when locating and building the stores.

### Wal-Mart [MORGANTOWN]



#### Big-Box Pushes for New Road

Unfortunately, Wal-Mart has proposed a new project in West Virginia that would erase its laudable revitalization of Mountaineer Mall. This time, almost 10 years later, Wal-Mart is back in the Morgantown market with plans to build a brand new superstore on the outskirts of town.



**No Place for a Wal-Mart:** Protesters stand their ground near the open space that Wal-Mart is proposing to develop in Morgantown, W.V. Part of the site is a Native American burial ground. Photo by Jim Sconyers.

The environmental damages alone are staggering. As currently planned, the new store would gobble up open spaces, fill in a wetland and destroy a Native American burial site. Severe transportation problems add to the impacts. If the Wal-Mart were built, the already heavy traffic at eight intersections surrounding the area would be made worse. Wal-Mart supporters argue that traffic problems are easily resolved: Build a new, incredibly expensive four-lane expressway with a special access road for the store.

Hopefully, Wal-Mart will learn from its own "best practices" and concentrate its development efforts at existing retail locations, instead of creating more sprawl.

## WISCONSIN

### Downtown Development Plan [RACINE]



#### Bringing People Back Downtown

The development plan for downtown Racine demonstrates how communities can revitalize their city centers, even after decades of stagnation. The plan includes new housing, a lakefront hotel, office buildings, parks, retail stores and cultural resources. The developers recognize that the value of a vital city center extends outward to the farm land that is no longer threatened by suburban sprawl, to open space that will be preserved, and to residents who will enjoy a higher quality of life.

An important component of the plan is to attract people back to the downtown by building row houses, small-lot, single-family homes and condominium-style apartments. An old YMCA will be converted into housing for senior citizens. With changes to the streets and sidewalks that will make the area more pedestrian- and bike-friendly, residents of the downtown will have less reason to drive. For commuters needing to reach points beyond Racine, the plan includes a restoration of commuter rail service to Milwaukee and Chicago, and a new bus transit center in the heart of downtown.

Fewer cars means fewer parking lots — and this has spurred developers to replace a large parking lot and boat ramp with a 3.5-acre waterfront green space connected to the city center by a three-block-long parkway. Also, a two-mile pedestrian and bike path will wrap around downtown Racine along Lake Michigan and the

Root River. Green spaces will be publicly owned and protected in perpetuity.

The business community has not been ignored. One of the first major developments announced after the completion of the downtown plan was a five-story office building designed by William McDonough, an internationally known "green" architect. In fact, the business community has shown its enthusiasm for the project by investing more than \$50 million since the plan was adopted.

## Hawk's Landing

[DANE COUNTY]



### Isolated Houses Add Traffic, Kill Open Space

Although it has a Madison address, the only thing that connects Hawk's Landing to the larger city is a sewer line — the development is actually located miles from town.

The 575-acre development is located on rolling hills that were predominantly farm land and forest. Far from public transportation and surrounded by working farms, the development will harm these rural lands by adding an estimated 10,000 car trips per day.

Of course, some walking is available in the community — to, from and around the golf course. Home prices reflect the golf course lifestyle, with prices starting at \$250,000 — over \$50,000 more than the average price for a home in Madison and Dane County. In addition to the environmental nightmare of maintaining a golf course, the development is likely to cause severe stormwater runoff and groundwater contamination.



**Chewing Up the Countryside:** This 575-acre development will be built far from existing communities on farm land and open space. Photo by Chuck Erickson.

## WYOMING

## Union Pacific Depot

[EVANSTON]



### Locals Pitch in to Restore Town

In 1868, Union Pacific rail came to Evanston kicking off years of economic growth and prosperity for the region. The downtown grew quickly around the new depot and became a prime location for shopping, eating and touring in Wyoming. Over 100 years later, after the railroad left town, a natural-gas boom caused explosive growth. As the population quickly tripled and suburban sprawl gained ground, business in the downtown started to fade. When the boom collapsed, so did the city.

But the citizens of Evanston and city officials are fighting to preserve their history and prepare for the future. Recognizing the value of a historic downtown, the city spent 13 years transforming an old Union Pacific depot into a community center with a public square. The town has also embraced its cultural resources which include the biggest Chinatown in the Rocky Mountains. Residents, many of whom are descended from Chinese railroad workers, are proud of the work the community is doing to restore turn-of-the-century buildings in the neighborhood.

What's perhaps most impressive about the efforts in Evanston is the community involvement. Over \$350,000 of the funding used to restore the old depot was raised at the city's annual Renewal Ball. Residents, local businesses and town officials invested their own time and money to rebuild the town. Perhaps that's why the revitalization of Evanston has been so successful.

## Jackson Hole



### Intense Growth Threatens Wildlife, Residents

The Teton Mountains near Jackson Hole offer some of the most stunningly beautiful scenery in the world. Unfortunately, tremendous growth threatens the area's scenic beauty — not to mention the bald eagles, wolves, elk and bighorn sheep that call the mountains home.

The area's natural wonders have brought both people and businesses to Jackson Hole. The population has quadrupled in the past 30 years from a sleepy little town of 4,800 to over 20,000 today. Along with the people have

come buildings — many of them poorly planned and built in a sprawling fashion. In the last 15 years, Jackson Hole has had to build three new schools, two new post offices, a new jail, a new hospital, and a new airport terminal. New businesses and housing developments have sprung up in the valley and most of the projects have been built on open space or farm land.

However many people come to Jackson Hole, it is clear that only the most affluent can afford to stay. The average single-family home price in 1999 was \$750,000. Because of the lack of affordable housing, many people who work in the area must commute from as far as Pinedale, over 77 miles away, thus adding to the region's traffic and air pollution.

# Resources

The Sierra Club's Challenge to Sprawl Campaign has a comprehensive list of strategies, resources and information for those concerned about suburban sprawl available at: [www.sierraclub.org/sprawl](http://www.sierraclub.org/sprawl)

## **Additional Sources of Information on Sprawl:**

Sprawlwatch is an excellent source of up-to-date news and information on efforts to control sprawl. Go to: [www.sprawlwatch.org](http://www.sprawlwatch.org)

The Surface Transportation Policy Project's Web site has lots of great information on issues related to transportation and sprawl that can be accessed at: [www.transact.org](http://www.transact.org)

The Smart Growth Network Web site is filled with smart-growth news and examples of good policies and initiatives to deal with sprawl. Check out: [www.smartgrowth.org](http://www.smartgrowth.org)

The Congress for New Urbanism's Web site is currently being updated. Check there for examples of smart growth projects at: [www.cnu.org](http://www.cnu.org)

The National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street program is working with hundreds of towns across the country on redevelopment projects. Information on that program and other initiatives are available at: [www.nthp.org](http://www.nthp.org)

The Local Government Commission's Center for Livable Communities Web site features guidelines for smarter planning as well as specific examples. Go to: [www.lgc.org](http://www.lgc.org)

The Chicago-based Center for Neighborhood Technology offers strategies for livable communities, including specific smart-growth tools and examples. It can be reached at: [www.cnt.org](http://www.cnt.org)

The National Neighborhood Coalition is leading the effort to reinvest in existing communities across the country. To find out more, go to: [www.neighborhoodcoalition.org](http://www.neighborhoodcoalition.org)

For more information about the University of Louisville's Sustainable Urban Neighborhoods program, go to: [www.louisville.edu/org/sun/](http://www.louisville.edu/org/sun/)





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